

Session Guide: The Refugee Crisis

Session Outline

Description

Refugees are persons who are outside their country of origin for reasons of feared persecution, conflict, generalized violence, or other circumstances that have seriously disturbed public order and, as a result, require international protection.

At least 79.5 million people around the world have been forced to flee their homes. Among them are nearly 26 million refugees, around half of whom are under the age of 18. There are also millions of stateless people, who have been denied a nationality and lack access to basic rights such as education, health care, employment and freedom of movement (<https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>, <https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/camps/>).

This session aims to provide learners with an overview of the refugee crisis around the world, and then reflect on the reasons why people might flee their countries and become refugees. It starts by informing learners about the refugee crisis through a reading activity and a discussion. In the second part of the session they learn about people's life, hopes and struggles in refugee camps. Finally, in the third part of the session, poetry is used to help students make a personal connection to the global refugee crisis.

Session Objectives

The objectives of this session are to:

- Understand the scope of the global refugee crisis and how this is important to Kenya, where the four world's largest refugee camps are located.
- Learn about and reflect on the life of people in refugee camps, their hopes and struggles.
- Make a personal connection to the global refugee crisis through poetry.

Expected Outcomes

By the end of the session learners will have:

- Read about the global refugee crisis and its relevance to their country.
- Read about everyday life in a refugee camp, people's aspirations and frustrations.
- Read and discuss a poem by a refugee.



Areas involved

- Citizenship
 - Values formation
 - Social responsibility
- Language
 - Poetry
 - Reading

Activity: The global refugee Crisis

Objectives

Understand the scope of the global refugee crisis and how this is relevant to Kenya.

Expected Outcomes

Learners will have read about the global refugee crisis and reflected on its relevance to their country.

Teaching Instructions

Provide the following reading materials for learners to gain familiarity with the refugee crisis.

- [UNHCR](#)
- [UN - Refugee Camps](#)

Lead a discussion on what learners find most striking about these readings. Mention in the discussion that Kenya has some of the largest refugee camps in the world.

Student Instructions

Read the following web pages:

- [UNHCR](#)
- [UN - Refugee Camps](#)

After reading, answer the following questions:

Did you know about the refugee crisis? What have you learned about it from these readings?

How does it make you feel about your personal circumstances?



Activity: Life in refugee camps

Objectives

Learn about and reflect on the life of people in refugee camps, their hopes and struggles.

Expected Outcomes

Read stories from people in a refugee camp and reflect on their everyday life, aspirations and frustrations.

Teaching Instructions

Learners will read the stories about 5 individuals and families currently living as refugees in the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya, which hosts almost 200,000 refugees. You can talk about it and detail it (you can find information about it [here](#)).

Learners should read the following 5 stories from refugees in the Kakuma camp:

1. [Dhie Lemi](#)
2. [Yomjima Konyi](#)
3. [Steven Okun Ogak](#)
4. [Yasmin Mohamed](#)
5. [Ghuem Moses Agoth](#)

Lead a discussion on the learner's reflections from the readings, focusing on the reasons why people may flee their countries and what they find inspiring about these stories.

Student Instructions

In the current heated debate on the refugee crisis, one hears a lot from politicians and ordinary people in host countries, but less from the people involved, from the refugees themselves. What kind of people are they? Why did they flee their own country in the first place? What do they like and dislike about living in refugee camps? What are they doing there all day? How do they see their future?

In [I-Am-Kakuma](#), people from the Kakuma refugee camp get the opportunity to speak out and give a worldwide audience the opportunity to directly communicate with them.

Read the following 5 stories and write a short paragraph on why you think people might flee their countries to become refugees and what you found inspiring about these stories:

1. [Dhie Lemi](#)
2. [Yomjima Konyi](#)
3. [Steven Okun Ogak](#)



4. [Yasmin Mohamed](#)
5. [Ghuem Moses Agoth](#)

Activity: Connecting through Poetry

Objectives

Make a personal connection to the global refugee crisis through poetry.

Expected Outcomes

Learners will have read and discussed the poem “Home” by Warsan Shire, a poet, writer, editor and teacher, born in Kenya to Somali parents, who lives in London, UK.

Teaching Instructions

<https://www.facinghistory.org/standing-up-hatred-intolerance/refugee-crisis-human-responsibility>

- Decide how you will read the poem. Allow students to read the poem individually first. Then one student could read the context section, and the teacher reads the poem out loud.
- Ask learners to choose a line from the poem that resonates with them. Ask them to copy the line and then write about their choice, exploring what the line makes them think and feel. Encourage students to write questions as well.
- Divide the class into small groups (4 to 5) and have students share their lines and why they chose them. If they wrote any questions they can discuss them together.
- Finally, come together as a class to discuss a few questions about the power of art and stories.

Suggested Guidelines

The poem includes language and topics that require special consideration from the teacher and learners.

1. Dehumanizing Language: The poem uses the word “nigger” to express how some people view refugees who are arriving to their countries. Before teaching the poem, read [Addressing Dehumanizing Language from History](#) and plan how you will approach the term in your classroom when you read and discuss Shire’s poem.
2. Sexual Violence: Be aware that “Home” also alludes to the sexual violence that some refugees face on their journeys. It is important that you preview the materials, know your



learners, and build in time and space for individual reflection so that students can respond emotionally to what they are reading and learning.

Student Instructions

Read the poem “Home”, by Warsan Shire:

<https://www.facinghistory.org/standing-up-hatred-intolerance/warsan-shire-home>

- Read the poem and the article.
- Choose a line from the poem that resonates with you. Copy the line and write about your choice, exploring what the line makes you think and feel. Write questions as well if you would like.
- Share the poem and your selected lines with someone close to you and explain why you chose them. If you wrote any questions you can discuss them together.

