

# Walk a Mile in My Shoes



How to Host a Refugee Awareness Exercise On Your Campus or In Your Community





# Introduction

Today, there are more than **100 million displaced people** around the world, the most since World War II.

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While it is impossible to fully comprehend what it is like to be forced from your home and live as a refugee, Jesuit Refugee Service's *Walk a Mile in My Shoes* refugee awareness exercise provides individuals with an opportunity to begin to understand what it might be like.

### WHAT IS WALK A MILE IN MY SHOES?

- An opportunity for communities to pause and consider some of the experiences, including the frustration, disappointments, and hopes, that refugees around the world face.
- A structured event in which individuals, students, community groups, and their guests move through different stations to learn more about the journeys that refugees around the world take to find safety.
- A strong tie to the JRS mission of serving the forcibly displaced and the centuries-long Jesuit tradition of promoting social justice.



# Our Mission

## Who is JRS/USA?

Jesuit Refugee Service/USA ([www.jrsusa.org](http://www.jrsusa.org)) is an international Catholic non-governmental organization whose mission is to accompany, serve and advocate on behalf of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons. JRS/USA serves the vulnerable, and often forgotten, people who are driven from their homes by conflict, natural disaster, economic injustice, or violation of their human rights. JRS/USA is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

As one of 10 geographic regions of the Jesuit Refugee Service, JRS/USA serves as the major refugee outreach arm of the U.S. Jesuits and their institutional ministries, mobilizing their response.

JRS works in more than 50 countries worldwide to meet the educational, health, social, and other needs of refugees and forcibly displaced persons. JRS implements programs for more than one hundred million children and adults, and undertakes advocacy to ensure that all displaced people are provided with the protection they deserve. All JRS services are made available to refugees and displaced persons regardless of their race, ethnic origin, or religious beliefs.

## Why Should You Host *Walk A Mile In My Shoes?*

“This exercise was able to give me a better glimpse into what the living conditions are for millions of people.”

“I was not sure what to expect from the event but I can honestly say it opened my eyes further than they already were regarding the plight of refugees. All told, this was a memorable experience, and truly shifted my perspective on the refugee crisis.”

- Help people understand the daily life of 100 million displaced persons around the world.
- Motivate people to remain involved in refugee justice issues.
- Students and clubs can earn service credits for hosting and/or attending an event.
- Explore opportunities for appropriate advocacy.
- Strengthen your community's role in helping refugees locally and around the world.
- Promote the role of JRS in providing education and other services to refugees around the world.

# How Can You Host *Walk A Mile In My Shoes*?



Hosting *Walk a Mile in My Shoes* requires taking several steps prior to the event, during the event, and after the event.

## PRIOR TO THE EVENT:

- 1) Identify members of groups from whom you will need help and support. This includes your organization's decision-makers (e.g. group presidents, administrators, pastors), possible participants, and other groups that can serve as allies (e.g. social justice clubs, community civic groups, local parishes).
- 2) Create a Planning Committee that includes leadership and potential participants. Its responsibilities are to organize, oversee, and follow-up on the exercise. Two things of importance to note when planning this exercise are location and supplies. *Walk a Mile in My Shoes* can take place in any common area, indoors, outdoors, or in someone's home; the location does need to be large enough to accommodate all the stations and participants. For supplies, see the checklist provided in the Appendix.  
  
Consider forming teams to handle logistics, communications and outreach, and preparations of materials and organization of supplies. Have a checklist available for each team so that they remain organized.
- 3) Train volunteers. Volunteers help set-up for the event, staff the stations, and answer questions from participants. The Planning Committee will inform volunteers about the current refugee situation as well as provide instructions about the exercise. See the Appendix for the Questions and Answers and Fact Sheet pages useful for training volunteers.
- 4) Involve the local community. If hosting your exercise at a school, encourage faculty to incorporate a refugee related issue into their course work. Write an op-ed for a local or school newspaper. Invite members of the media to the event by sending out a press release (see outline in Appendix).

Be sure to register your event with JRS by emailing [outreach@jrsusa.org](mailto:outreach@jrsusa.org) or calling 202-629-5929. JRS will provide outreach materials, media support, and advocacy suggestions.

See page 7 for important ideas to further enhance this experience.



# Event Stations

Participants will walk through the following eight stations to learn more about the different aspects of a refugee's experience. These stations can be adjusted or altered to fit any context. Feel free to be creative so that the stations are impactful for your community!

Have participants sign-in using JRS-provided sign-in sheets to track the number of participants and to follow-up. It should take participants around 30 minutes to walk through all the stations. Participants can begin the exercise individually or in a group of 4-6 people.

## 1) ENTRY/BORDER STATIONS

Participants will be presented with a "Refugee Identity Card" (JRS will provide) upon entering the space. The Identity Card will give the participants a refugee identity, providing a country of origin, refugee status, and the circumstances that led to their refugee status. As over half of refugees do not qualify for assistance, a few participants will be detained or denied entry for a few moments while the remainder of their group enters. Participants will continue to use their ID cards as they walk through each station.

## 2) SHELTER STATION

The "minimum standard area" for shelter in a refugee camp is 3.5 square meters per person (37 square feet); however, this size requirement is almost never met. Use colored tape on the floor to represent the area a family of four should receive, and then make a smaller space (about half) within the taped area to show what the family would actually receive. Some groups have found that setting up room dividers with blankets and a tarp on top acting as the roof or using a tent creates a powerful visual for participants. If you use room dividers, you could also let people construct their own shelter.

Place four blankets, one pot for cooking, one spoon/knife for cooking, and four bowls/sets of utensils. The purpose of these materials is to show the participants the few supplies that refugees may receive. Ask the participants to create a cooking area and four sleeping areas so that they can experience how difficult it would be to live in that small environment for an extended period of time.

### 3) FOOD STATION

The purpose here is to compare a participant's diet with a typical refugee's diet. The average calorie intake for most U.S. adults is 2,500 calories per day. In comparison, the average daily calorie intake for refugees in a camp is around 1,300 calories per person. This is equal to approximately three small bowls of rice, some beans or lentils on top, and a few sparse vegetables. For refugees' meals, it is important to display the same three meals as many refugees repeatedly eat the same few items due to limited access to a variety of foods. It is up to you to represent what you think a "typical" participant eats in your community — maybe a bowl of cereal, sandwich and chips for lunch, a few pieces of fruit, and a dinner plate of food. You can also include a few cans of soda, a coffee cup, desserts, snacks, etc.



“When you can get past the news cycle and learn more in depth about such situations, compassion increases, and a solution is closer.”

### 4) WATER STATION

The water station is both visual and interactive. For the visual portion, set up a gallon jug of water representing the normal water allotted to each refugee per day in a camp. Adjacent to the gallon jug, display five gallons of water to represent only two minutes of an average American shower. Many refugees access water through wells or other communal water sources and often have to carry the water long distances. A five-gallon bucket of water weighs about 41 pounds. Ask the participants to carry a five-gallon bucket about ten steps to provide a sense of how difficult it would be to transport the water. (If you don't want to fill the bucket, use weights or other items to provide weight).

### 5) MEDICAL/HEALTH STATION

The 1951 Refugee Convention states that refugees should enjoy access to health services equivalent to that of the host population. At the start of an emergency, individuals who are displaced are given measles immunization, nutritional support, and monitored for communicable diseases and epidemics. Severely malnourished refugees or those who have suffered trauma or violence can also be treated here. Consider also including information about medical organizations who work in refugee camps such as Doctors without Borders.

### 6) EDUCATION STATION

Currently, 48% percent - almost half - of refugee children are out of school. Only 68 percent of crisis-affected children are enrolled in primary school, 34 percent in lower secondary school (middle school), and very few have access to pre-primary or post-secondary education. At the education station, ask participants to divide in half. One half will sit on the floor and each will be given a textbook and pencil. The other half will also sit on the floor but will have to share one textbook and one pencil. The person staffing this station will ask the group one question based on a section or passage in the book they were given and they will provide an answer. This should be more difficult for the group sharing one book and pencil.

At the education station, participants could also create Any Refugee Postcards (see [www.jrsusa.org/any-refugee](http://www.jrsusa.org/any-refugee) for details) to send to refugees. These cards offer messages of hope and solidarity for refugees that we serve overseas.

### 7) DESTINATION STATION

The purpose of this station is to educate participants on the length of time that someone typically resides in a refugee camp. The UNHCR's current estimate is that people spend an average of 17 years in a refugee camp before they can resettle in a third country. Refugees must undergo one of the most rigorous immigration background checks in order to qualify for resettlement.

For this station, highlight the three options for refugees during the resettlement process:

1) remain in the refugee camp, 2) repatriate to their country of origin, 3) or gain new citizenship or status in the host country or a third country. According to the UN 2021 Global Trends Report and government statistics,

57,500 refugees were resettled to a third country in 2021, meaning that only 4% of estimated 1.4 million refugees in need of resettlement were resettled. As conflicts around the world continue, voluntary repatriation is becoming less of an option for refugees. Since 2010, for every refugee resettled, 4 have repatriated. A decade previously, this ratio was 1 for every 12.

After explaining the options, have participants grab a bead or other small object from a bag. Include three different colored beads. Out of the 100 beads in the bag, only 1 of them should be a different color. If anyone randomly selects this color, congratulate them on being able to resettle and leave the camp. Notify everyone else that they must continue their life in the camp.

## 8) ADVOCACY STATION

At this table participants can learn how JRS/USA works with refugees around the world and what they can do to work with refugees in their communities as well as advocate for globally displaced persons. There are many ways that you can set up this station to encourage advocacy on behalf of the displaced. Have JRS literature at the table that provides the data and rationale for writing advocacy letters to local and national policymakers. Arrange to have technology available where participants can take action on current JRS advocacy issues. Visit [www.jrsusa.org/take-action](http://www.jrsusa.org/take-action) to sign up for future actions.

# Public Visibility

Raising awareness about *Walk a Mile in My Shoes* and its messages is an important element of the program's success. This section gives you tools and strategies to work with faculty, media, and community leaders to raise awareness about the needs of refugees.

- Encourage participants to capture their experience through photos or videos as they move through the *Walk a Mile in My Shoes* stations. You can figure out a way to judge the best photo or video and award prizes to the winners. Use social media as a way to document your event and be sure to tag JRS.
- Use and visit [www.jrsusa.org/take-action](http://www.jrsusa.org/take-action) to sign up for future actions. Incorporate messages into flyers and bulletin boards, printed forms, and e-mail signatures.
- Extend your reach to the broader community. For example, disseminate information about your *Walk a Mile in My Shoes* event through posters hung in local churches or school facilities and fact sheets posted in high-visibility locations.
- Contact the local radio or television media, school paper, parish newsletter, or church bulletin. Use the press release outline in the Appendix to describe your *Walk a Mile in My Shoes* event.
- Remember to include information about your *Walk a Mile in My Shoes* event on your organization's website. Be sure to keep event information updated and link

## Reflection and Other Resources to Consider

Some participants might want to reflect on and/or discuss their thoughts, experiences, and feelings from the exercise. Organizing a reflection opportunity is an excellent way to facilitate this. Reflection can be structured in a variety of ways. It can be an area set aside immediately following the exercise or even organized for a separate day shortly after the exercise. In addition, it can be silent individual reflection or small group dialogue. Consider your participants and which structure would best suit them. **See sample reflection questions in the Appendix.**

Along with JRS, local organizations involved with refugee resettlement and assistance are a valuable resource for informing your community and providing opportunities for participants to remain involved after the exercise. Think about inviting them and/or former refugees (if possible) to the exercise in order to add another perspective.



# What's Next



## After *Walk a Mile in My Shoes*

- Encourage participants to become active advocates to help other friends, family, and community leaders work towards improving the lives of refugees. Pass along resources such as JRS information and the book and film list found in the Appendix.
- Encourage participants to provide feedback to the organizers and to JRS regarding their experience with *Walk a Mile in My Shoes*.
- Follow JRS on Twitter (@jrsusa) and Facebook (facebook.com/jrsusa), and Instagram (@jrs\_usa).
- If you wrote Any Refugee postcards during your event, be sure to mail them to:

**Any Refugee**  
**c/o Jesuit Refugee Service**  
**1627 K Street, NW - Suite 1100**  
**Washington, DC 20006**  
**USA**

Be sure to share the instructions with participants so that they can continue to send postcards!

- Contact local organizations to learn how to help resettled refugees in your community. Encourage participants to engage with local refugees in the community. Sponsor events to showcase the diversity and culture of their homelands, to help refugees get acclimated to the community and the various resources available, and to help them get additional education.
- Host a fundraiser for JRS or incorporate a fundraising component into *Walk a Mile in My Shoes*. A little goes a long way and JRS can allocate funds raised to specific programs or geographic areas, depending on your interest.
- Consider starting a JRS Refugee Action Team to continue spreading the word about refugees and displaced people.

**For more information, please contact**  
**outreach@jrsusa.org or 202-629-5929.**

# Appendix

## SUPPLIES CHECK LIST

### Organizer to Provide:

- 7 Tables (for Stations)
- Room Dividers (or Tent Structure)
- 4 Blankets
- 4 Small Bowls and Utensils
- 1 Cooking Pot and Large Spoon
- Typical Participant Daily Meals
- Typical Refugee Daily Meals
- 5 Gallon Bucket and “Weight of Water”
- 6 Gallon Sized Water Jugs
- First Aid Kit, Lab Coat, Other Medical Supplies
- Pencils and Textbooks
- 2-3 Laptops

### JRS/USA to Provide:

- JRS Planning Toolkit
- Refugee Identity Cards
- Sign-In Sheets for Entry Station
- JRS/USA Literature
- Additional Station Information



# Sample Identity Cards

To get access to all of our unique identity cards, please email [outreach@jrsusa.org](mailto:outreach@jrsusa.org).

Be sure to remind participants of the QR code on the backside of the identity card that links to a more detailed story from JRS/USA's website.

**Name:** Danh  
**Age:** 21  
**Country of Origin:** Vietnam  
**Current Location:** Bangkok, Thailand



Danh is a differently abled refugee who fled Vietnam and has temporarily resettled as an urban refugee in Thailand. Like many refugees in Thailand, Danh does not have documents, and Thailand does not provide legal status to refugees. This makes securing any sort of formal education difficult and creates a sense of constant fear of arrest. Nevertheless, in 2018, Danh graduated from language and skills training courses run through the JRS Urban Education Project. Now, Danh is driven to help other students by continuing as an aid in the school.

## Scan to Learn More About Danh's Story



**Name:** Shaista  
**Country of Origin:** Pakistan  
**Current Location:** Bangkok, Thailand



Shaista fled Pakistan with her husband and two teenage children after prolonged persecution due to their Christian faith. They finally fled when one of Shaista's relatives was murdered. Now, they live in an apartment in Bangkok, Thailand, where they are not allowed to resume their professional careers due to lack of official Thai status. The family lives under intense stress, as Thailand does not recognize refugees and there is a constant threat of imprisonment and deportation. Shaista's entire family, including the children, stay in the apartment all day, every day.

## Scan to Learn More About Shaista's Story



**Name:** Keyhan  
**Country of Origin:** Afghanistan  
**Current Location:** Australia



Keyhan is a member of the persecuted Hazara ethnic group in Afghanistan, and persecution because of his ethnicity required him to flee. He took a small fishing boat with 12 other people to an island in Indonesia. From there, he attempted to cross the ocean into Australia, but was caught and detained by Indonesian authorities, where he stayed in detention for over one year. Upon release, he was sent to Yogyakarta, Indonesia, where he remained for months until his refugee application to Australia was accepted.

## Scan to Learn More About Keyhan's Story And the Work of JRS Australia



# Questions & Answers

## WHAT IS WALK A MILE IN MY SHOES?

*Walk a Mile in My Shoes* is an exercise for individuals to gain insights into the lives of refugees around the world. The exercise is held in an open area where participants can learn more about particular aspects of the refugee experience and get an inside into the hardships, the frustrations, and often the pain that refugees endure.

## HOW WAS WALK A MILE IN MY SHOES DEVELOPED?

Jesuit Refugee Service developed *Walk a Mile in My Shoes* to provide individuals and communities in the U.S. with an opportunity to learn more about the current global refugee crisis and support programs that serve refugees.

## CAN PARTICIPANTS REALLY LEARN ANYTHING ABOUT REFUGEES IN A SHORT EXERCISE?

As part of this exercise, participants stop their regular activity and really focus on the challenges that refugees face in accessing the bare necessities of life—food, water, shelter, healthcare, and education. Participants can't live the true experience of refugees, but for a few hours they can walk a mile in the shoes that refugees walk every day. Many will continue to learn about refugee issues and continue to advocate on behalf of those who have been displaced.

## HOW MANY REFUGEES ARE THERE IN THE WORLD?

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that violence, conflicts, and other emergencies have motivated more than 27 million people to leave their homes and seek refuge in another country.



## WHAT IS THE AVERAGE LENGTH OF DISPLACEMENT FOR A REFUGEE?

Most people don't realize that the average length of displacement for a refugee is 17 years. For many young children and babies born as refugees, it is the only life they've ever known.

## DO REFUGEES HAVE ANY OPPORTUNITY FOR EDUCATION?

Some refugees have the opportunity for some education, but most do not. Half of all refugees are children under the age of 18 and the need for education for these young people has never been more urgent. Only 68 percent of all refugee children are enrolled in primary school, and one in three are estimated to be in secondary school. Just five percent of refugees are enrolled in post-secondary education.

## HOW CAN OUR COMMUNITY AND OUR CITY HELP REFUGEES?

There are many ways for your community to get involved in refugee advocacy. You can raise funds for organizations like JRS who support displaced persons all over the world. You can volunteer your time to local or international organizations that serve these vulnerable communities. You can also advocate for better refugee policies by writing to your representatives.

Visit [www.jrsusa.org](http://www.jrsusa.org) to learn more about how you can advocate for refugees and other displaced persons.

# Fact Sheet

## NUMBER OF DISPLACED PEOPLE WORLDWIDE

More than 100 million individuals are forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, or generalized violence exceeding all previous records for global forced displacement. This includes more than 27 million refugees, 53 million internally displaced people, and 4.6 million asylum seekers. Children below 18 years of age constitute 41% of the refugee population.

## NUMBER OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

53 million internally displaced people (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. Over 9 million of these IDPs were newly uprooted during 2021.

## LOCATION OF REFUGEES

The countries hosting the largest number of refugees are Turkey (3.8 million), Colombia (1.8 million), Pakistan (1.5 million), Uganda (1.5 million), and Germany (1.3 million). The largest number of refugees live in Europe (7+ million), followed by Sub-Saharan Africa (4.7 million), the Americas (5.1 million), Asia and the Pacific (4.2 million), and the Middle East and North Africa (2.4 million).

## ORIGIN OF REFUGEES

The largest number of refugees are from Syria (6.8 million), followed by Venezuela (4.6 million), Afghanistan (2.7 million), South Sudan (2.4 million), and Myanmar (1.2 million).

## LIVING CONDITIONS OF REFUGEES

Refugees live in widely varying conditions, from well-established camps and collective centers to makeshift shelters or living in the open. As of 2020, most 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.

Additionally, there are 53 million people who are internally displaced within their home country and 4.6 million asylum seekers.

## LENGTH OF TIME A TYPICAL REFUGEE IS DISPLACED

UNHCR estimates that the average length of displacement for a refugee is 17 years, although this time is difficult to firmly establish.

## JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE

Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic organization with a mission to accompany, serve and advocate on behalf of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons. JRS undertakes services at national and regional levels with the support of an international office in Rome. JRS was founded in 1980 as a work of the Society of Jesus.

## NUMBER OF COUNTRIES JRS WORKS WITH REFUGEES

JRS programs are found in more than 50 countries, providing assistance to refugees in camps and cities, to individuals displaced within their own countries, to asylum seekers in cities, and to those held in detention centers.

## JRS AREAS OF WORK

The main areas of work are in the fields of education, emergency assistance, healthcare, livelihood activities and social services. More than one million individuals were direct beneficiaries of JRS projects in 2020.

## NUMBER OF PEOPLE WORKING WITH JRS

More than 1,400 workers contribute to the work of JRS, the many of whom work on a voluntary basis, including about 78 Jesuits and 66 religious leaders from other congregations. These figures do not include the large number of refugees recruited to take part in the programs as teachers or health workers.

# Press Release Outline

Send a press release to local media before an event inviting them to participate in and cover the event. Below is a possible outline for you to use; be sure to fill in all the underlined sections with your information and add details specific to your organization and community.

## OUTLINE:

Jesuit Refugee Service helps communities understand refugee crises and advocate on refugees' behalf.

[YOUR ORGANIZATION'S NAME] will host a JRS sponsored refugee awareness exercise known as *Walk a Mile in My Shoes* on [INSERT DATE AND TIME] at [INSERT LOCATION].

As the sun rises on hundreds of make-shift camps around the world, more than 82 million refugees and internally displaced persons start their day seeking water, food, and shelter to meet the basic needs of their families. 42 percent of the 82 million refugees are children.

[INCLUDE A BRIEF PARAGRAPH SPECIFIC TO YOUR PARTICIPANTS, COMMUNITY, AND ORGANIZATION. YOU CAN ADDRESS TOPICS SUCH AS THE REASON THAT YOU DECIDED TO HOST THIS EXERCISE, WHO YOU HOPE WILL PARTICIPATE, AND THE ASPECTS THAT YOU HOPE PARTICIPANTS WILL TAKE AWAY FROM THIS EXPERIENCE. USE QUOTES FROM RELEVANT PEOPLE LIKE AN ORGANIZATION MEMBER OR POSSIBLE PARTICIPANT.]

Participants in this exercise will have the opportunity to think critically about a refugee's journey. As they enter the exercise, participants receive an identity card with the name, country of origin and background of a typical refugee. Throughout the exercise, they are encouraged to keep that individual at the forefront of their minds as they move between interactive stations that demonstrate various aspects of a refugee's daily life. Stations include the border, shelter, food, water, medical services, and education. At each station, participants encounter the everyday frustrations and hardships that refugees face. The final part of the exercise allows time for participants to reflect on their experience and to consider ways to advocate for refugee justice.

The advocacy station at the end of the exercise is an important resource to provide additional information about refugees and to provide ways for participants to further support refugees. Many former *Walk a Mile in My Shoes* participants continue to participate in JRS/USA's advocacy programs or have started JRS Refugee Action Teams. Details on other advocacy methods are available such as how to write effective letters to policymakers.

To participate in this refugee awareness exercise, contact [INSERT NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION] to make arrangements.

# Resources

The following books and films may serve as resources to prepare volunteers before a *Walk a Mile in My Shoes* event, or for post-event reflection. You can also share this list with interested participants.

## BOOKS

### **Dying to Live: Stories from Refugees on the Road to Freedom**

By: Danielle Vella

*This book opens a window into the world of people who are forced to flee their homeland to survive: refugees. To understand this world, you'll read the words, stories, hopes, expectations, and often despairs of the refugees themselves. Danielle Vella, a JRS staff member, takes the reader along on her travels from Africa to the Middle East to Europe to the US to meet and interview refugees—and tell their stories.*

### **Enrique's Journey: The Story of a Boy's Dangerous Odyssey to Reunite with his Mother**

By: Sonia Nazario

*Enrique's Journey recounts the unforgettable quest of a Honduran boy looking for his mother, eleven years after she is forced to leave her starving family to find work in the United States. Braving unimaginable peril, often clinging to the sides and tops of freight trains, Enrique travels through hostile worlds full of thugs, bandits, and corrupt cops. But he pushes forward, relying on his wit, courage, hope, and the kindness of strangers.*

### **Call Me American**

By: Abdi Nor Iftin

*Call Me American tells the story of Abdi Nor Iftin, a Somali boy captivated by American culture. When the radical Islamist group al-Shabaab rose to power, his love for America became dangerous, eventually forcing him to flee to Kenya and ultimately find his way to the United States.*

### **What is the What: The Autobiography of Valentino Achak Deng**

By: Dave Eggers

*What Is the What is the epic novel based on the life of Valentino Achak Deng who, along with thousands of other children—the so-called Lost Boys—was forced to leave his village in Sudan at the age of seven and trek hundreds of miles by foot, pursued by militias, government bombers, and wild animals, crossing the deserts of three countries to find freedom. When he finally is resettled in the United States, he finds a life full of promise, but also heartache and myriad new challenges.*

### **Where the Wind Leads: A Refugee Family's Miraculous Story of Loss, Rescue, and Redemption**

By: Vinh Chung

*Vinh Chung was born in South Vietnam, just eight months after it fell to the communists in 1975. Knowing that their children would have no future under the new government, the Chungs decided to flee the country. In 1979, they joined the legendary "boat people" and sailed into the South China Sea, despite knowing that an estimated two hundred thousand of their countrymen had already perished at the hands of brutal pirates and violent seas.*

## FILMS

### **Flee (2021)**

*Flee tells the story of Amin Nawabi as he grapples with a painful secret he has kept hidden for 20 years. Recounted mostly through animation to director Jonas Poher Rasmussen, he tells for the first time the story of his extraordinary journey as a child refugee from Afghanistan.*

### **Not Just Football: from genocide to the World Cup (2018)**

*Not Just Football follows the story of Darfur United, an all-refugee team from a forgotten region, as they journey from refugee camps in Chad to the Football World Cup.*

### **Salam Neighbor (2015)**

*The film follows the journey of two Americans, Chris Temple and Zach Ingrasci, as the first filmmakers ever allowed to be registered and given a tent inside of a refugee camp.*

[livingonnone.org/salamneighbor](http://livingonnone.org/salamneighbor)

### **God Grew Tired of Us (2006)**

*Filmmaker Christopher Quinn observes the ordeal of three Sudanese refugees—Jon Bul Dau, Daniel Abul Pach and Panther Bior—as they try to come to terms with the horrors they experienced in their homeland, while adjusting to their new lives in the United States.*

### **Lost Boys of Sudan (2004)**

*Santino Majok Chuor and Peter Nyarol Dut are two orphaned Sudanese boys whose lives have been ravaged by civil war in their country. This film follows these "lost boys" as they travel from a refugee camp in Kenya to the United States to try to start a new life.*

[www.lostboysfilm.com](http://www.lostboysfilm.com)

# Reflection Questions

The *Walk a Mile in My Shoes* refugee awareness exercise can be an intense experience after which participants may want to discuss their thoughts and feelings.

## GENERAL QUESTIONS

- How much did you know about refugees before this exercise? What did you learn? What surprised you?
- What will you take away from this experience?
- How would you describe it to others?
- If you could only improve one part of a refugee's life, which would you want to change and why? (Food, Water, Shelter, Education, Health/Medical)
- How will you respond if you meet a refugee in the future?
- How can you help refugees?

## ENTRY/BORDER STATION

- In your words, describe the person and their situation you were given.
- Did language barriers affect your journey?

## SHELTER STATION

- What challenges would your family experience living in this space?
- What could someone do if they needed to have privacy?
- Would your sense of community or security change if you lived in this space with your family for five, ten, or fifteen years?
- How do the cooking supplies given to refugees compare to those in your home?
- Would this limit your ability to cook?

## FOOD STATION

- How would you deal with eating limited amounts of the same foods every day given there are few food options?

- How do the nutrient/food needs of children, adolescents and adults differ?
- How do refugees meet these needs?

## WATER STATION

- If you only had a gallon of water for your whole day, how would you use it?
- What would you give up that you normally use water for? (Showers, hand washing, making food/drink are included)

## MEDICAL/HEALTH STATION

- How do you think the trauma of fleeing a war-torn country affects refugees?
- Where would refugees go to receive help to address the effects of trauma?
- How do refugees with diabetes, asthma or other chronic diseases control their symptoms or disease?

## EDUCATION STATION

- How can resources impact a person's opportunity for education?
- How do you think eating around 1,300 calories daily would affect your performance in school?
- What sorts of challenges would you face if you started going to school in a different country?

## DESTINATION? STATION

- Were you surprised that resettlement took so many years?
- Why do you think it takes so long to resettle?
- How would you feel if you were told that you remain in a camp for a few more years?

# Making *Walk A Mile In My Shoes* Virtual

Wondering how you can bring the *Walk a Mile in My Shoes* exercise to your community virtually? Below we provide you with some tips and ideas on how to make this an interactive, educational and awareness raising event for all who participate.

## HOW TO CHOOSE A VIRTUAL PLATFORM

We recognize that there are many different platform options for hosting a virtual event. Many institutions currently choose to run events over Zoom, as it can create a more interactive experience for participants through their “polling” feature. Consequently, this sheet walks event coordinators through how to best use Zoom to create a digital *Walk a Mile in My Shoes* exercise. Should your organization choose to use a different virtual platform, such as Facebook Live or Microsoft Teams, please reach out to [outreach@jrsusa.org](mailto:outreach@jrsusa.org) to discuss how to make your event a success!

## ASSIGNING ROLES FOR LEADERS

The following is a list of people and tasks to consider for hosting a virtual event. This is not a comprehensive list, but rather a way to get you thinking about how to divide up the work to have a successful virtual experience.

Role:	Responsibility:
<b>Host/Pollster</b>	<b>Must be the host of the virtual meeting.</b> In charge of scheduling the meeting ahead of time and starting the meeting 40 minutes early to input all questions into the poll function and launching the correct poll at the correct time during the exercise.
<b>Screen-sharer</b>	<b>Must be a co-host of the virtual meeting.</b> In charge of displaying the presentation and moving through the slides.
<b>ID Card Distributors</b>	In charge of creating and executing a way to individually get ID cards to participants through the chat function at the start of the event.
<b>Monitor</b>	<b>Must be a co-host of the virtual meeting.</b> In charge of keeping an eye on the chat to troubleshoot technology issues and answer questions.
<b>Presenters</b>	In charge of writing scripts for each station and reading them at the appropriate times during the event.
<b>Communications/Marketing</b>	In charge of advertising the event, making sure that registrants have the event zoom link, and sending a follow-up thank you email with next steps.

## HOW TO USE IDENTITY CARDS

The ID Card Distributors will use the JRS provided identity cards to privately message every event participant. Wait about five minutes until everyone has joined the event. Then, have the ID Card Distributors send an identity card to every participant. Make sure that one person is in charge of sending an ID card to anyone who comes in late. We suggest these ID cards are sent to people using the individual chat function, as it will give the exercise more of an intimate feeling and help participants enter into the exercise.

## HOW TO MOVE THROUGH THE STATIONS

JRS has prepared a slide show that was specially designed for a virtual Walk a Mile in My Shoes. You can obtain the slide show and other helpful information by sending an email to [outreach@jrsusa.org](mailto:outreach@jrsusa.org). The photos in the slide show depict each Walk a Mile in My Shoes station as presenters talk about that particular station. We recommend that you talk with your team beforehand to come up with a script for each station, decide who will be in charge of screen sharing the slideshow, and discuss who will read each part.

For example, to keep participants engaged, we recommend that you use the poll feature on Zoom at the beginning of every new station. Please visit Zoom's Polling Page for more information about setting up polls. We recommend having a test run with members of your group a week before the event to ensure that everything goes smoothly. Below are some suggestions as to what you can use for poll questions.

### 1. Entry and Border Checkpoint

- a. **Go to slide 3** in the slideshow and discuss what it means to be a refugee crossing borders.
- b. **Sample poll question 1: True or False:** Once a person is in the European Union, they can choose where in the EU they want to apply for asylum. *(Answer: False. Under the Dublin Regulations, people must seek asylum in the first country in the EU that they enter)*
- c. **Sample poll question 2:** How many individual applications to claim asylum did the US receive in 2020? *(Answer: 250,800).*

### 2. Shelter

- a. **Go to slide 4** in the slideshow and discuss different types of shelters for refugees.
- b. **Sample poll question 1: True or False:** Most refugees live outside of refugee camps in more urban settings. *(Answer: True)*
- c. **Sample poll question 2:** How many people, approximately, live in refugee camps? *(Answer: 6.6 million)*

### 3. Food

- a. **Go to slide 5** in the slideshow and discuss food in refugee camps.
- b. **Sample poll question 1: True or False:** Providing refugees with boxes of food rather than e-vouchers leads to higher rates of nutrition. *(Answer: False. E-vouchers allow for autonomy, which boosts self-confidence, and is shown to lead to healthier and more varied diets).*
- c. **Sample poll question 2:** At minimum, how many of the estimated 32 million refugee children are likely to suffer from malnutrition according to data from the United Nations and the World Food Program? *(Answer: 10.6 million. Globally, 1 in 3 children suffer from malnutrition)*

### 4. Water

- a. **Go to slide 6** in the slideshow and discuss how refugees obtain water in a camp.
- b. **Sample poll question 1:** What is the minimum amount of water that should be supplied to refugees in a UNHCR camp daily? *(Answer: 20 Liters, 5.3 Gallons. For perspective, mention that the average person in the US uses up to 300 gallons per day).*
- c. **Sample poll question 2:** True or false: It is safer for women and girls to get water than it is for men and boys. *(Answer: False. Mention that sexual assaults and kidnapping are common. This is why it is important that water stations are in well-lit areas with people around)*

## 5. Medical

- a. **Go to slide 7** in the slideshow and discuss what medical situations look like in a camp.
- b. **Sample poll question 1:** What percentage of asylum seekers and refugees experience high rates of depression, anxiety, and PTSD? (**Answer:** 33%. *Remind participants that this is the number of people who have been diagnosed. The actual rate is likely much higher*)
- c. **Sample poll question 2:** How many people share a space the size of a tennis court in sub-camp 2E in Cox's Bazar refugee camp in Bangladesh? (**Answer:** 13. *Highlight that this makes social distancing during COVID-19 impossible*)

## 6. Education

- a. **Go to slide 8** in the slideshow and discuss educational opportunities for refugees.
- b. **Sample poll question 1:** If every child had the ability to read, how would it affect the global poverty level? (**Answer:** It would decrease by 12%).
- c. **Sample poll question 2:** If you are doing this event with High School students, ask: What percentage of refugee children are able to get a high school education? (**Answer:** 31%)

**If you are doing this event with University students, ask:** What percentage of refugees are able to get a university education? (**Answer:** 3%)

## 7. Destination?

- a. **Go to slide 9** in the slideshow and discuss what it means for a refugee to be resettled.
- b. **Sample poll question 1:** How long, on average, does a person wait in a refugee camp before they are resettled? (**Answer:** 17 years)
- c. **Sample poll question 2:** How many refugees are in need of resettlement? (**Answer:** 1.4 million)

## 8. Advocacy

- a. **Go to slide 10** in the slideshow and discuss what it means to be a refugee crossing borders.
- b. **Encourage participants to sign up for JRS Action Alerts** to stay up to date with current news regarding ways you can work on behalf of refugees.
- c. **Send the link below** in the chat function and leave one minute for participants to sign up during the event.  
[www.jrsusa.org/take-action/jrs-advocates/advocacy-alert-sign-up](http://www.jrsusa.org/take-action/jrs-advocates/advocacy-alert-sign-up)

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# How to Conclude *Walk a Mile in My Shoes*

Make sure that you thank participants for engaging in this digital exercise. In the chat, feel free to send the links below and encourage participants to take one step further in their journey to walk with refugees. Remind them that you will also be sending a follow-up email with more information about how to get involved.

Sign up for JRS Action Alerts: [www.jrsusa.org/take-action/jrs-advocates/advocacy-alert-sign-up](http://www.jrsusa.org/take-action/jrs-advocates/advocacy-alert-sign-up)

Be a JRS Global Companion: [www.jrsusa.org/take-action/companions-at-home](http://www.jrsusa.org/take-action/companions-at-home)

**Do not hesitate to reach out to [outreach@jrsusa.org](mailto:outreach@jrsusa.org) with any and all questions!**



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ADDRESS SERVICE

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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 one million 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 U.S. through our Detention Chaplaincy Program.



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