



**Global
Young
Leaders**

WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL OF DALLAS/FORT WORTH

JWAC Lesson Plan Refugee Crisis

By: Ryan Subel, August 2017

Lesson 1: Refugees Abroad/Lost Boys of Sudan

Warm up questions: *What is the definition of a refugee? Do you think there are differences between public perceptions of refugees and the legal definition according to the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR)?*

Discussion:

Refugee definition according to UNHCR: "A person owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself/herself of the protection of that country." See more at <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c125.html>

Asylum Seeker definition according to UNHCR: "An asylum-seeker is someone who says he or she is a refugee, but whose claim has not yet been definitively evaluated. On average, about 1 million people seek asylum on an individual basis every year. In mid-2014, there were more than 1.2 million asylum-seekers". See more at <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c137.html>

UNHCR: "The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was established on December 14, 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly. The agency is mandated to lead and co-ordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. It strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or to resettle in a third country." See more at <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646cbf.html>

U.S Committee for Refugees: "Since 1911, the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) has been serving uprooted people, regardless of their nationality, race, ideology, or social group. We continue to provide tools and opportunities for self-sufficiency to refugees and immigrants nationwide, fight refugee warehousing around the world, serve victims of human trafficking, and protect the rights of unaccompanied immigrant children" See more at <http://refugees.org/about/>

Resettlement: "Resettlement is the transfer of refugees from an asylum country to another State that has agreed to admit them and ultimately grant them permanent settlement." See more at <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a16b1676.html>

Lesson plan and activity resource:

<http://www.afsusa.org/educators/teachers-toolbox/lesson-plans/exploring-refugees-and-asylum-seekers/>

Activity:

This activity revolves around a specific group of refugees from Sudan, collectively called “The Lost Boys of Sudan.” It details their stories and struggles, and gives us a context to reengage in our earlier discussion.

1. Build background.

Ask students if they’re familiar with Peter Pan’s Lost Boys—characters in the J.M. Barrie novel Peter Pan who formed a family and took care of each other in Never-Never Land. Explain that there is a group of over 25,000 young Dinka men who ran away from a civil war. These young men trekked across sub-Saharan Africa in search of safety, and eventually found homes in the United States. Relief workers called them the “Lost Boys” after the characters in the J.M. Barrie novel, and the media picked up on this; the group is now known collectively as “The Lost Boys of Sudan.” Review the vocabulary in this new context.

2. Have students locate Sudan on the map.

Ask students to locate Sudan on a wall map of the world. Point out northern and southern Sudan. Point out the homeland of the Dinka—in southern Sudan along the White Nile. Ask: What geographical aspects of Sudan contribute to civil unrest? What cultural aspects of Sudan contribute to civil unrest? Explain to students that Sudan’s second civil war was caused by conflicts between northern and southern Sudan over oil and religion. Go to National Geographic’s Sudan Facts page and invite volunteers to take turns reading aloud the information. Then discuss the historical, cultural, and geographic factors that contributed to Sudan’s civil war and some of the consequences the civil war—which lasted over twenty years—had on Sudan and its peoples, including orphaned children, violence, famine, and disease.

3. Introduce the film *God Grew Tired of Us* and the excerpt students will watch.

Explain to students that the film documents the story of the Lost Boys of Sudan as they fled civil war, spent a decade growing up in a Kenyan refugee camp, and were eventually resettled in the United States. Tell students that they will see an excerpt, called “From Sudan to the United States.” The excerpt includes stories from the Kakuma refugee camp. If possible, show students the full film, *God Grew Tired of Us*, during class time. If you do not have enough time, encourage students to watch the film at home on their own.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/god-grew-tired-of-us-the-lost-boys-of-sudan/>

Recap: Refugees are people who have been forced to leave their homes due to violence or persecution. Today, there are millions of refugees who have fled a multitude of countries including Syria, Palestine, and Sudan. *What is the difference between a refugee and an asylum-seeker? There are many refugees in the world, but not all of them have sought asylum. Why might a refugee be unable to seek asylum? What is the role of the UNHCR in aiding refugees? What about the U.S. Committee for Refugees? How might President's Trump ban on people from Sudan, Syria, and other countries in ongoing conflict affect refugees?* Resettlement is a vital part of solving a refugee crisis, granting refugees a new life in a stable and safe country. There are currently 37 countries involved in the UNHCR's resettlement program¹, but 65.3 million refugees in the world². Clearly, the refugee crisis is a very pressing and urgent issue.

Call to Action: With the amount of refugees today, the organizations dedicated to helping them are under immense financial strain. Because volunteering overseas is not a viable option, donations are one of the best course of action to help refugees who have not yet been able to leave countries with ongoing conflicts. Consider donating to these organizations, such as the International Rescue Committee (IRC). Check out their website here: <https://www.rescue.org/>

Consider starting a fundraiser at your school for refugees. You could organize a bake sale, ice cream social, or brainstorm other ideas as a group. Donate profits to a number of organizations:

<http://www.savethechildren.org/faf/home/default.asp?ievent=1109771>
<http://www.roadtomafraq.org/fundraisers-toolkit/>

The UNHCR has a petition asking governments all over the world to be dedicated to promoting the education and wellbeing of refugee families and children. Sign your name here: <http://www.unhcr.org/refugeeday/us/>

¹ United Nations. "Information on UNHCR Resettlement." *UNHCR*, UN Refugee Agency, www.unhcr.org/en-us/information-on-unhcr-resettlement.html.

² Domonoske, Camila. "Refugees, Displaced People Surpass 60 Million For First Time, UNHCR Says." *NPR*, NPR, 20 June 2016, www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/06/20/482762237/refugees-displaced-people-surpass-60-million-for-first-time-unhcr-says.



Lesson 2: Locally Resettled Refugees

Warm Up: *What are the challenges refugees face after being resettled in a new country? What are the difficulties for the host country?*

Discussion:

In the last few years a new global crisis has been brought to the forefront of the public's mind, both in the US and in Europe. The global refugee crisis became a major issue and played a large role in the 2016 US election, as well as many European elections and referendums, such as the Brexit vote and the recent 2017 French election. *So what is the global refugee crisis?* Tens of thousands of people are fleeing civil war and unrest to find new homes elsewhere—sometimes with tragic consequences. The U.N. estimates that more people have been displaced than at any time since World War II.³ Most of the attention has been focused on refugees coming from Syria and other countries in the Middle East and it is easy to forget about the refugees and Internally Displaced Persons coming from other places. Countries such as the DRC, Somalia, Myanmar all have hundreds of thousands internally displaced persons and refugees.⁴ Sudan has been a country plagued by constant conflict for the last few decades, creating over 3.2 million IDPs and over 300,000 refugees.⁵ The conflict in Sudan has been ongoing for decades, and there have been refugees escaping the country for just as long. *What might be the causes behind these conflicts? How might ordinary civilians be affected by civil wars and uprisings?* The stories of some of these refugees will help us understand some of the challenges of helping refugees and the hardships refugees face adapting to their new lives. With the new explosion of refugees in the world, looking back and listening to stories to those who have gone through this before can give us the tools to help refugees and their host countries find even better solutions for everyone involved. *What are your thoughts on the refugee crisis? Do you think other countries have a responsibility to take in refugees? Do you think refugees pose a threat or can they offer benefits to other countries?*

Activities:

Try this BBC choose-your-own-journey activity to highlight the perils of trying to leave a country in conflict (in this case Syria): <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32057601>

Watch this video as a group: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BT0kzF4A-WQ>

In a group discussion, ask students what stood out to the refugees in the video, then ask what else about America foreigners might find strange.

Continue by having pairs of students fill out this worksheet:

<http://files.peacecorps.gov/uploads/wws/lesson-plans/files/bridges.americans.a.pdf>

³ Graham, David A. "Violence Has Forced 60 Million People From Their Homes." The Atlantic. Atlantic Media Company, 17 June 2015.

⁴ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "UNHCR Statistical Yearbook 2014, 14th edition." UNHCR. N.p., 8 Dec. 2015.

⁵ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "Sudan: Refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs and others of concern to UNHCR by State as of 30 April 2016." Refworld. N.p., 13 May 2016.



After they have finished, have them take turns reading their answers aloud. As a group, compare the answers to those found on this worksheet:

<http://files.peacecorps.gov/uploads/wws/lesson-plans/files/bridges.americans.b.pdf>

Explain that if the statements about "Americans" were actually meant to apply to all Americans, this would be an example of cultural stereotyping. Ask students: How would you feel if someone from another country had stereotypes about you before the person even knew you?

Extend this to a discussion about refugees resettling in America. How might a person with little education find learning English? How might parents feel about their children adopting American culture rather than the culture of their home country? This article offers examples of problems refugees can have with resettlement:

<https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/the-7-biggest-challenges-facing-refugees-and-immig/>

Encourage students to try this simulation of a refugee escaping and resettling at home: http://www.playagainstodds.ca/game_us.html

Recap: After completing a long journey from their home countries, many refugees continue to face problem in their countries of resettlement. They can experience discrimination, the challenges of learning a new language, and adapting to a culture vastly different from their own. *What other challenges might refugees face in their new country? How can we help them through the resettlement process?* Because of fears of terror attacks on home soil, refugee admissions to the U.S. are slowing and people who need help the most are being turned away. *What have you taken away from the refugee experience, from leaving a conflict-ridden country to resettling elsewhere?*

Call to Action: Texas is home to the most refugees out of every state in the US—close to 9,000 of them. Out of those, nearly 4,000 live in the DFW area⁶. This means that DFW is ripe with opportunities to help refugees with the resettlement process.

Volunteer with Northwest Bible Church's community center refugee program: <http://www.northwestbible.org/nccrefugees/>

They have a number of programs including resource distribution.

Volunteer with IRC Dallas:

<https://www.rescue.org/announcement/volunteer-opportunities-dallas>

Note that a background check costing \$45 is required to volunteer with IRC.

⁶ Vestal, Allan James, and Andrew Chavez. "See the Scale of Refugee Resettlement in Texas and Walk the Winding Path of the Vetting Process." *Dallas News*, The Dallas Morning News, 3 Feb. 2017, www.dallasnews.com/news/donald-trump-1/2017/02/03/refugee-ban-matters-north-texas.



Volunteer with Refugee Services of Texas:

<https://www.rstx.org/volunteer>

Guided by the principles of human compassion and dignity, Refugee Services of Texas welcomes refugees, immigrants, and other displaced peoples and supports them in integrating and thriving in their new communities.

Volunteer with Catholic Charities:

<https://ccdallas.org/get-involved/>

Every day, Catholic Charities helps our community's most vulnerable by taking on the effects of poverty and helping all those in crisis move toward a better life.

Volunteer with the Human Rights Initiative:

<http://www.hrionline.org/get-involved/>

Human Rights Initiative is a Dallas-based non-profit assisting survivors of violence from all over the world.

Volunteer with Gateway of Grace:

<https://gatewayofgrace.wufoo.com/forms/ztaw6ql1yac9yr/>

Gateway of Grace is a Christian organization dedicated to helping refugees in the DFW area.