

SESSION 1:

THE REFUGEE EXPERIENCE

Time 2 Hours - plus video clips, an additional 30 minutes 

“I lost everything in Sarajevo. I was the sole carer of my daughter and my mother ... I was a journalist - when they make war, they use media to make war, they make advertisements to make war. As a journalist and a mother I thought I had to do something about it, so I wrote about peace. Then I was put on the liquidation list. A friend told me to run and save our lives - we had to leave with just what we were wearing.”

(Bosnian Focus Group, 2004)



Introduction

In the first session, we look at the differences between ‘refugees’ ‘asylum seekers’ and ‘migrants’. We also look at the ‘refugee journey’, a journey that is long and arduous, and often without end. The journey includes the many ways in which people seek refuge in other countries and the conditions under which they have to live. It may include the return of refugees to their home country which, in some cases, results in death, or it may include their resettlement in a developed country. We will examine the potential impacts of this experience on refugee families and their experience of domestic violence.

Session Objectives

It is intended that on completion of this session, students will be able to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the difference between an asylum seeker, a refugee and a migrant
- describe what “persecution” means in the refugee context and demonstrate an understanding of its importance in relation to refugee issues such as domestic violence
- demonstrate an understanding of the different stages of the refugee journey, and the potential impact of these on refugee families
- demonstrate an understanding of what life is like in refugee camps and other places where refugees live in the country of first asylum



PRESENTER'S NOTES

Presenters must read and be familiar with the course material for this session before conducting the training. Section 1, SESSION CONTENT, is background material for the facilitator. This material can also be given as class handouts if required. Section 2, SESSION MATERIALS, includes a suggested running order, a power point presentation, audio visual materials and activities to use when presenting this training session. Small copies of the power point slides are included in the text to indicate where they will be most useful. Larger copies of the PowerPoint slides are printed at the end of the section and can be photocopied as Session Handouts.

SESSION CONTENT

The refugee experience

(NB this session is based on parts of the Training Kit, “Roads to Refuge” a joint product of the Migrations Heritage Centre, The NSW Department of Education and Training, and the Centre for Refugee Research (CRR) UNSW. The video is on the DVD which comes with this package. The full kit is available from the CRR).

Who is a “Refugee”?

There are millions of refugees in the world. In 2002, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had responsibility for more than 22 million refugees, mainly from Asia and Africa. More than 80% of these refugees are women and children.

A refugee is a person who has fled his or her country and cannot return because of a well-founded fear of persecution due to identity constructs such as race, religion, nationality or membership of a particular social group. The full legal definition of a refugee is contained in Article 1a of the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees which is in the back pocket of the Teaching Resource.

Fear of persecution is the basis of refugee claims. Persecution occurs when human rights violations or threats are sustained or systematic, and governments either fail to protect their citizens or in some cases actively participate in the violations. This may happen because a person holds a particular political opinion or religious belief, or belongs to a particular ethnic or social group.

Examples of persecution include assassination, torture, and sexual violence including rape, arbitrary arrest, false imprisonment and beatings. These and other grave and often life-threatening violations of human rights occur every day under repressive governments around the world.

Women, as well as men, are targeted for persecution. Many women face systematic discrimination in all aspects of their lives. They may be denied equality of opportunity in access to work, forced to comply with restrictive dress codes, and segregated in public life. In some countries, religious police punish women with public beatings for disobeying the dress code.

Most persecution today takes place in times of conflict. Sometimes, there are the added horrors of genocide or “ethnic cleansing”. However, thousands continue to flee more peaceful countries in genuine fear for their own personal safety, whether alone or with other members of a persecuted group. Many individuals bear the scars of ill treatment or torture.

Some ethnic groups have been persecuted because they have taken a deliberate stand against an oppressive government. Others have been in other countries as visitors or students when political changes in their home country made it extremely dangerous for them to return.

Refugees are mostly ordinary people who have been targeted for abuse in their own countries because of who they are or what they believe. They are often forced to leave their homes suddenly, leaving family and friends, with their possessions reduced to what they can carry. No one likes or chooses to be a refugee. Being a refugee means living in exile and often depending on others for basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter.

Refugees sometimes flee for safety to neighbouring countries where they may not be welcome. Many of these countries are very poor and cannot sustain a large inflow of people from other countries. Many refugees face the harsh conditions of overcrowded refugee camps and all face an uncertain future. It is hard to imagine, in a country as safe as Australia, what it must be like to fear the police, the army, the courts or the government of your own country; and to have to flee for your safety, rather than be able to live in a stable and secure place. This is the experience of many refugees.

Who is an “Asylum Seeker”?

An asylum seeker is a person who has fled from his or her country and seeks legal and physical protection (asylum) as a refugee in another country.

For some of the world’s refugee population, it is impractical or impossible to go to, or to remain in a neighbouring country to seek asylum. This may be because the neighbouring country is not a signatory to the international laws that would ensure their permanent protection in that country. For example, many countries in the Asia Pacific region are not signatories to the UN Refugee Convention and many refugees would not feel safe in those countries.

Alternatively, if the neighbouring country is sympathetic to the regime from which the refugees had fled, or has itself suffered political and social unrest, refugees would be unlikely to feel safe in that country. This is why asylum seekers try to reach a country such as Australia, which has signed the UN Refugee Convention.

Who is a “Migrant”?

Migrants voluntarily choose to leave their countries to make a new life in a new land. In Australia, people who are accepted as migrants are granted permanent residency, which means they are entitled to almost the same services as Australian citizens. They may have a job waiting for them or receive assistance in finding a job. Often they have visited the new country as a tourist to enable them to make a decision about leaving their home. They have opportunities to say goodbye to family and friends. They can pack the belongings they wish to take with them. They can

make arrangements to travel to their new location. They can return home at any time and maintain contact with family and friends in their home country for social and economic support. They can still count on the protection of their own government.

Differences between Refugees and Migrants

Refugees leave their countries to escape serious human rights violations. Often refugees flee in fear of their lives. They do not have a choice. They leave with minimal belongings, sometimes with only the clothes they are wearing. The decision can be very sudden. Often, they do not have time to say goodbye to those close to them. They frequently experience violence during flight, and may lose family members who are not able to keep up with the rest of the group, or who die during the journey.

Some family members may not be able to join in flight and may never be seen again. Usually, refugees do not know what is going to happen to them or their families. They arrive in a place where they may not be wanted, and where the social systems may be very different from those they have left. They are in very vulnerable, isolated situations and they cannot maintain ties with their homeland for social or financial support.

In Australia, refugees who are chosen for resettlement from refugee camps and other situations overseas are given the same entitlements as migrants, and become permanent residents. However, asylum seekers who arrive in Australia before their refugee status is determined, are given only Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs). This means they are unable to access the full range of services that are available to migrants and Australian citizens, such as health, employment, and other support services.

Mass Refugee Movements

People have always had to flee from their countries. For example, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, thousands of Protestants fled to Britain, the Netherlands and Switzerland to escape religious persecution in France. In the twentieth century, hundreds of thousands of Jews fled from the Nazis. More recently, severe restrictions imposed on dress, freedom and various ethnic groups by the Taliban government in Afghanistan have led to large numbers of the population fleeing the country.

In recent years, major refugee movements have resulted from civil wars and ethnic, tribal and religious violence. Rather than being battles between contending armies, modern conflicts are much more complex struggles between armies and civilians, or between groups of armed civilians. These conflicts are often fought in villages and suburban streets. In these situations, the enemy camp is all around and distinctions between combatant and non-combatant are often unclear. Families and children are not just caught in the crossfire; they are likely to be specific targets.

Flight

Refugees flee because it is unsafe to live at home. It may be unsafe because they are being persecuted or fear persecution for who they are or what they believe. Refugees may have had their human rights violated or threatened because of their political opinion, their membership of a particular social group, their ethnic background or their religion. War may have broken out in their country.

It takes enormous courage to flee from your home, your village or town, or from your country. Flight from persecution often involves difficult and dangerous ordeals along the way. Many refugees are forced to flee at night in the midst of conflict and confusion. There may be no time to collect travel documents. For others it is too dangerous to travel on genuine passports or identity papers.

Sometimes families will have time to sell their homes and possessions to raise money to pay for a people smuggler to carry them to safety across the border or to organize a boat trip to safety. Other people do not have prior warning of the danger they face. Bombs destroy their homes or armed people invade their villages, towns or cities and they have to flee for their lives. The fortunate ones carry some of their most precious possessions. Others escape with just the clothes they wear. Sometimes they have to walk long distances or travel through hostile territory with little to eat and drink. They can face many dangers before they reach safety. Some refugees do not reach safety.

During flight, some refugees are stopped by the authorities of other countries, either on land or sea. Some are turned back or forced to go elsewhere. Many of them bear the scars of ill treatment or torture as they make the journey into exile. Refugees, both adults and children, miss their homeland. They miss their homes and their neighbourhood, their schools, their family and friends. They miss all the familiar things that we take for granted. Refugee children see things and survive experiences that many adults in the world never have to endure.

The Country of First Asylum

When a refugee flees to a neighbouring country, this country is called the country of first asylum. Here, refugees live in refugee camps or in poor border districts. The majority of the world's refugees live in a country that borders their own. Refugees often face extremely harsh conditions in their country of first asylum. Refugee camps are usually insecure and dangerous, frequently without sufficient food, water, adequate shelter and medical care. They do not always offer the level of protection set out in refugee law and human rights conventions. Refugees in camps are in a very vulnerable position. The threat of violence and exploitation is huge, particularly for women and children who are often raped, and live in poverty and fear.

If the situation improves in their home country and they are no longer afraid, refugees may be able to return. Usually, they live for many years in refugee camps, hoping to return home or to resettle in another country. Some become so desperate about their situation that they place themselves and their families in the hands of people smugglers to make the costly and sometimes extremely dangerous journey to a safe third country.

It is the role of the United Nations Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to take these people under its protection and decide whether they are genuine refugees.

The UNHCR provides a minimum standard of food and basic needs when able to do so. Lack of funds sometimes makes even this impossible.

Life in Refugee Camps

Refugee camps are often not places of protection for refugees. People in refugee camps commonly suffer:

- poor physical security and lack of privacy,
- armed attacks, which may involve rape and sexual violence against women and children (the UNHCR has produced guidelines on prevention of sexual violence and response to survivors),
- physical hardship,
- physical illness and psychological stress,
- lack of food and medical treatment,
- scarcity of water, particularly clean water, which is difficult to obtain,
- lack of secure shelter,
- abuse by officials and members of the local population.

In 2001, the majority of the world's refugees lived in camps in developing world countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan and Tanzania as well as other parts of Asia, Europe and Africa. The largest urban refugee populations were in the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia and Sudan. Other refugees were dispersed in rural areas. There were 170 camps or centres in Africa, including Kenya.

Very few of the world's refugees are resettled into safe, developed countries. Gaining access to developed countries' offshore resettlement programs is extremely difficult or impossible for many refugees. The majority of people in refugee camps do not understand that they may be eligible to apply for resettlement in a third country. If they do know about resettlement, it is often difficult for them to find official papers which prove their identities, or to obtain the official forms on which they must apply.

In order to apply for resettlement they must be interviewed by a government official from the third country. Another difficulty arises in travelling to a location where they can be interviewed for eligibility. For example, in Africa, the Australian High Commission in Nairobi, Kenya (East Africa) processes all off-shore refugee (Protection Visa)

applications from Africa. Refugees from Sierra Leone living in a refugee camp in Liberia (West Africa), may find it very difficult to apply for resettlement in Australia. Usually, overseas Australian immigration officers interview asylum seekers who lodge applications for resettlement to Australia. This can be a daunting or impossible task for asylum seekers who may not even speak the local language, let alone English.

Conclusion

This information is intended to assist facilitators in helping participants to understand what it means to be a refugee. By the end of the session, students should demonstrate an understanding of the differences between asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants, as well as the stages of the refugee journey before arrival in Australia. This will help them to identify the assistance refugees require in adjusting to Australia and recovering from the hardships of the journey.

Participants should be encouraged to respect the courage of refugees and to understand some of the issues involved, such as the impact of the memories of the journey, which can affect refugees for many years as they resettle into their new country. (Resettlement of refugees in Australia is covered in Session 3). This session provides a necessary context for participants to begin to understand the additional dimension of domestic violence in refugee communities.

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PROFILE OF A REFUGEE CAMP

Kakuma Refugee Camp Kenya

It is important for all domestic violence and community workers to learn about camps such as Kakuma, as the Australian Government has pledged to bring some 7000 refugees from Africa as part of our resettlement program in 2004 – 6. Many of these refugees will come from Kakuma or from similar camps and circumstances. Workers are already reporting that they are unable to cope with the high levels of trauma experienced by people who have survived circumstances such as those described below.

This information is from a report by Linda Bartolomei and Eileen Pittaway following field trips to Kakuma in 2002, 2003 and 2004 (a video of life in Kakuma is available from the Centre for Refugee Research).

Kakuma camp is situated in an extremely remote semi arid area in the north of Kenya, where temperatures in the day are near to 45 degrees and only drop to the low 30s at night. Water and food rations are in short supply and many in the camp face nutritional problems in the coming months. Travel on the road to Kakuma is dangerous and is only undertaken by NGOs and UNCHR staff as part of a daily convoy or with security guards, carrying rifles. The camp is also a place of extreme

insecurity: it has been designated a danger area by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). AK47 rifles are prevalent, and there is a very high incidence of rape and sexual torture of women and girls.

Many of the refugees fleeing from the Sudan are unaccompanied minors who had been separated from their parents during the attacks. Others are female-headed family groups. On arrival in Kenya, they are required to register at the camp reception centre and wait, often for several days, until there are sufficient numbers to fill a cattle truck for transportation to Kakuma camp, 120 kilometres down the road. Conditions in the reception centre are appalling. There are half a dozen tin roofed concrete buildings, open on three sides, providing no protection from the heat and the swirling red dust. A high cyclone wire fence topped with razor wire encloses the compound. There is no food available at this centre. Only water and firewood and some limited medical assistance are provided.

Kakuma camp has operated for over twelve years and now holds 88,000 people, with the population increasing daily as a result of the escalating conflict in the Sudan. With limited opportunities available for self-sufficiency due to the semi-arid environment, lack of employment opportunities, and lack of access to markets for the sale of goods, camp inhabitants will continue to rely heavily on international assistance for their survival.

CAMP CONDITIONS

Shelter

Approximately half of the camp's current population is housed in mud brick huts. Families are required to both make the mud bricks and to construct the walls of their homes. UNCHR staff then assist with roofing, using either tin or woven flax-like material. Neither material is ideal for the hot climate; the tin turns the huts into ovens and the flax leaks during the rain. Worse still are the temporary shelters which were constructed after the floods some eight months ago. During these floods, approximately one third of the mud huts were washed away, leaving some 25,000 people, mainly Southern Sudanese, without shelter. Emergency shelters were constructed by UNCHR using white polythene sheeting. Conditions in these plastic tents are unbearable due to the heat, and yet provide the only shelter against the swirling and almost relentless dust storms. New arrivals to the camp are housed in a reception centre similar to the one at Lockichockio until such time as they are able to construct accommodation.

Those who are in particular danger in the camp are effectively imprisoned in an enclosure known as the "protection area". They are confined in mud brick huts in an area approximately the size of a football field, behind six foot high barbed wire fencing. Some 120 families live in this area. Most are women and children, including women who have been raped or abducted or sexually tortured. Some men from minority groups who are in

particular danger in the camp, are also confined in this area. Many have lived in this confined area for up to four or five years. At the beginning of 2004, the protection area was so crowded that there was no space for new cases deemed to be in need of additional protection. An ad hoc “new area” has sprung up near the protection area. There are frequent attacks on the refugees in the “new” area. During our last visit, in 2004, there were two murders, two rapes of adult women and one case of a mother being forced to watch the rape of her 14 year old daughter. There was then a retaliatory murder, and fear of further violence sent the refugees to seek emergency shelter in the already crowded reception area.

Food and water

There is insufficient water in the camp to meet the basic needs of the population. The minimum international standard in emergency situations is 18 litres per person per day. In Kakuma, the daily water allowance is only 14 litres per person per day. This allowance is not sufficient to meet even the basic requirements for cooking, drinking and washing and therefore seriously limits opportunities for the cultivation of kitchen gardens or the rearing of chickens or livestock. The camp inhabitants are required to queue for many hours at water taps and many must then walk long distances to their huts carrying their daily water allowance. Those lacking the physical strength to carry large containers or those arriving at the tap late in the day, often do not even receive their daily allocation.

Food rations in the camp are also insufficient. According to World Food Program standards, the Food Basket necessary for minimal survival must include vitamins, carbohydrates and protein and must provide a minimum daily kilo calorie intake of 2100kc daily. At the time of our visit to Kakuma, the daily food basket distributed provided only 1300kc per day and was composed only of maize, salt and oil. It was expected that the basket would be reduced to only 900kc in the coming weeks, due to further reductions in donor support. The supplementary feeding program, which was available to high-risk groups in the camp, was also under threat. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) support for the school breakfast program, which had provided porridge to students, had already been discontinued due to lack of funding.

Security issues

Safety and security fears are high in the camp. We were informed that there is frequent ethnic and clan fighting between various groups including between the refugees and the local Turkarna people. Most of the Turkarnas and a number of the refugee inhabitants own AK 47 guns.

Relationship with the local community

Tensions between the refugee and local Turkarna community are very high. Outbreaks of violence between the two are frequent. Women from both communities are most often the victims of this conflict. There are regular reports of rape and sexual mutilation of refugee women by gangs

of Turkarna men. Most recently a 60 year-old woman was raped and her genitals were mutilated. These rapes would occur when women walked long distances from the camp to collect firewood. As firewood is a scarce and essential resource in the area, this has been an ongoing source of conflict with the local Turkarna people. Tragically, although firewood is now provided to the refugees, it appears to have had little impact in reducing the number of rapes.

Women at risk

The lack of safety in the camp, particularly for women and girls, is a factor of major concern. The incidence of rape and sexual violence is extremely high, and domestic violence is commonplace. A range of factors contribute to the high incidence of violence against women. These include; conflict between clan groups and with the local Turkarna people, a high rate of alcoholism, lack of economic independence and an almost complete lack of social structure. Unusual for refugee situations, women and girls are in the minority in the camp due in part to the large number of "lost boys" - the orphaned or separated child soldiers who have fled over the mountains from Southern Sudan. This factor dramatically compounds the degree of risk for women. The abduction and sale of young girls as brides, the forced marriage of widows and the physical and sexual abuse of those in mixed marriages are commonplace. Women are frequently raped and sexually mutilated by gangs of men. Women who are raped by rival groups, especially those who give birth to babies, are stigmatised and harassed, and are in urgent need of protection. Yet for most of these women, there is simply no protection available.

It must be noted that these circumstances have arisen because the aid workers are under-resourced and overwhelmed with the demand for services. UNHCR constantly requests the international community to share the cost of providing international protection (burden sharing), but the response is not adequate to meet the demand.

Resources

Books/Documents

Amnesty International (1997) *Refugees – Human Rights have No Borders*, Amnesty International Publications, London.

Bartolomei, L. and Pittaway, E, 2003, *Women at Risk Research Report*, CRR, UNSW, Sydney

Crock, M. and Saul, B. (2002) *Future Seekers – Refugees and the Law in Australia*, The Federation Press, Sydney.

Marr, D. and Wilkinson, M. (2003) *Dark Victory*, Allen Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW.

Pittaway, E. (200%) *The Ultimate Betrayal - an examination of the experience of domestic and family violence in refugee communities*,

Occasional Paper commissioned by the Domestic Violence Clearing House, UNSW. NSW

Pittaway, E. (2004) *The Roads to Refuge* A Training lit produced in partnerships with the Centre for Refugee Research, The NSW Migration Heritage Centre and the NSW Department of Education and Training. CRR Sydney

Tyler, H. (2003) *Asylum: Voices behind the razor wire*, Lothian, Melbourne.

UNSW Centre for Refugee Research (2001) *The Truth Hurts – Facts and Stories about Asylum Seekers*, UNSW, Sydney.

Websites

www.unhchr.ch

Website for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

www.unac.org

United Nations Association in Canada.
Refugees: A Canadian Perspective.

www.unesco.org

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

◆ search under *1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.*

www.unhcr.ch

◆ *1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*

◆ *1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees.*

www.eldis.ids.ac.uk

ELDIS provides information on development issues, and summarises and links to online documents. It offers a directory of websites, databases, library catalogues and discussion lists.

◆ Search under *1951 Convention* or *1967 Protocol* for text of each.

www.crr.unsw.edu.au

Follow useful links to a range of other web sites and a complete listing of all Human Rights Conventions

◆ *The Convention on the Rights of the Child*

◆ *The Refugee Convention and Protocol*

◆ *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

www.amnesty.org

SESSION MATERIALS

The Refugee Experience

ASYLUM SEEKERS, REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS - 40 Minutes

What is persecution?

“My family members were placed in jail several times for stating they were Croatian”

(Croatian Focus Group, 2004)

“In Iraq there was discrimination in religion, among people in school communities and in Government offices”

(Iraqi Focus Group, 2004)

Activity – Play Section 1 “From Hope to Horror” DVD

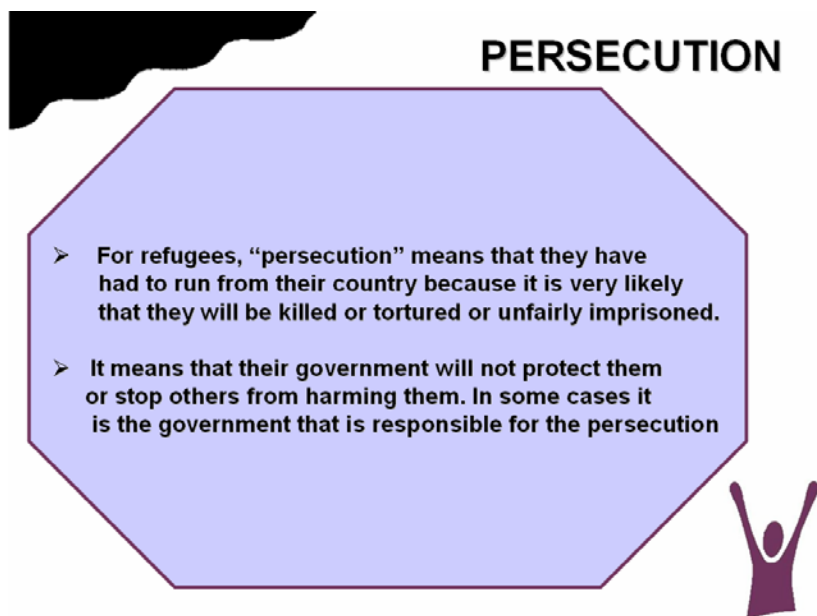
NB Presenters may wish to use the first part of the “Welcome to Kakuma” video clip and parts 1 – 3 of the Roads to Refuge Video contained on the DVD as part of this session. Presenters must be familiar with the video material before presenting it to a group as some of the content can be distressing.

Key points to be covered

Fear of persecution is the major difference between refugees and migrants. In Australia, it is illegal to discriminate against someone on the grounds of race, ethnicity or gender. We all have the right to belong to the political party of our choice, or to form a new political party. We can follow the religion of our choice. In some countries, people are jailed and killed for doing this. This is persecution.

Use PowerPoint Number 1

PERSECUTION



- For refugees, “persecution” means that they have had to run from their country because it is very likely that they will be killed or tortured or unfairly imprisoned.
- It means that their government will not protect them or stop others from harming them. In some cases it is the government that is responsible for the persecution

Discussion Point

Imagine being told that if you do not convert to another religion you will be severely punished. Imagine not being allowed to attend school, or to work because you belonged to a particular ethnic group. Imagine the Government banning participation in organised sport. These are things which happen to people who are persecuted.

Activity: Discussion



Ask participants to discuss how it might feel to live in fear of persecution. Ask them to list, or brainstorm some of the rights or freedoms that we enjoy in Australia. Name which of these are so important, that if they were removed, we would consider the lack of these rights as persecution. What do they think the impact would be on people who have had these rights removed from them in their countries of origin?

Who is a refugee?

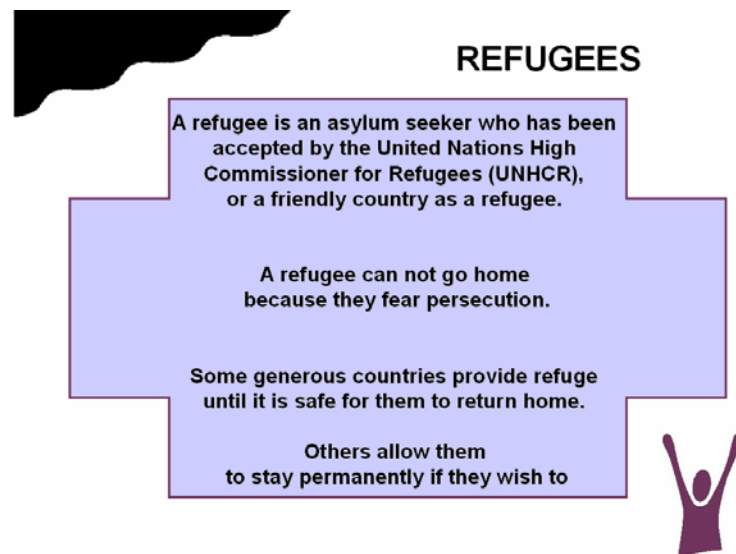
Play Section 1 “Roads to Refuge” Video clip



There are millions of refugees in the world. In 2002, the *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)* had responsibility for more than 22 million refugees, mainly from Asia and Africa. More than 80% of these are women and children. A *refugee* is a person who has fled his or her country and cannot return because of a well-founded fear of *persecution* due to their race, religion, nationality or membership of a particular social group. Under the United Nations Convention on

Refugees, which was established in 1951, refugees have the right to seek and claim refuge for as long as necessary in countries which have signed the refugee convention. While seeking refuge they are entitled to the same basic standard of living as the citizens of the country in which they have sought refuge.

Use PowerPoint Number 2



Discussion Points

Once an asylum seeker has been accepted as a refugee, they have international protection. This means that they cannot be forced to return to their homeland until the hostilities have ceased, and they are safe and protected from the persecution from which they fled. When countries sign the Refugee Convention they agree to provide refuge to asylum seekers for as long as is necessary. If there was war or persecution in Australia, we would be entitled to seek asylum and become refugees in other countries.

Who is an “asylum seeker”?


An asylum seeker is a person who has fled from his or her country, and seeks legal and physical protection (asylum) as a refugee in another country. For some of the world’s refugee population it is impractical or impossible to go to, or to remain in, a neighbouring country to seek asylum. This may be because the neighbouring country is not a signatory to the international laws that would ensure their permanent protection in that country. Alternatively, if the neighbouring country is sympathetic to the regime from which the refugees had fled, or has itself suffered political and social unrest, refugees would be unlikely to feel safe in that country.

Use PowerPoint Number 3

ASYLUM SEEKERS

An Asylum Seeker is someone who has to run from their own country because they are in danger and their own government will not protect them.

Some of the reasons for this lack of protection can be because of their religion, their ethnic group or for political reasons.



Who is a migrant?

Migrants voluntarily choose to leave their countries to make a new life in a new land. In Australia, people who are accepted as migrants are granted permanent residency, which means they are entitled to almost the same services as Australian citizens. They may have a job waiting for them or receive assistance in finding a job. They have opportunities to say goodbye to family and friends. They can pack the belongings they wish to take with them. They can make arrangements to travel to their new location. They can return home at any time and maintain contact with family and friends in their home country for social and economic support. They can still count on the protection of their own government.



Use PowerPoint Number 4



MIGRANTS

A Migrant is someone who chooses to leave their own home to live in another country.

Most migrants accepted by the Australian Government are granted permanent residency status on arrival in Australia.

Migrants can always go home if they choose to do so.



Discussion Points

The most important difference between migrants and refugees is that migrants have choice. They have passports and can return to their homeland whenever they choose. They can keep in touch with, and visit their families. Their families can visit them in Australia. Migrants can bring their favourite possessions with them to Australia.

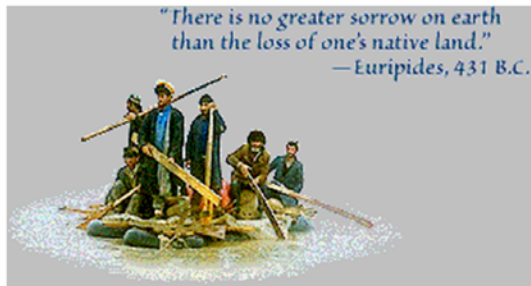
THE REFUGEE JOURNEY

Use PowerPoint Number 5



The Refugee Journey

*"There is no greater sorrow on earth than the loss of one's native land."
—Euripides, 431 B.C.*



Discussion Point

This PowerPoint graphic shows that people have had to flee from their homes for thousands of years. It also shows that as far back as 431 BC, it was acknowledged that being forced to leave your home is one of the saddest things that can happen to human beings.

Activity: Small Group Exercise



Ask participants to list the cultural and social aspects of Australia they would miss most if they had to leave Australia. Are there other things they would miss? What would this mean to Aboriginal people, who have such a deep connection to their lands? Many people who become refugees are the indigenous people in their own countries.

Stages of the journey – 40 Minutes

Activity: Play section 2 – 3 of the Roads to Refuge Video Clip



We now look at the various stages of the refugee journey. Not all refugees go through all of these stages, but all experience some of them.

"Living in war - in war zones, makes some people mentally not settled; it can do bad things to people" (Afghan focus group, 2004)

Use Power Point Number 6



THE REFUGEE JOURNEY: STAGES



Use Power Point Number 7

THE REFUGEE JOURNEY: EXPERIENCES ON THE WAY

Refugees are subjected to many perilous situations on their journey to safety including:

- Running in fear of death
 - Being bombed
- Facing violence including rape
 - Attack by pirates
- Having to pay bribes to border guards
- Staying in dangerous places with little food or water



Play the Kakuma Video Clip



Use Power Point Number 8

THE REFUGEE JOURNEY: REFUGEE CAMPS

Often, the first place that refugees stop when they run from their homeland is a refugee camp in the nearest country

This is the country of first asylum

Refugee camps are supposed to be places of safety, where refugees can shelter when they have fled from their homes.

Camps are often as dangerous
As the places from which they have fled



Use Power Point Number 9

THE REFUGEE JOURNEY: PROBLEMS IN REFUGEE CAMPS

- Often there is not enough food or water
- There are few doctors and hospitals
- There is little schooling and few games and entertainments
- Refugee camps can be very violent places
- Most camps are in very poor countries
- Many rich countries do not help these countries with the cost of hosting refugees



Activity: Discussion

40 Minutes



Discuss with participants how they would feel on each stage of the journey.

Ask them to list:

- what they would miss most from home – what they would most hate to leave behind
- What they would fear most on the journey
- Some of the things they would feel when they reached a refugee camp and found that they were still in great danger
- Some of the challenges they think they would face in a new country
- What it would feel like to be sent home when they know it is still dangerous for them in their own country.

Share the list with the group, and discuss how the things they have discussed might impact on refugees who come to resettle in Australia. In small groups, discuss how the experiences discussed in this session might impact on families. What additional stresses might they experience, how could they affect family roles, parenting, and cultural norms.

Understanding the pre arrival experience of refugees is essential for service providers who work with them in Australia. It is the additional baggage which they carry with them and affects their resettlement and their ability to integrate successfully into their new

country. It impacts on refugee families and communities and their experience of domestic and family violence.