



GENERATION  
HUMAN  
RIGHTS

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SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER

# THE REFUGEE

We are currently facing the greatest refugee crisis since World War II. Millions are fleeing conflict and persecution around the world, creating the highest level of migration in eighty years. The global displacement of people is complex and difficult to bring into classroom learning and discussions. These lesson plans offer a gateway to understanding these topics through stories of youth refugees, photos, and videos; enabling students to make a tangible connection to what it is like to be a refugee. Using a human rights-based approach, the activities, developed by educators, offer ways to better understand the crisis and challenges cultural narratives and prevailing prejudice and stereotypes against the world's refugee population. The activities encourage empathy and invite students to reflect on the commonalities they share with their peers who are refugees. Students are introduced to human rights defenders, and provided tools for creating change in their communities and beyond.

*All images provided by Ron Haviv/ VII Agency*

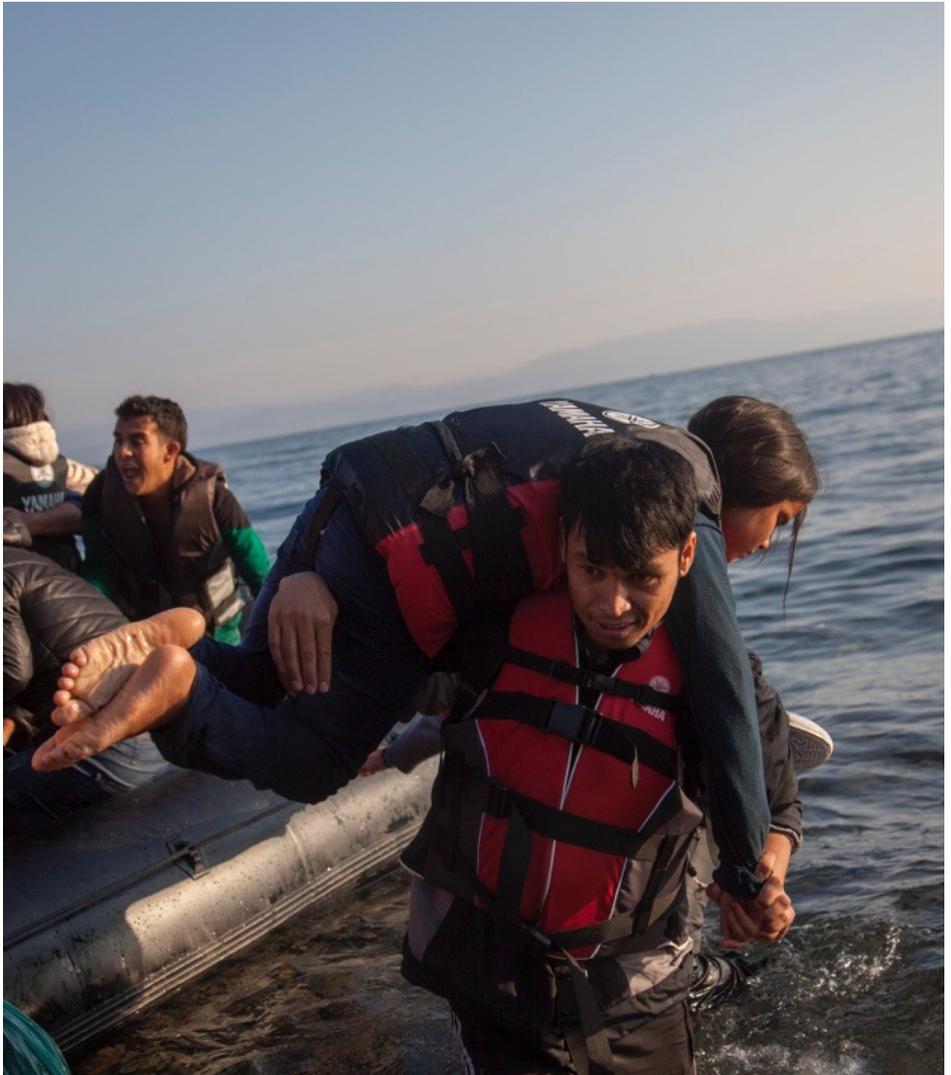
# THE REFUGEE

"I'M HERAN, 15 AND FROM IRAQ. IT TOOK ME TWO WEEKS TO GET HERE. I LEFT BECAUSE OF ISIS. THE SITUATION IS NOT VERY GOOD IN IRAQ. I WANT TO FINISH MY STUDIES HERE AND BE AN ENGINEER. ALL I WANT IS JUST PEACE."

FROM *THE EXODUS* BY RON HAVIV/ VII AGENCY

According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, the ongoing conflict in Syria has resulted in the displacement of over 6.6 million people and the creation of at least 4 million new refugees as recorded by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).

The Syrian Refugee Crisis is being touted as the largest refugee crisis facing the world since the outbreak of World War II. People have been forced from their homes, communities, and professions as a result of the ongoing civil war. Without a place to call home, a large number have decided to remain close to Syria, relocating to countries such as Lebanon, Turkey or Jordan, while others have journeyed further afield to Europe. Despite the widespread media coverage on refugees, many remain uncertain as to what exactly a refugee is. According to the UNHCR a refugee is "someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence." Typically, these conflicts are founded on a basis of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Consequently, returning home is not an option, not only due to fear, but because the circumstances make it impossible. The current refugee crisis has come at a time of both great economic and political instability in the European Union, and against the backdrop of what is arguably the most toxic American presidential campaign in modern history. The international refugee crisis has fueled dangerous discriminatory reactions, with



levels of xenophobia, prejudice, hate crimes and stereotyping against the 'other' having reached unprecedented heights in many parts of the Western world. Refugees are not some abstract idea, but people too. Individuals with dreams and aspirations they wish to pursue. They, like all of us, are also entitled to the human rights of personal security, freedom of movement, and asylum. Refugees, who are taking huge risks to save their lives, deserve to be recognized and not met with closed doors and policies that hinder the fulfillment of their basic rights

- **1 in every 113 people on earth was an asylum-seeker, internally displaced or a refugee.**
- **24 people were newly displaced in the world every minute.**
- **51% of all refugees were children. 98,000 of those children were alone.**

*(UNHCR Global Trend Data 2015)*

# THE REFUGEE

LESSON GRADE LEVEL: 9-12  
HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES: FREEDOM  
OF MOVEMENT, FREEDOM FROM  
VIOLENCE, REFUGEE RIGHTS

## UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS:

**Article 3:** Right to Life, Liberty and Security of Person.

**Article 9:** Right to Freedom from Arbitrary Arrest, Detention, or Exile.

**Article 13:** Right to Freedom of Movement, including the right to leave one's own country, and to return.

**Article 14:** Right to Seek Asylum.

**Article 15:** Right to Nationality.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

Who is the 'refugee'?

## TIME REQUIREMENT:

45 minutes

## OVERVIEW:

In this lesson students will learn the definition of a refugee, and what conditions cause a human being to become a refugee. Students will review the freedoms they have experienced to travel and recognize their peers in other countries that have not had the same advantages. They will analyze art depicting the plight of refugees and analyze how different sources of media describe refugees.

## OBJECTIVES:

- Students will understand the definition of a refugee.
- Students will list and explain the reasons of how it is possible to become a refugee.
- Students will build a tangible understanding of the obstacles refugees must overcome to find safety in other countries.
- Students will investigate rhetoric in the media toward refugees.

## VOCABULARY:

- **Refugee:** a person who has been forced to leave his or her country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster.
- **Visa:** an endorsement on a passport indicating that the holder is allowed to enter, leave, or stay for a specified period of time in a country.
- **Asylum:** the protection granted by a nation to someone who has left their native country as a political refugee.
- **Internally Displaced Person:** person who has not crossed an international border to find sanctuary but have remained inside his or her own home country.

## COMMON CORE LEARNING STANDARDS:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.3
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.4
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7

## MATERIALS:

- A world map in either paper or digital form. Whatever form used you should be able to highlight the route of students' journeys. With a digital map you can use a pointer stick, and with a paper map you can draw directly on it or attach a colorful string to it with pins.
- Video: *The Exodus* by Ron Haviv/ VII: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_bEKXzji4n](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_bEKXzji4n)
- Journal to be used for reflection
- Sculpture Image: sculpture by the artist Frances Bruno Catalano, which symbolizes the vacuum created by being forced to leave your land, your life and your society <http://brunocatalano.com/sculpture-bronze/bruno-catalano-news.php?z=architecturaldigest>
- Destruction of Homs, Syria: <http://bit.ly/20EEedMM>

# STUDENT ACTIVITIES

## ACTIVITY 1: WHERE HAVE WE TRAVELLED? (10 MIN)

- Step One:
  - Using your chosen form of map ask students to share places they have visited, specifically the point of departure and the destination. If a student has traveled from NYC to Florida, mark a line between the two states. On a paper map draw a line or use colored string and on a digital map use a pointer stick to reveal the route.
- Step Two:
  - After a few minutes the map should be covered by crossing lines by ink or string. It is a powerful image. Ask students what the image represents. Freedom? Power? Wealth?
  - Now ask the students whether they needed documents to travel outside of the country. Answers may include: passports, visas.
  - Ask them how they were able to obtain the passports and visas? Ask students if it would have been possible to travel without these documents.

## ACTIVITY 2: INTRODUCTION TO THE REFUGEE (15 MIN)

- Step One:
  - Ask students: Who are Refugees? Lead to the definition of refugee:
  - A person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster.
  - Ask students: Do you think it would be easy for a refugee to obtain a passport or visa to escape the war or conflict in their country?
  - Listen to their responses.
  - As an example from the current refugee crisis share with students that currently 4.6 million Syrians are refugees, and 6.6 million are displaced within Syria; half are children. Review the definitions of the THP glossary for refugees, internally displaced persons, and asylum.
- Step Two:
  - Show the video of footage taken of Homs, Syria in 2016. Explain that this is an example of why people are choosing to risk their lives to find safety and become refugees.
- Step Three:
  - Share with students that in 2015 more than one million refugees crossed by sea and over land into Europe.

## ACTIVITY 3: MEDIA AND ART

- Step One:
  - Ask students what they hear about refugees in the news or conversations in their communities. Most likely you will hear a variety of negative and positive responses. Explain to students that you would like to question some of the rhetoric that has been in our media.
  - Example of rhetoric: Refugees want to leave their home countries and live in America or Europe
  - Share that the refugees' desire to make these journeys are true but it is possible they would rather stay in their own homes with their families and daily lives. Explain that most of the refugees leave their homes because of a war or a natural disaster.
- Ask students to list examples of the difficulties of leaving your home country. Examples may include:
  - You leave behind people you love.
  - You leave your job.
  - You may not speak the language.
  - You leave your culture.
  - You may not be accepted in your new community.
  - Etc.

## ACTIVITY 4: SCULPTURE (5 MIN)

- Project the Sculpture of the Refugee by the artist Frances Bruno Catalano, which symbolizes the vacuum created by being forced to leave your land, your life, your people... for any reason.
- Ask students what is missing on the Refugee sculpture?
  - Heart, hand, etc.
- What is the Refugee carrying?
  - What do you think is in his suitcase?

## CLOSING ACTIVITY

- Close the class with *The Exodus* video. Ask students to think about the teenagers who exited to the rafts.
  - Were their journeys long?
  - Are they hopeful? If so, what are their hopes for the future?
  - Ask students what they think is next for these teenagers on their journeys.

# THE REFUGEE CAMP

LESSON GRADE LEVEL: 9-12  
HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES: FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT, FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE, REFUGEE RIGHTS

## UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS:

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**Article 14:** Right to Seek Asylum.

**Article 15:** Right to Nationality.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

What can we learn from refugee stories?

## TIME REQUIREMENT:

45 minutes

## OVERVIEW:

Creating a simulation of a refugee camp provides a supportive background as students share stories of their peers around the world who are refugees. These firsthand narratives enable students to make a tangible connection to other youth in their generation who are experiencing the harsh reality of being a refugee.

## OBJECTIVES:

- Students will learn about life in a refugee camp.
- Read narratives written by teenage refugees and teenage displaced persons.
- Articulate the difference between a refugee and an internally displaced person.

## COMMON CORE LEARNING STANDARDS:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.3
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.4
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7

## VOCABULARY:

- **Refugee:** a person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster.
- **Internally displaced Person:** is a person who has been forced to leave his or her home or place of habitual residence, a phenomenon known as forced migration. They remain in their home country.
- **Refugee Camp:** a shelter for persons displaced by war or political oppression or for religious beliefs.
- **Identity Card:** a document that describes aspects of a person's identity such as name, age, where they were born, etc.
- **Humanitarian Organization:** an organization that delivers aid. It can be a governmental or non-governmental agency.
- **United Nations:** an organization of independent states formed in 1945 to promote international peace and security.
- **Doctors Without Borders:** an international medical humanitarian organization working in more than 60 countries to assist people whose survival is threatened by violence, neglect, or catastrophe.

## MATERIALS:

- Refugee camp ID cards: <http://bit.ly/2fAOQIF>
- Ink pad (to take personal thumb prints on ID cards).
- Video: *Children of Darfur* by Ron Haviv/ VII: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Cc\\_FDzDxC8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Cc_FDzDxC8)

## CLASS ROOM SPACE:

- Ideally all desks and chairs should be moved to the sides of the room to create a central, open floor space. Situate one desk near the classroom entrance. If possible, turn lights off as long as there is enough natural light to read by.

# STUDENT ACTIVITIES

## ACTIVITY 1: REFUGEE CAMP REGISTRATION

- If possible have students line up outside the classroom before entering. Tell them they are about to enter the refugee camp and need to register. Make sure the ID cards are mixed up so each group will have at least one journalist or humanitarian aid worker. As each student enters the following occurs:
  - Step One:  
The instructor assumes the role of Refugee Camp Director.
  - Step Two:  
A designated student helper is given the Refugee Camp Director's assistant role. He or she should wear the id card with the Refugee Camp Director Assistant written on it. The assistant should collect any bags or books the students carry as they enter the room and places them away from the center of the room.
  - Step Three:  
The Refugee Camp Director hands each student an ID card after their items have been surrendered to the assistant. Upon receiving their ID card, each student presses their thumb to the ink pad and places a fingerprint on the card.
  - Step Four:  
The Refugee Camp Director instructs

## ACTIVITY 2: VIDEO (3 MIN)

- Step One: At this point have the entire class should be sitting on the floor in small groups of four to five students.
- Step Two: Play the video, *Children of Darfur* by Ron Haviv/ VII Agency.

## ACTIVITY 3: SHARING STORIES

- Step One:
  - The Refugee Camp Director then asks students to share their names and the stories that are written on the back of their ID cards to their small groups. Encourage students to be quiet as they listen to their classmates' stories. ID cards are numbered to ensure that each group of four to five students represents diverse refugee stories.

## ACTIVITY 4: CLASS DISCUSSION

Ask each group to share its thoughts and feelings about the experience of reading the refugee narratives out loud and also about their experience listening to the narratives their classmates shared.

## TEACHERS NOTE

There will be at least one ID card per group that will be a representative from Doctors without Borders or other humanitarian organizations. As students share their stories they will also learn about these aid agencies.

# HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

LESSON GRADE LEVEL: 9-12  
HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES: FREEDOM  
OF MOVEMENT, FREEDOM FROM  
VIOLENCE, REFUGEE RIGHTS

## UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS:

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**Article 15:** Right to Nationality.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

Do we have a choice to become a human rights defender?

## TIME REQUIREMENT:

45 minutes

## OVERVIEW:

This lesson provides activities for students to build a tangible understanding of what it means to become a human rights defender. Through self-reflection students will explore choices they have made to become a bystander, perpetrator or an upstander in situations where a person or people were being discriminated against for unjust reasons. Students will be able to observe the potential outcomes of what a different choice may have led to in their past situations through a role-playing exercise.

## OBJECTIVES:

- Students will self-reflect on choices they have made when in a situation where a person or people were being discriminated against for unjust reasons.
- Students will understand and be able to articulate the THP Glossary Words.
- Students will articulate what can happen in a situation when there is a breakdown of Human Rights and there are no human rights defenders.

## VOCABULARY:

- **By-stander:** an onlooker, passerby, eyewitness or spectator. The by-stander does not directly engage in the event.
- **Perpetrator:** the doer, the executor, the person responsible for or behind the event.
- **Activist/Upstander:** an advocate for the victim, acts out against the actions of the perpetrator.
- **Human Rights Defender:** a term used to describe people who, individually or with others, act to promote or protect human rights.

## COMMON CORE LEARNING STANDARDS:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.3
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.4
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7

## MATERIALS:

- Copies of scripts for the role play exercise.
- Pencils and pens.
- Telling History Journal.

# STUDENT ACTIVITIES

## INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION (10 MIN)

- Share with students that in this lesson we are going to explore choices we have made in situations where a person or people were being discriminated against for a biased or subjective reason. Explain that in most situations we have three roles to choose from when in such a situation: role of by-stander, role of perpetrator, or role of activist/upstander. Ask students for their definitions of each role and then share the following definitions on the board:
  - By-stander: an onlooker, passerby, eyewitness or spectator. The by-stander does not directly engage in the event.
  - Perpetrator: the doer, the executor, the person responsible for or behind the event.
  - Activist/Upstander: an advocate for the victim, acts out against the actions of the perpetrator.

## ACTIVITY 1: SELF-REFLECTION ON CHOICE WRITING EXERCISE (7-10 MIN)

- Step One:
  - Have students take out their THP journals and write a reflection piece on a time they took on the role of bystander, perpetrator or activist/upstander. Share with them that we have all each chosen these roles at one point, and that there is no judgment. Emphasis to students the importance of being honest in their reflection, and that they can keep it private if they choose.
- Step Two:
  - When students have completed their writings ask them to share examples from their personal experiences of the different roles they have chosen in these difficult situations.

## ACTIVITY 2: CHOICE ROLE PLAYING (15 MIN)

- Step One:
  - Tell the students we are now going to act out a scene with three different endings, each based on choice. Ideally, the scene is based on a student reflection, however we have provided an example of a 'bullying scene' that can also be used.
- Step Two:
  - Choose three students to act out the chosen scene.
- Step Three:
  - Explain to the student actors that they will repeat the scene three times. Each time they will choose a different role, which will then conclude with a different ending. Each scene should not be more than two minute long.

## ACTIVITY 2: CONTINUED

- When the scene reaches the pivotal moment where the students 'choice' is clear say 'freeze'. Then ask the class to identify which choice the main character has made: becoming a perpetrator, bystander, or activist/upstander
- Step Four:
  - Lead a discussion with students about their observations of the different choices and outcomes they observed.
  - (If time permits different scenarios can be chosen for the scenes, and you can even assign one student to be the director!)

## ACTIVITY 3: HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER DISCUSSION (7-10 MIN)

- Step One:
  - Share with students that the times they choose to be an Upstander or Activist they are stepping into the role of a human rights defender. Explain that a human rights defender is a term used to describe people who, individually or with others, act to promote or protect human rights. Ask students to name human rights defenders they have learned about in school or have heard their stories elsewhere. Examples include:
    - Martin Luther King
    - Ghandi
    - Malala Yousafzai
- Step Two:
  - Now ask them to name human rights defenders in their communities, possibly even in their school or classroom.

## CLOSING ACTIVITY

- Ask students to read the newspaper or watch the news before the next class and take note of any human rights defenders whose stories are shared. For homework have students write a reflection piece on what they think can happen if there were no human rights defenders to step up and advocate for a person or people being discriminated against for unjust reasons.

## SCENE FOR ROLE-PLAYING CHOICE EXERCISE

*The scene takes place in the cafeteria. Bring one desk up to the front of the room and that will be the lunch table.*

Characters (Note: Everyone is referred to as a 'she', *but roles are not gender specific*)

Three Students:

Student 1 is sitting and eating her lunch

Student 2 has decided that she wants her seat

Student 3 has a CHOICE to make

### **First Take:**

Student 1 is sitting at the lunch table and eating his/her lunch. Student 2 approaches the table.

Student 2: I want that seat. You have to leave.

Student 3 stands a foot away and watches the exchange. Student 1 gets out of the chair and walks away and Student 2 sits in it.

Say FREEZE. Ask the class what role Student 3 played in the scene. The answer is a BYSTANDER.

### **Second Take:**

Student 1 is sitting at the lunch table and eating his/her lunch. Student 2 approaches the table.

Student 2: I want that seat. You have to leave.

Student 3 stands a foot away and watches the exchange. She/He walks over beside Student 2.

Student 3: Yeah - get out of that seat and give it to him/her

Student 1 gets out of the chair and walks away and Student 2 sits in it.

Say FREEZE. Ask the class what role Student 3 played in the scene. The answer is a PERPETRATOR.

### **Third Take:**

Student 1 is sitting at the lunch table and eating his/her lunch. Student 2 approaches the table.

Student 2: I want that seat. You have to leave.

Student 3 stands a foot away and watches the exchange. She/He walks over beside Student 2.

Student 3: No, leave her alone. You need to find your own seat.

Student 2 walks away.

Say FREEZE. Ask the class what role Student 3 played in the scene. The answer is an ACTIVIST OR UPSTANDER.

## INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK

Since the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the United Nations (UN) in 1948, many other international documents have been drafted to develop these rights further. These documents include other declarations and resolutions, as well as treaties – which are also called covenants or conventions. Countries commit to protect the rights recognized in these documents. Sometimes a specific institution is created within the UN to monitor countries' compliance.

Here are examples of relevant international documents:

- **The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees**
- **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)**
  - Article 12: Right to Freedom of Movement, including the right to leave one's own country, and to return
- **Convention Against Torture (CAT)**
  - Article 3: No State Party shall expel, return ("refouler") or extradite a person to another State where there are substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture.
- **Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**
  - Article 22: Right to Protection for Refugee Children

## BECOME A DEFENDER

- Organize a fundraiser in your school in order contribute to an NGO that works to support refugees throughout the world.
- Advocate through social media in order to promote acceptance of refugees in your community. Raise awareness on the importance of tolerance in our communities and the dangers of xenophobia and hate.
- Write a letter to your senator or representative expressing your concerns and beliefs regarding the current refugee crisis.
- Contact an NGO that supports refugees and arrange for a speaker to come to your class, school or community event in order to raise awareness.
- Create a refugee exhibit or display for the public at either your school or a public space to bring about awareness on the issue and begin serving as a conversation starter for how improvements can be made.
- Volunteer for a local organization that works to provide aid to displaced refugees throughout the world. Whether it is supplying food, enforcing education in camps, relocating refugees, providing sanitation amongst others.
- Research a particular story on a refugee and write an article for your school newsletter in order to expose the issue and raise awareness.
- Create an informative video on the current refugee crisis that highlights what may of these people must endure on a daily basis. Share the video with the student body.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Refugee International

<http://www.refugeesinternational.org/>

An international non-profit organization seeking to find real solutions to victims displaced by conflicts, specifically focusing on those impacted by issues related to climate, and ensuring the safety and well being of women and girls.

### The U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants

<http://refugees.org/>

U.S. Committee for refugees and immigrants (USCRI), a US based organization working to advance the rights of refugees and immigrants here and abroad.

### United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

<http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/teaching-resources.html>

UNHCR tools created specifically for educators, equipped with a variety of activities, games and resources to teach students about refugees.

### Doctors Without Borders

<http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/>

An international humanitarian-aid NGO and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, best known for providing medical aid in war-torn regions and developing countries facing endemic diseases.

### TED talk by Alexander Betts

[https://www.ted.com/talks/alexander\\_betts\\_our\\_refugee\\_system\\_is\\_failing\\_here\\_s\\_how\\_we\\_can\\_fix\\_it?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/alexander_betts_our_refugee_system_is_failing_here_s_how_we_can_fix_it?language=en)

Dr Betts offers a critical look into how the West is failing hundreds of thousands of refugees. He offers four ways to change the treatment of refugees, so that they can make immediate contributions to their new homes. Refugees are human beings which skills, talents, aspirations.

### Refugee Council USA

<http://www.rcusa.org/>

A coalition of 22 U.S.-based non-governmental organizations dedicated to refugee protection, welcome and excellence in the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program. It enhances the voices of refugees, advocates for their rights to be upheld and builds links to enable their integration into the community.

### The International Rescue Committee

<https://www.rescue.org/>

An organization that responds to the world's worst humanitarian crises and helps people whose lives and livelihoods are shattered by conflict and disaster to survive, recover and gain control of their future.

### The International Organization for Migration

<https://www.iom.int/>

IOM is the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration and works closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners.

### Ron Haviv

<http://www.ronhaviv.com/>

Ron Haviv is an Emmy nominated, award winning photojournalist and co-founder of the photo agency VII, dedicated to documenting conflict and raising awareness about human rights issues around the globe.

### VII Agency

<http://viipphoto.com/>

VII was created in 2001 by seven of the world's leading photojournalists and now represents 19 of the world's preeminent photojournalists whose careers span 35 years of world history. They are a group of engaged and committed photographers concerned with the world and the lives of others

### Generation Human Rights

<http://www.generationhumanrights.org/>

Generation Human Rights empowers youth to chart a world free of human rights abuse & genocide through human rights education in the classroom and in the field.

### Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights - Speak Truth To Power

<http://rfkcenter.org/what-we-do/speak-truth-power/>

Robert F. Kennedy's Speak Truth To Power is a human rights education program that strives to create a global citizenry dedicated to the highest standards of justice and equality.