

Activity 5: Refugee suitcase

Learning objectives

- To support the development of a different narrative regarding displaced people, asylum seekers and refugees around the world.
- To help young people reflect upon the decisions faced by people forced to flee.
- To promote a culture of social inclusion, welfare and solidarity at a local and global level.

Resources

- Presentation: “Refugees: The Land of the Invisible”
- 20 sheets of A5 paper for each group of five participants (for example, 120 sheets for a class of 30)
- Pens

Time required: 55 mins

20 mins for the simulation and 20 mins for the discussion. 10–15 mins for the optional activity at the end.

- Ask young people to look carefully at the photograph on Slide 6 of the presentation, then ask them these questions:
 1. What does the picture show? How many people are there?
 2. Where are they? What are they doing?
- Divide the class into groups of five. Each group of five will form a “family”. The group members have to decide which of them will play the roles of the parents and which, those of the children. Each family receives a set of 20 blank sheets of paper.
- Tell participants that their country has just become involved in a war and that they have to flee. Because they have to leave their homes, they will have to take with them the things they need most to live in a new place. The family can take only 20 items, one per A5 sheet of paper. They must decide between them what to take. They should write or draw each item on a sheet of paper.

(10 min)

- When the “families” are ready, inform them that, owing to limited space in the car, they will have to leave some items behind. They can save up to 14 items. Participants in their “families” have to decide which items to leave behind. They should draw an “x” on these items and put them to one side.

(5 min)

- Say to the families, "Since a lot of people are leaving their homeland at the same time, the roads are crowded and it's not possible to go any further by car. Therefore, you must continue the journey on foot and you can't carry so many things with you. You have to limit yourself to six items and get rid of the other eight." Again, they must discuss this, cross some items out and put them to one side.

(5 min)

- After this, invite the young people to discuss the activity:
 1. What is included in the final list of items of the different groups? Are they similar? Why? Why not?
 2. Why did you choose these items? Was it difficult to determine a common list of items in your groups?
 3. What were the reasons for taking some things? How would they be useful?
 4. Which items were left behind after the first round? Why?
 5. Was the second round more difficult than the first one? Why?
 6. Did members of your family always agree on what to leave behind? What were the disagreements about, and why?
 7. What was the difference between desires and needs? Were your “family’s” needs and desires different from those of the other “families”?

The discussion should lead to the reflection, that all people, despite their differences, have similar needs and that everyone has the right to satisfy their most basic needs – survival, development and security. Exile is unfortunately often the only way to do this. The choices we make are very similar to the choices of people from a different country or a different cultural background.

(20 min)

- At the end of the session, to enable young people to compare their ideas with reality, the teacher can show the website [Landed in Italy – Can refugees and migrants begin again?](#), which presents some stories of migrants arriving in Italy by boat.

[The teacher can also use this article from The Guardian](#), which shows photos of the belongings refugees from Syria took with them: “Passport, lifejacket, lemons: What Syrian refugees pack for the crossing to Europe”.

This activity was inspired by UNHCR training materials.

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