



## REFUGEE ACTION TEAM TOOLKIT







# WELCOME TO THE JRS REFUGEE ACTION TEAM TOOLKIT

At a time when more than 68 million people have been forced to flee their homes around the world, understanding of their plight and support for their needs is diminishing in too many places. We can make a difference.

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A JRS Refugee Action Team is a group of individuals dedicated to organizing their own community to support displaced people around the world through raising awareness, advocacy, fundraising, and other programming centered on refugees. JRS Refugee Action Teams are diverse in their membership and scope. A Refugee Action Team can be created at a school or on a college campus, in a parish, or with any group interested in promoting greater understanding of, and support for, refugees and the forcibly displaced.

This toolkit will provide you with guidelines, suggestions, and resources to help you launch your Action Team and ensure it is successful!

On behalf of those we serve, we sincerely thank you for advocating for the rights of the vulnerable. We look forward to forming a partnership that will help build welcoming and supportive communities in the U.S. while changing the lives of many around the world.

If you have any thoughts, comments, or questions regarding this toolkit, please contact [outreach@jrsusa.org](mailto:outreach@jrsusa.org) or visit [www.jrsusa.org/outreach](http://www.jrsusa.org/outreach). Thank you again!



# WHAT YOU CAN DO

## TO HELP REFUGEES

Around the world, millions of men, women and children, have been forced to flee their homes to escape persecution, violence, conflict, or human rights abuses. JRS is pleased to work with you to make a real difference on a crisis that has both immediate urgency and challenging implications for the future. Together, we can help displaced families and children overcome the trauma they have experienced and build a constructive future for themselves, their communities, their countries, and the world.

### **Local groups in the U.S. can play an important role in building support for displaced people by:**

- Building positive awareness that the individuals and families who have made the difficult choice to flee their homes are children, mothers, fathers, sisters, and brothers just like us with hopes and dreams for contributing to their own and their communities' well-being. Help shift the tone in the discussion in the U.S. to one of support for refugees.
- Advocating for policies that are welcoming to displaced people in the United States, positioning the U.S. as a beacon of hope and freedom that provides support for refugee children and families around the world.
- Hosting a fundraiser that provides an opportunity for your group and networks to contribute to programs run by JRS that help displaced people rebuild their lives around the world.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

### **BUILD AWARENESS**

- Share refugees' stories on social media platforms.
- Include prayers and reflections at Masses, in your parish bulletin, and at other events.
- Promote the "Write to Any Refugee" initiative.
- Host a "Walk a Mile in My Shoes" refugee simulation.

### **ADVOCATE**

- Host a sign-up for the JRS/USA Action Network.
- Organize a petition drive with help from JRS/USA.
- Visit the local offices of your Members of Congress.

### **RAISE FUNDS**

- Make a donation to support one of JRS's many programs helping refugees around the world.
- Launch a personal fundraising page to encourage your friends and family to support refugees.
- Host a fundraising event to raise donations for JRS programs.

***Form a JRS Refugee Action Team to help build ongoing support for our brothers and sisters who have been forced to flee their homes around the world (see page 5).***



# JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE



## AN OVERVIEW

Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic non-governmental organization founded in 1980 as a work of the Society of Jesus. Our mission is to accompany, serve, and advocate for the rights of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons.

JRS is now present in more than 50 countries, addressing the educational, health, social, and emergency needs of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons. Our services are available to refugees and displaced persons regardless of their race, ethnic origin, or religious beliefs.

To get you started, the following is a list capturing some of JRS's programs serving refugees and other forcibly displaced persons across the globe. Familiarize yourself with the many ways in which JRS works to make a difference.

Additional information on JRS programs can be found at: [www.jrsusa.org](http://www.jrsusa.org).

## JRS SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE GLOBE

JRS programs start with sharing the journeys of forcibly displaced people as the best way to understand their aspirations and rekindle their hope. Programs are framed by reconciliation rooted in justice and dialogue among diverse cultures and religions. JRS engages in an integrated approach to service, encompassing the healing brought by accompaniment, the hope nurtured by education, and the dignity given by work.

**EDUCATION:** Education is at the heart of JRS's work in most regions, comprising a wide range of services involving formal and informal instruction. This encompasses pre-school, primary, secondary and third level education, special education, distance education, scholarships, life-skills and vocational training, adult literacy, computer and language classes and education for peace and reconciliation.

**LIVELIHOODS:** JRS seeks to promote self-sufficiency by helping refugees access employment and land, providing technical training and assistance, and facilitating the establishment of small businesses by making available funds, grants and loans, as well as tools and other resources.

**RECONCILIATION:** In a spirit of welcome and hospitality, JRS works to build a communal expression of social cohesion and reconciliation through its programs supporting forcibly displaced populations.

**EMERGENCY RELIEF:** In some parts of the world, JRS is involved in the distribution of food and non-food items, such as mattresses and blankets, clothes, seeds and tools, money for transport, and referrals and the provision of medical treatment. JRS also distributes tents in refugee camps, renovates buildings in post-conflict situations, and helps refugees find accommodation in urban areas.

**ADVOCACY:** A vital part of JRS's mission is to defend the rights of refugees and migrants throughout the world. In the United States, JRS/USA advocates for just and generous policies and programs for the benefit of victims of forced displacement, so people made vulnerable by exile can receive support and protection, and so a durable solution to their plight can be achieved.



# JRS DOMESTIC PROGRAM: DETENTION CHAPLAINCY PROGRAM

The JRS/USA chaplaincy programs provide pastoral and religious assistance to meet the needs of non-citizens detained by the Department of Homeland Security in five U.S. federal detention centers located in Florida, Texas, Arizona and New York. We provide comfort and accompaniment to detainees by offering a range of emotional and spiritual support for people of all faiths at an extremely stressful and difficult time.

## JRS PROGRAM SNAPSHOT: **LEBANON**



To refugee children, school can be a safe haven, a space of psychosocial support, and a beacon of hope. In Lebanon, the influx of refugees from Syria has posed key political, economic, and social issues that have impacted access to education. In fact, one in six people currently living in Lebanon is a refugee. Among the consequences of this new reality is a significant gap in education for refugees. According to the UNHCR, 59% of school-aged refugees in Lebanon remain out of the formal education system. These students have unique needs and can face barriers to education created by child labor, trauma, and inadequate nutrition.

Since 2012, JRS has been supporting refugee education in Lebanon to fill this gap and overcome these barriers. JRS's education programs focus on early childhood (Kindergarten – 5 years old) and formal basic education and learning support

(6 to 15 years old) in both urban and rural areas. JRS addresses gaps in access to quality education by enhancing school enrollment and performance in Lebanese institutions and by offering quality formal education in areas where access to public schools is limited.

JRS programs span across Lebanon and serve a diverse group of refugee children. As one example, in the Bourj Hammoud neighborhood of Beirut, JRS provides learning support and early childhood education for Syrian refugees at the Frans van der Lugt Centre, named for a beloved Jesuit who lost his life defending displaced Syrians. The JRS Kindergarten program alone serves 240 students who are receiving critical support to prepare them for entry into the Lebanese public school system. By supporting these students and hundreds of others, JRS is dedicated to improving the livelihoods of refugees in Lebanon by providing them with the educational tools necessary to achieve their goals and face future challenges.

**“My dream is to go back to Syria and rebuild my home, which was destroyed in war. I hope that children in Syria can go to school and they can get a better education.”**

— **Turk Adel Sehman**, 12 years old, Syrian refugee in Lebanon





# HOW TO START

## A JRS REFUGEE ACTION TEAM

### GETTING STARTED

Start off by finding a core group of 3-5 committed people. Then try to expand to 10 or more members. You can do so by reaching out to friends or other contacts you think might be interested, setting up information tables in public spaces like your student union, parish vestibule, school cafeteria, local supermarket, or town square, and by speaking to groups you are currently involved with that are willing to listen. Make sure to be inclusive and open minded. Diversity broadens ideas! Always keep a list of interested prospects that includes their contact information (Name, Phone, Email) and contact them shortly after with a notification of when your team will meet next. Post flyers, pass out handouts, utilize your social media, and hold information sessions to spread the word and attract members.

### CONNECT YOUR TEAM WITH JRS

Next, register your Refugee Action Team with JRS. To register, contact the JRS Outreach Coordinator at [outreach@jrsusa.org](mailto:outreach@jrsusa.org) and provide your contact information and location. Once you register your Refugee Action Team, you'll receive invitations to JRS Refugee Action networking calls, email updates, personal support from the JRS/USA team, and opportunities to work with other teams nationwide.

You can also invite a JRS representative to speak to your school, community, or parish about current refugee issues, JRS's experience of working with the forcibly displaced, and effective ways to promote positive social change for our vulnerable brothers and sisters. Contact the JRS Outreach Coordinator to request a speaker and we will do our best to accommodate your request.

### CREATE YOUR OWN MISSION STATEMENT

Work as a team to create a 1-3 sentence mission statement. Your mission statement should reflect the JRS mission to "accompany, serve, and advocate for the rights of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons." Make sure it answers the following: Why was the group created? What does it hope to achieve? Keep it short and sweet, using informative and positive phrasing.

### FORMALIZE YOUR ACTION TEAM

Establish your Action Team with a School Administration, Social Committee, Campus Minister, Pastor or Pastoral Associate, Community Leader, or other relevant entity in your community. When establishing your Action Team, be sure to know the rules: What is needed to start and maintain your team? Where will you meet? What are your group's limitations in terms of fundraising and outreach? Consider finding an advisor or local sponsor to help you. Finally, consider what funds your group might need to sustain itself and, if needed, how you can raise those funds in the future.

### GET ORGANIZED!

The best way to get your team organized is to designate responsibilities to different members. Consider creating a group structure that can include President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Events Chair, and Publicity Chair. Make a schedule with all meetings and events and be sure to send reminders to members through email or social media.





# ADVOCATE WITH JRS

At JRS, advocacy involves empowering forcibly displaced people to claim the rights to which they are entitled and assisting them to exercise those rights, as well as supporting them by engaging others in promoting their rights. This involves lobbying for governmental and institutional action to address challenges faced by the forcibly displaced and working towards sustainable and durable solutions. Advocacy also includes activities to enhance public perception of refugees and forcibly displaced persons. There are a myriad of advocacy opportunities that your team can pursue!

## GETTING STARTED

As a Refugee Action Team, you will be a part of the JRS/USA Action Network. The Action Network represents individuals and groups from around the U.S. who play an active role in collaborations with JRS in raising awareness about displaced people, advocating for their rights, and promoting fundraising for programs that support them around the world. Your team will receive periodic action alerts – messages sent from JRS with the aim of mobilizing teams to take action on a particular issue. Typically, action alerts refer to a timely issue, when prompt action is needed in order to affect an upcoming decision.

Once you receive an action alert via email, act on it! JRS will ask that your team take a particular action regarding an issue at hand. This mobilization can be extremely powerful in affecting decisions as it shows policy makers and other important decision makers that we, the public, care about refugees.

## HOST A LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN

Speaking out on behalf of refugee rights is critical to the work of JRS. Groups can take action by sending a letter to their policymakers on a variety of issues, to include: ensuring refugees

have access to an education, protecting asylum seekers who come to the U.S., and providing sufficient humanitarian assistance to refugees in need.

Studies show hand-written letters are among the most powerful ways to reach members of Congress. Choose one of JRS/USA's current advocacy priorities and bring together friends, family, and community members to get their voices heard!

## SCHEDULE AN IN-DISTRICT LOBBY VISIT

Meeting with Members of Congress and their staffers face-to-face sends a very powerful message and ensures that your voice is heard. Often, legislators will not be able to meet with you due to their busy schedules, but a meeting with the right staff member can be just as effective. Lobby visits can be done individually or in a group.

Schedule a meeting by calling or emailing your Senators' and Representative's local offices. You can find their contact information online by entering your home address at [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) and [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov). When speaking to the staffer, make sure you check on space limitations so you can arrange an appropriate sized group. Be persistent! Call or email the scheduler until you can agree on a date. Make sure to request a meeting time at least one week before you would like to meet.

Bring 2-3 members of your team with you to the meeting with the legislator or staff member. At the meeting, exchange contact information and leave documents or other important items for the legislator and/or staffer to become more engaged and familiar with your issue. Keep in mind that you do not have to be an expert. As a constituent, your position matters. Rarely will you be asked detailed questions, but if there is anything you can't answer, simply promise to get more information and send it by email.

To follow-up, send the staff you met an e-mail restating your message, providing any information you promised, and thanking them for their time.

If you would like to organize your thoughts and discuss the key issues for the meeting, please contact the JRS Outreach Coordinator at [outreach@jrsusa.org](mailto:outreach@jrsusa.org) for help as you prepare for your meeting.

Your in-district visits are important to the advocacy efforts of JRS, so anytime you meet or speak with someone from your Members' offices, please let us know how it went! The information you provide helps us send a stronger message from our office in Washington, D.C.

**Learn more about JRS/USA's advocacy work at [www.jrsusa.org/advocacy](http://www.jrsusa.org/advocacy).**

## PARTICIPATE IN JRS/USA'S ADVOCACY DAY

JRS/USA hosts an annual Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C. in which JRS supporters come together to advocate for the rights of refugees and migrants on Capitol Hill. JRS/USA organizes meetings with key appropriations and foreign policy legislators who need to hear from their constituents about the importance of U.S. leadership on refugee issues. Participants meet with the offices of members of Congress to discuss topics such as the importance of refugee resettlement, funding for overseas humanitarian assistance programs, and access to education for refugees. Look out for an invitation to your Action Team to join us in advocating for justice for refugees and other forcibly displaced persons.





# HOST AN EVENT OR ACTIVITY

Events can support engagement in awareness-raising, advocacy, or fundraising. They are effective ways to get your community involved with your action efforts. Schools, parishes, and communities across the nation have utilized creative methods to support the refugees JRS serves worldwide.

## Examples include

- “free dress days” on high school campuses
- basketball games
- auctions
- dinner parties
- guest speakers
- dance-a-thons, and many more!

The sky is the limit to creative forms of support! Staff at JRS/USA are always available to support you as you organize an event to raise awareness, fundraise, or promote advocacy. Your efforts will go far and wide to help refugees across the world.

Following these 8 steps can help your event be as successful as possible.

## STEP 1: ESTABLISHING GOALS

What is the purpose of your event? What goals are you trying to achieve? Outlining your purpose and goals will enable you to determine what details need to go into the event.

## STEP 2: PICKING AN ACTIVITY

Some event ideas include: bake sale, pancake breakfast, a walk or march, a form of “a-thon” event, benefit concert, sporting tournament, movie screening, or a panel discussion.

## STEP 3: FINDING PARTNERS

If possible, find partners to co-host events and increase publicity. Aim for partners that can help you achieve your goals and provide support for the event.

## STEP 4: LOGISTICS

Choose a date, location, and time for the event. Make sure you schedule far enough in advance. Once you figure out the details, register your event with JRS by emailing [outreach@jrsusa.org](mailto:outreach@jrsusa.org) so that JRS/USA is aware of your event and available to help in any way.

## STEP 5: ORGANIZE YOUR EVENT

What is needed to make your event happen? Clarify the tasks needed to carry out your event. Then recruit volunteers, give them assignments, secure supplies, etc.

## STEP 6: ADVERTISE

Post on social media, make flyers and posters, talk to friends, and make announcements. Ask volunteers to personally invite their friends and family. Wherever possible, make sure to tag or acknowledge JRS/USA in some shape or form. We want to be active in your efforts!

## STEP 7: DAY OF EVENT

At the event, set up a table for participants to learn more about the refugees JRS/USA serves. For those interested in receiving updates from JRS, have them fill out a sign-up sheet so they can be placed on JRS/USA's mailing list.

Make sure there is a way to facilitate collection of money and checks, in case people wish to donate to the cause. Keep track of a donor's name and address, so you can send a thank you card or email after the event.

Taking pictures can also be a good way to advertise your team's efforts in the future. If you do take pictures, send them to us! We would love to see your accomplishments. Or, tag us on social media – Twitter: @jrsusa Facebook: /JRSUSA Instagram: @jrsusa\_photos

## STEP 8: WRAP-UP

Make sure to thank your partners and volunteers. Following the event, contact JRS/USA and let us know how it went. Send us any new contacts and pictures you may have. For more information on handling donations, follow this link: [www.jrsusa.org/donate](http://www.jrsusa.org/donate).

## EXTRA: INCLUDE A DIGITAL COMPONENT

Broaden your support by adding a digital component to your event. Contact [fundraising@jrsusa.org](mailto:fundraising@jrsusa.org) to set up a personal fundraising page online that you can customize and share with fellow students, faculty, parishioners, parents and alumni. A fun way to boost success is to add a competitive spirit: create a fundraising challenge among classes or students vs. faculty. JRS can help with ideas and prizes.





# REFLECT AND PRAY

Promoting prayer for refugees within your community and incorporating prayer and reflection into your JRS Refugee Action Team's meetings or events can be powerful ways to engage others, spiritually connect to the JRS mission, and build a network of solidarity with the forcibly displaced. Use the examples below or create your own to connect your faith to your advocacy!

## SAMPLE PRAYER FOR REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

Lord, may we not wash our hands of our refugee brothers and sisters, and may you rain down upon them with all of the love and peace you were denied in your condemnation. Lord, may we be "struck and shocked by the plight" of our brothers and sisters worldwide and follow in the steps of Fr. Arrupe as we humbly bear the cross that awareness brings. Lord, we pray for vulnerable migrants that you may grant them strength and safety in their journeys, and we pray for open hearts to understand their desperate motivations. Lord, as we see your full humanity and suffering, may we see the full humanity and suffering of our displaced brothers and sisters.

Lord, we pray for women and children around the world. You asked us to weep for their oppression, and we pray that we may see their gifts, their strengths, and their plight as you do. Lord, as we see you wounded on the cross, help us to recognize the wounds of our brothers and sisters throughout the world. Let your spirit guide us to bring your light and hope to refugees and displaced people as we join together to build a world of love, justice, and peace for all.

## SAMPLE INTENTIONS

Incorporating prayers for refugees during the general intercessions at Masses, or in other prayers, helps all parish and school members reflect on God's call to love our brothers and sisters who are suffering around the world. Here are sample intentions:

- For all those who have been forced to flee their homes seeking a safe and dignified life...
- For all those living in refugee camps around the world...
- For advocates who work to defend the rights of refugees...
- For the education of all children caught in crisis and conflict...
- For strength that we may all participate in welcoming and defending the rights of refugees and displaced persons...

For a complete guide to **Renewing Welcome** through prayer and reflection visit: [www.jrsusa.org/renewwelcome](http://www.jrsusa.org/renewwelcome).





# RAISE FUNDS FOR REFUGEES



Giving children the hope and stability that regular schooling provides, making sure the basic household needs of refugees are met, and helping displaced people work through the trauma they've experienced all require funding. Your group can make a real difference in people's lives by providing financial support for some of the more than 635,000 individuals JRS serves worldwide.

Below you will find some ideas to motivate your community to donate and fundraise for refugees. Feel free to get creative and come up with your own initiatives!

## SET UP A PERSONAL FUNDRAISING PAGE

Contact [fundraising@jrsusa.org](mailto:fundraising@jrsusa.org) to set up a personal fundraising page online that you can customize and share with fellow students, faculty, parents and alumni, parishioners, and others in your community. Post your fundraising page on your social media to get the word out!

## FUNDRAISING CHALLENGE

For a fun way to fundraise, sponsor a charity basketball game, a "dance-a-thon" or some other "a-thon", or create a community-wide competition to reach the most donations among different groups, classes, or students vs. faculty. Reach out to JRS for help with ideas and prizes.

## INCORPORATE SALES AND BUSINESSES

You can raise donations by hosting a bake sale or yard sale and committing your profits to JRS. You can also reach out to local businesses or religious organizations and encourage them to match your donations.

## SUPPORT THE JRS GLOBAL EDUCATION INITIATIVE

In the words of Pope Francis, "To give a child a seat at school is the finest gift you can give." The Global Education Initiative is an effort to expand and strengthen JRS education programs to provide refugees with primary, secondary, and higher education. By 2020, we hope to open the doors of education to 250,000 students at a cost of \$35 million. Donations to this initiative provide a pathway to quality education for refugees around the world. Here are some of the ways your gift of education can empower minds and foster a bright future of opportunity for the displaced:

- \$10: Basic Back to School Kit for a refugee child
- \$50: School Uniforms for students
- \$400: Laptop in a JRS educational facility
- \$200: Tablet to supplement learning
- \$125: A Year of Primary School in a refugee camp
- \$1,000: Scholarship for Secondary Education
- \$250: Teacher Training Program

For more information on the Back to School Gift Guide and other ways to support JRS services visit: [www.jrsusa.org/donate](http://www.jrsusa.org/donate).

For any questions related to fundraising and donations, please reach out to [fundraising@jrsusa.org](mailto:fundraising@jrsusa.org) or 202-629-5906.





# SHARE THE STORIES OF REFUGEES

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Promoting a positive understanding of refugees and other displaced people is a critical need today. Social media platforms can play a key role in awareness-raising, advocacy, and fundraising. You can tag @jrsusa when hosting an event or meeting, receive updates on our work, and share information with your followers.



<https://www.facebook.com/jrsusa>



<https://twitter.com/jrsusa>



[https://www.instagram.com/jrsusa\\_photos/](https://www.instagram.com/jrsusa_photos/)



<https://vimeo.com/jrsusa>

Visit this link to download sample social media images you can use to publicize an event, recruit members to your JRS Refugee Action Team, or spread the word about JRS:  
<http://bit.ly/ActionTeamGraphics>

## MEDIA OUTREACH

Engaging your local media outlets is one of the most effective ways to spread the word about upcoming events, desired advocacy actions, and to inform the masses about refugee issues. Contact your local news stations and request more coverage of humanitarian concerns worldwide. Ask your newspaper or TV station to feature an article on refugee issues.

Local newspapers often accept opinion submissions (Op-Eds) and Letters to the Editor. Guidelines for these submissions can usually be found online on the newspaper's website. You can submit your own writing to advocate for refugees in the press.

- Op-Eds are typically 600-750 words in length. They express your view on a current situation and include a specific call to action. When writing an Op-Ed, be aware that the average reader may not be familiar with your issue, so make sure to fill in the blanks and give background information. Make your point clear.
- A letter to the editor is typically around 100-200 words in length. It references a story, column, or comment that appeared in the newspaper. Your letter should make a new point or counterpoint to a certain piece and should conclude with a suggested action.

(See pages 11 and 12 for examples)



# SAMPLE OP-ED

## The Children of Syria Still Need Our Attention

By: Giulia McPherson, Opinion Contributor

*“Last week, a mortar targeted a public school...some of the children have witnessed the death of their friends in the school.”* This is the way my colleague in Damascus described the current situation in Syria – a situation that no child should witness or live through.

Yet, since the beginning of this year, those living in the suburbs of Damascus have seen an increase in violence and destruction. With reports of a recent chemical attack that affected at least 300 people and killed 42, there seems to be no end in sight.<sup>1</sup> As Mike Pompeo’s nomination for Secretary of State is considered in the Senate this week, it is important that these children inside Syria, and those who have fled to a neighboring country, are not forgotten.

Within Syria and across the region, access to education for children displaced by the Syrian conflict is at a critical juncture. Inside Syria, one in three schools are not operational due to destroyed infrastructure or lack of security, and a third of all children within the country are out of school. In neighboring refugee-hosting countries – primarily Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey – 43.5 percent of school-aged children from Syria are out of school. Child labor is widespread and rates of early marriage among the refugee population is over 20 percent in Lebanon and 30 percent in Jordan.<sup>2</sup>

Education offers an important form of protection for children and engenders hope as it prepares refugees to meet future challenges. Education provides stability and a sense of normalcy, and acts as a form of vital psychosocial support to children whose lives have been affected by crisis.

I visited Jesuit Refugee Service education programs in Lebanon late last year and met refugee families who were desperate to find a quality education for their children, within a nurturing environment. In our recent report, *Protecting the Promise of a Generation*, we describe the challenges refugees face in accessing a quality education, and how to address those challenges.

Early childhood education, primary and secondary education, youth centers, and learning support programs like tutoring and language training are all necessary interventions. These programs ensure that the generation of children who have lived through war, and know little else, will be independent and self-sufficient no matter what their future holds.

Since the start of the Syrian conflict in 2011, the U.S. has provided nearly \$7.7 billion in humanitarian assistance to Syrians. This support has helped fund emergency food, water, shelter, and health services.<sup>3</sup> Maintaining this level of support by the U.S. is critical as Syrian families struggle daily to put food on the table and a roof over their heads. Yet, investing in education should be as much of a priority.

Unfortunately, globally, education receives only 2.7 percent of total humanitarian aid available, which amounts to 48 percent of the amount requested.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to traditional bilateral support by donors, a new funding mechanism established at the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016, Education Cannot Wait, has transformed the delivery of education in emergencies by mobilizing the partners and resources needed to provide for a child’s right to education in the face of complex and protracted crises.

With both rapid response and multi-year funding platforms, Education Cannot Wait programs fund education in emergency and protracted crisis situations and include a special focus on reaching girls, improving protection of the most vulnerable, and improving both teacher capacity and engagement with the refugee host community.

Through innovative mechanisms like Education Cannot Wait, we must ensure that education becomes a priority for all displaced children and adolescents.

***Giulia McPherson is the Director of Advocacy & Operations at Jesuit Refugee Service/USA. JRS works in more than 50 countries worldwide to meet the educational, health, psycho-social and emergency needs of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons.***

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<sup>1</sup> The Guardian. (April 8, 2018). “Trump: Big Price to Pay for Syria Weapons Attack.” <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/08/trump-big-price-to-pay-suspected-syria-chemical-weapons-attack>

<sup>2</sup> No Lost Generation Update. (January – September 2017). <http://childrenofsyria.info/2017/11/08/no-lost-generation-update-january-september-2017/>

<sup>3</sup> USAID. (January 26, 2018). Fact Sheet: U.S. Assistance for the People of Syria. <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/jan-26-2018-fact-sheet-us-assistance-people-syria>

<sup>4</sup> UNESCO. (June 2017). “Aid to education falls for the sixth consecutive year.” <https://en.unesco.org/news/aid-education-falls-sixth-consecutive-year>





## SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The September 4 article in The Washington Post, “A year after the death of Alan Kurdi, another Syrian child fights for survival” shared the story of 6-year-old Syrian refugee Shaima who was blinded after being caught in the crossfire and fled to Turkey with her family. Yet, impressively, she still has a strong desire to return to school.

According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, only 61 percent of refugee children have access to primary school, 23 percent to secondary school and very few have access to either pre-primary or tertiary education. For children in crisis situations, education is an absolute necessity. In the midst of destruction, violence, and instability, school is a place of learning and opportunity, a sanctuary for healing, and a haven of normalcy and hope for the future.

This year, UN member states will negotiate and finalize the UN Global Compact on Refugees to agree on policies and set forth commitments that can significantly improve the lives of refugee children by creating a better system for responsibility-sharing among nations and ensuring that education for refugees is a central concern. Support for the Compact and initiatives like Education Cannot Wait can provide an avenue towards quality, meaningful education for refugees around the globe. World leaders, including the U.S., must not forget Shaima and thousands of other children like her who are missing out on an education and the opportunity to forge a path forward for themselves and their families.

*Jane Doe*  
*Washington, D.C.*





# READY-TO-USE RESOURCES

## HOST A WALK A MILE IN MY SHOES REFUGEE SIMULATION

This experience is an opportunity for communities to pause and experience, if only vicariously and if only for a few moments, the frustrations, the disappointments, and the hopes that refugees around the world face. It is a structured event in which individuals, students, community groups, and their guests assume the role of refugees. They will act out some typical activities that a refugee experiences by walking through 7 different stations, all with different themes.

A “walk-through” simulation can take place in any common area, inside or outside, or in someone’s home. The time period could range from 10-20 minutes per participant. Participants make their way from station to station on their own or in groups of 4-6 people. Volunteers help set-up for the event, staff the stations, and answer questions from participants. The following stations can be adjusted or altered to fit any context.

### The stations outlined in the simulation include:

- |                          |                           |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) Entry/Border Stations | 5) Medical/Health Station |
| 2) Shelter Station       | 6) Education Station      |
| 3) Food Station          | 7) Advocacy Station       |
| 4) Water Station         |                           |

Visit [www.jrsusa.org/outreach](http://www.jrsusa.org/outreach) to download the *Walk a Mile in My Shoes* Refugee Simulation Toolkit for complete details and instructions.

Be sure to register your event with JRS by emailing [outreach@jrsusa.org](mailto:outreach@jrsusa.org). In addition to the toolkit, JRS will provide outreach materials, media support, and advocacy suggestions.



*Students at Gonzaga College High School in Washington, D.C. walk through the shelter station during a refugee simulation.*



*Students at Misericordia University in Pennsylvania get a sense of what it is like to gather and carry water in a refugee camp.*



## WRITE TO ANY REFUGEE

*Any Refugee* was founded in 2014 by JRS supporter William Scannell IV. The idea for Any Refugee came from a story William heard from his dad about how people used to be able to send letters addressed to Any Soldier. He took this idea and applied it to reaching out to refugee children, with a hope to send them a message of support and comfort.

You can participate in Any Refugee by writing a postcard and sending it to the JRS/USA office. Your Refugee Action Team can also host a postcard-writing event to motivate others to take part! JRS/USA staff will then deliver the postcards to refugee children enrolled in JRS programs around the world.

### How to Send a Postcard:

#### *Step 1: Write One!*

Write a postcard or draw a picture (or both!) with a message of hope and comfort. Everyone needs to know that others are thinking of them and wishing them a better future. You can even add something personal from your own life.

Things to remember:

- You can keep the card simple. Sometimes just a short note and drawing can be perfect.
- Avoid references that are specific to one religion, culture, or nationality – aim for a message that will be well-received across any demographic.
- Avoid phrases like “Welcome to America.” The child receiving your card is studying at a JRS school outside of the U.S.

#### *Step 2: Send your postcard.*

Any Refugee  
c/o Jesuit Refugee Service/USA  
1016 16th Street, NW Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20036  
USA

Feel free to bundle cards in a package. You do not need to pay for postage on every card.

#### *Step 3: We deliver.*

Your postcard will be distributed by the Jesuit Refugee Service to a refugee child enrolled in a JRS program.







# HANDOUT:

## THE STATE OF GLOBAL DISPLACEMENT

Today, we are in the midst of one of the largest periods of global displacement since World War II. Men, women, and children around the world are forced to flee their homes in fear of violence, persecution, or human rights violations. It is important to remember that these refugees are diverse in their ethnicities, countries of origin, and needs. JRS aims to structure its education, psychosocial, and training programs to best support this vulnerable population in the ways that matter most. These displacement statistics from the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) highlight the experiences of refugees across the world.

### REFUGEES WORLDWIDE

- More than 68 million individuals are forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, or generalized violence.
- This includes over 25 million refugees, 40 million internally displaced persons, and 3 million asylum seekers.
- Children below 18 years of age constitute 52% of the refugee population, up from 41% in 2009.

### INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

- More than 40 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been uprooted from their homes because of war and violence but have not yet crossed an international border in search of shelter and safety.
- A massive 16.2 million of these IDPs were newly uprooted during 2017, equal to 44,400 people each day.

### ORIGIN AND LOCATION OF REFUGEES

- Most refugees are from Syria (6.3 million), followed by Afghanistan (2.6 million), South Sudan (2.4 million), Myanmar (1.2 million), and Somalia (986,400).
- The countries hosting the largest number of refugees are: Turkey (3.5 million); Pakistan (1.4 million); Uganda (1.4 million); Lebanon (998,900); Iran (979,400); Germany (970,400); Bangladesh (932,200); Sudan (906,600)

### LIVING CONDITIONS OF REFUGEES

- Refugees live in widely varying conditions, from well-established camps and centers to makeshift shelters or living in the open.
- More than half of all refugees live in urban areas. They all await one of three possible solutions: repatriation to their country of origin, integration in their host country, or resettlement in a third country.
- The average time spent as a refugee is estimated to be 17 years.





# HOW TO HOST

## A SUCCESSFUL MEETING

Now that you have an established Refugee Action Team, you should begin to hold regular, productive meetings to brainstorm projects and track your progress. Below is a suggested outline for hosting a successful meeting:

### 1. CHECK-IN

Allow time for socializing as you sign in members and gather the contact information of new members.

### 2. CELEBRATE SUCCESS

Highlight successful recent projects and recognize group members (consider creating a “Member of the Month” to recognize at this time).

### 3. DEBRIEF

Allow the secretary (notetaker) to give a brief recap of your last meeting. Take the time to review any events or activities you’ve organized since the last meeting.

### 4. CURRENT PROJECTS

Discuss what needs to be done to complete current projects. If the group is large, you can divide into sub-committees that focus on specific components of the project. If you use this method, consider providing some time for the sub-committees to meet and then come back together as a group to discuss further.

### 5. FUTURE PROJECTS

Discuss future projects you’d like to pursue. Gain input and ideas from members.

### 6. WRAP-UP

Announce the next meeting, review decisions made during the current meeting, and ensure everyone is aware of their assignments.

#### Tips:

- Make sure that your meetings are open to anyone interested in joining the Refugee Action Team.
- Allow for a variety of opinions by giving everyone in the room an opportunity to speak. If the group is not too large, it can be helpful on key points to go around the room asking each person to contribute so that everyone’s voice is heard.
- Consider creating a clear decision-making process to avoid conflicts.
- Consider bringing snacks to meetings for motivation.



# 2018-19 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## SEPTEMBER – BACK TO SCHOOL CAMPAIGN

The fundamental right of children to education is most at risk during emergencies. Join JRS/USA in building awareness, fundraising and advocacy for programs centered on the right of refugees to quality education. Stand in solidarity with refugees around the world and show your support for programs that **#EducateRefugees**.

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## NOVEMBER 14 – JRS'S ANNIVERSARY

Help us to commemorate JRS's 38th Anniversary by posting on social media, conducting media outreach, or by hosting an awareness or fundraising event for your community.

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## JANUARY 14 – #DO1THING CAMPAIGN

No matter where you live there are ways that you can respond to today's refugee crisis. Doing just one thing in your community can help refugees and migrants. Share how you **#Do1Thing**.

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## APRIL – ADVOCACY DAY

Join JRS/USA in advocating for refugees and forced migrants in meetings with legislators on Capitol Hill.

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## JUNE 20 – WORLD REFUGEE DAY

World Refugee Day was first commemorated by the UN in 2001. On this day, people around the world celebrate the achievements and resilience of refugees and the displaced. Your Refugee Action Team can host an event to raise awareness about refugee issues or support one of the many events hosted around the country.

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## TBD – WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS & REFUGEES

Each year, the Vatican designates a World Day of Migrants & Refugees to recognize the plight of the displaced around the world. When the date is announced, consider hosting a Refugee Awareness Week or Refugee Simulation to commemorate this event.

## OTHER RESOURCES

Below is a list of additional resources on refugees, migration, and displacement to help inform your Refugee Action Team.

### UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)

UNHCR is the UN Refugee Agency. It is a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights, and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities, and stateless people. The Agency collects updated research on the state of global refugees and works to ensure that the rights of refugees, migrants, and asylum-seekers are upheld. Additionally, UNHCR publishes an annual Global Trends Report, which highlights refugee data from around the world and serves as a resource to the public.

[www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)

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### REFUGEE COUNCIL USA (RCUSA)

RCUSA, a coalition of 25 U.S.-based non-governmental organizations, is dedicated to refugee protection, welcome, and excellence in the U.S. refugee resettlement program. RCUSA advocates for the rights of refugees in the U.S and around the world.

[www.rcusa.org](http://www.rcusa.org)

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### CENTER FOR MIGRATION STUDIES OF NEW YORK (CMS)

CMS is a think tank and an educational institute devoted to the study of international migration, to the promotion of understanding between immigrants and receiving communities, and to public policies that safeguard the dignity and rights of migrants, refugees, and newcomers. CMS publishes timely and evidence-based research on refugees, migration, and the role of Catholic institutions in immigrant integration.

[cmsny.org](http://cmsny.org)

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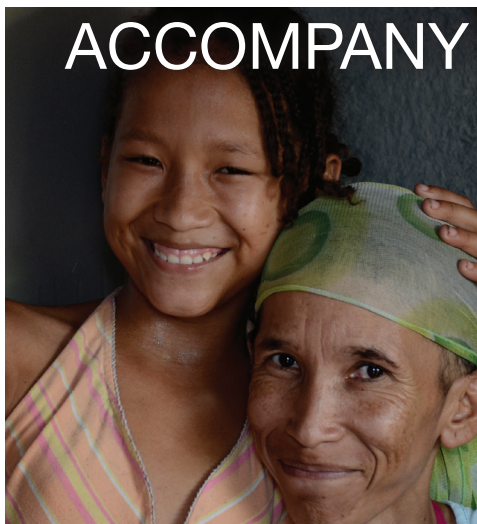
### INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT MONITORING CENTER (IDMC)

IDMC is a research organization dedicated to producing expert analysis on internal displacement. Its mission is to provide high-quality data, analysis, and expertise on internal displacement with the aim of informing policy and operational decisions that can reduce the risk of future displacement and improve the lives of internally displaced persons (IDPs) worldwide. The IDMC provides a Global Internal Displacement Database and publishes reports on the drivers of internal displacement across the world.

[www.internal-displacement.org](http://www.internal-displacement.org)



Jesuit Refugee Service/USA  
1016 16<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Ste. 500  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
(202) 629-5200 | [www.jrsusa.org](http://www.jrsusa.org)  
ADDRESS SERVICE  
REQUESTED



Jesuit Refugee Service is an international Catholic organization serving refugees and other forcibly displaced people. Founded as a work of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in 1980, in direct response to the humanitarian crisis of the Vietnamese boat people, JRS today works in more than 50 countries worldwide to meet the educational, health, and social needs of more than 635,000 refugees.

JRS/USA is the U.S. office for JRS based in Washington, DC. JRS/USA provides support to the broader JRS network - through funding, oversight, monitoring, and evaluation - to JRS projects and programming throughout the world. JRS/USA also serves forcibly displaced migrants in the US through our Detention Chaplaincy Program.



visit [www.JRSUSA.org](http://www.JRSUSA.org) to get more information and get involved