

Facilitator Guide



Welcome the stranger.
Protect the refugee.

Introduction

HIAS' Do-It-Yourself Educational Program for Congregations is intended to introduce participants to the global refugee crisis, provide Jewish historical and values-based framing, and provide some initial steps towards taking action on behalf of the world's refugees. The program is designed as three distinct modules: "Refugee 101", Text Study, and Advocacy, bookended by a set induction and brief wrap-up. It is intended for an adult (age 13+) audience.

If you move fairly quickly from one activity to the next, the program can be accomplished in one two-hour block. Leaving more time for questions and discussion, it will take two-and-a-half hours. You might also consider reserving two sessions for this program – one for the set induction, Refugee 101 and Text Study and another follow up Advocacy and wrap-up session.

Alternatively, if you already have programming on the refugee crisis planned in your community, you might use one of the modules to supplement what you already have planned. For instance, if you have invited a refugee to come speak about his or her experiences, you might consider facilitating the Text Study for the community to learn about the Jewish connection to refugee issues.

There is quite a bit of flexibility in how this program might be used. We encourage you to adapt the program to meet the needs of your congregation or community. Please contact Rabbi Rachel Grant Meyer, HIAS Educator, at rachel.grant.meyer@hias.org for a consultation on how to adapt the program for your community and/or to let us know that you are planning to use the program!

Timeline

If you are doing the program in one 2-hour session, the recommended timing is:

00:00 – 00:20 Set Induction: Story Sharing and HIAS Video
00:20 – 01:00 Refugee 101
01:00 – 01:30 Text Study
01:30 – 02:00 Advocacy and Wrap-Up

Materials

- Handout – "Some Helpful Definitions" (1 per participant)
- Handout – "The Global Refugee Crisis: The Top 5 Facts" (1 per participant)
- Handout – Text Study: "What Is Our Obligation To The Stranger?" (1 per participant)
- Handout – Guide to Calling and Writing Members of Congress (1 per participant)
- Handout – "My People Were Refugees Too" signs for people to fill in and take pictures of themselves holding (1 per participant)
- Handout – "A Blessing for Welcoming" (1 per participant)
- 11x17 print outs of 4 facts for Refugee 101 Module (1 set)

- Paper (at least 2 pages per participant)
- Envelopes (1 per participant)
- Stamps (1 per participant)
- Pens (1 per participant)
- 2 different colors of standard-size (3x3) post-its (4-5 per participant)
- 2 large pieces of flip-chart paper or very large sticky-post it notes (see http://www.staples.com/Post-it-Super-Sticky-30-inch-x-25-inch-Self-Stick-Easel-Pads/product_SS506808 for an example)
- Laptop with wireless connection to watch video or projector connected to laptop with wireless
- Cell phones for participants to contact members of Congress

Step-by-Step Directions

Set Induction (20 minutes)

1. *A Perfectly Disorganized Family Tree (8 minutes)*: Ask participants to find a *chevruta* (study/sharing partner). Have each participant take one minute (time it and stop at the one minute mark!) to individually write down the names of their ancestors, beginning with their parents and going back as far as they can. Encourage participants to be as thorough as they can in the time they have but not to worry about anyone they miss. Ask each person to identify one person on their tree who immigrated to the U.S. If they have no such relative, ask them to identify someone who moved to a new place during his/her lifetime. Then, have each person share with their *chevruta* a brief, 2-minute story about that family member. Where did that person originally come from, and where did they go? How did that person's experience of immigrating or moving affect his/her life?
2. *Dig A Little Deeper (4 minutes)*: Then ask participants to take turns sharing with their *chevruta* (2 minutes each). What fears did that person experience as a consequence of their move? How were they welcomed to the U.S. or the place where they moved? If you aren't sure what fears they experienced or how they were welcomed, think about why those stories may not have been passed down.
3. *Transition (1 minute)*:

Explain that you are now going to show a short video from HIAS that may resonate with some of the stories you have just shared.

4. *HIAS Video (5 minutes)*: Show this 2 minute video: <http://www.hias.org/hias-refugee>.
 - a. After you show the video, pose this question to the group and then briefly discuss this question as a full group for 3 minutes (just try to get people's immediate reactions – 1 sentence each): Does what you just saw in the video resonate with your own family's story?

(NOTE: Lift up the fact that there may be real parallels between the family stories shared and the themes of the video even though most people's family members did not come to this country as refugees.)

5. *Transition (2 minutes):*

Say to the group:

“Today, you are going to be learning more about the current refugee crisis, the Jewish community’s stake in that crisis and, perhaps most importantly, your individual connection to the crisis. As the video you just watched shows, as Jews, we connect to today’s refugees both out of our personal stories and communal history and out of our shared values. In a couple of minutes, we will have a chance to further explore the Jewish values that underpin our responsibility to protect refugees. First, though, let’s ground ourselves in a shared understanding of the global refugee crisis.”

Refugee 101 (30 minutes)

1. *Responding to the Facts (8 minutes):*

Hang up the posters with the 4 facts about the global refugee crisis spaced out on one side of the room. On the other side of the room, write these two questions, each on a piece of flip chart paper or large post-it note (see materials section for suggestions):

1. Which of these facts could you imagine yourself repeating to someone else to try to communicate the scale and depth of this crisis and why?
2. What questions do these facts raise for you?

Give participants 4-5 post-it notes in two different colors – assign one color to each question above. Ask participants to walk around the room and read the facts, respond to the two questions above, jot down their responses to the questions about these facts on the appropriate color post-it and place it on the flip chart paper/large post-it with the question written at the top.

Four Facts:

1. During 2015, conflict and persecution forced an average of nearly 34,000 individuals per day to leave their homes and seek protection elsewhere, either within the borders of their own country or in other countries. This number has increased four-fold over the last four years.
(Source: http://www.unhcr.org/556725e69.html#_ga=1.244089600.408374826.1448294863)
2. In 2015, over 51% of refugees were under 18 years old.
(Source: <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html>)
3. All refugees resettled in the United States are screened by the National Counterterrorism Center, the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security, and the State department. Any time new information about the refugee is provided – like a different phone number – the screening process is repeated again.

(Source: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2015/11/20/infographic-screening-process-refugee-entry-united-states>)

4. In 2011, Lebanon hosted only 10,000 refugees and asylum-seekers. Today, they host upwards of 1.1 million in a country of under 5 million people.

(Source: <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html>)

Give people about 6-7 minutes to walk around and respond to the facts on their post-its (2 colors). Then gather back together as a group.

2. *Transition (2 minutes):*

Say to the group:

“Over the next 30 minutes, we are going to ground ourselves in some shared facts and figures about the global refugee crisis, which is the worst it has been since World War II. We are going to have the opportunity to begin to answer some of the questions that the facts we just looked at raised for you. Most importantly, though, hopefully we will also put a face on this crisis and move a bit beyond the facts and figures. Given that we all come to this topic with such different levels of knowledge and different feelings, let’s start by creating some shared definitions.”

3. *Definitions and Facts (8 minutes):* Take turns as a group reading aloud from the “Some Helpful Definitions” and “The Global Refugee Crisis: Top 5 Facts” so that everyone has a shared understanding of the difference between refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced people, and migrants.

From “Some Helpful Definitions”:

- **Refugee:** A refugee is a person who has been forced to flee their home country due to persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group (e.g., members of the LGBTQ community). The persecution a refugee experiences may include harassment, threats, abduction or torture. A refugee is often afforded some sort of legal protection, either by their host country’s government, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or both. In the United States, refugees are hand-selected by the U.S. government and are screened in advance. They are subject to background checks and security screenings by multiple U.S. agencies. Only after everything is approved are they brought to the U.S. to reside permanently.¹
- **Asylum seeker:** An asylum seeker is a person who has fled persecution in their home country and is seeking safe haven in a different country, but has not yet received any legal recognition or status.² In several countries, including the U.S., asylum seekers are sometimes detained while waiting for their case to be heard.
- **Internally displaced person:** An internally displaced person, or IDP, is a person who fled their home but has not crossed an international border to find sanctuary. Even if they fled for reasons similar to those driving refugees (armed conflict, generalized violence, human rights violations), IDPs legally remain

¹ Based on “Who is a refugee?” from <http://www.hias.org/FAQ/HIAS>.

² Based on “What is the difference between an asylum seeker, a refugee and an asylee?” from <http://www.hias.org/FAQ/HIAS>.

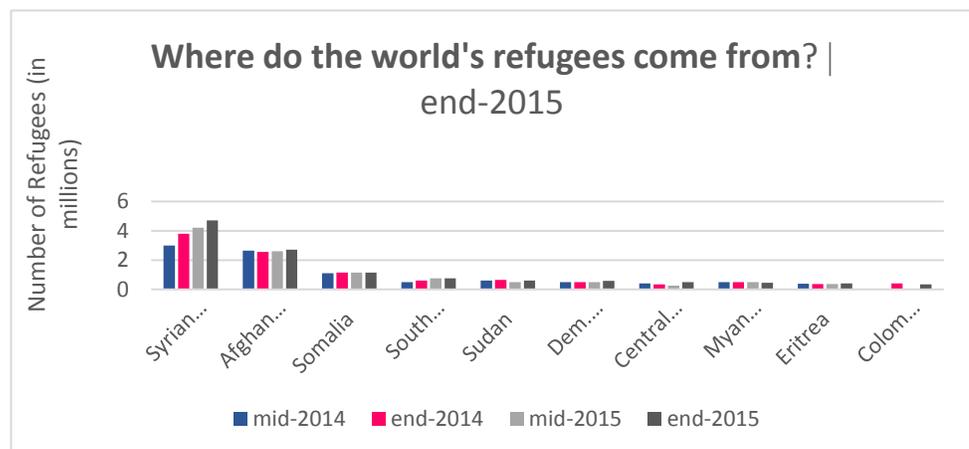
under the protection of their own government – even though that government might be the cause of their flight.³

- **Migrant:** A migrant is a person who chooses to move from their home for any variety of reasons, but not necessarily because of a direct threat of persecution or death. Migrant is an umbrella category that can include refugees but can also include people moving to improve their lives by finding work or education, those seeking family reunion and others.⁴

Continue reading together aloud:

From “Top 5 Facts”:

- There are over **65 million** internally displaced people, asylum seekers, and refugees worldwide. As of June 2016, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, or UNHCR, identified **21.3 million refugees** worldwide. Of the total global refugee population, **less than 1% are resettled** each year; in Fiscal Year 2014, **0.42% were resettled in the United States**.
- Refugee advocates often refer to three **durable solutions** for refugees. These durable solutions include **local integration** (for refugees who can safely rebuild their lives in the country to which they fled), **resettlement** (for the most vulnerable refugees for whom life is not safe in the country to which they fled and so require permanent resettlement in a 3rd country), and **repatriation** (for refugees for whom circumstances in their homeland change significantly enough that it is safe to return).
- From 2014 – 2015, the majority of the world’s refugees came from the following countries:



*Source: <http://www.unhcr.org/56701b969.html>.

³ <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c146.html>.

⁴ Based on “‘Refugee’ or ‘migrant’ - Which is right?” from <http://www.unhcr.org/55df0e556.html>.

- The maximum number of refugees resettled in the U.S. in a given year, which is referred to as the **ceiling for refugee admissions**, is determined by the annual **Presidential Determination**. For the last few years, the annual ceiling was set at 70,000. Recently, the administration announced that the ceiling will rise to 85,000 for 2016 and 100,000 for 2017, which includes both Syrian refugees and refugees from all other countries.
- There are **9 refugee resettlement agencies in the United States**: HIAS, Church World Service, Ethiopian Community Development Council, Episcopal Migration Ministries, International Rescue Committee, Lutheran Immigrant and Refugee Service, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants and World Relief. HIAS is the only Jewish agency among them. Any refugee resettled in the U.S. is resettled through one of these nine agencies.

4. *Transition (1 minute):*

Explain to the group that you are now going to watch a short video to gain further insight into some of the definitions, facts, and figures you have just learned together.

5. *UNHCR Video and Conversation (12 minutes):*

Show this video (4.5 minutes):

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2ZDAoIMGP3m9tAgnniNEYw>

Pose these questions to the group and discuss as a full group (7 minutes):

1. Was there something you saw or heard in the video that helped you realize something about the global refugee crisis that the facts we learned earlier didn't?
2. What did you see or hear in the video that really stuck with you or really resonated with you?

6. *Transition (1 minute):*

Say to the group:

“We have just learned about a crisis that is both vast and devastating. For some of us, it can make us feel overwhelmed and unsure of how to respond. For others of us, we might still be unsure about whether it is, in fact, our responsibility to respond and how we balance our own fear and concern about our well-being with our responsibility towards others. Our tradition gives us a meaningful framework that can give us a foothold as we seek to respond to something so big and so challenging. We are now going to take a look at some texts – both Jewish and secular – that will give us insight into how we might respond.”

Text Study (30 minutes)

While no prior experience with Jewish text is necessary to facilitate this text study, if you want to do some background reading on the connection between Jewish values and the refugee crisis, we recommend the following resources:

1. Mark Hetfield's Op-Ed "In a nutshell, taking in refugees is our moral duty" (November 2015)
<http://thechronicleherald.ca/opinion/1323407-in-a-nutshell-taking-in-refugees-is-our-moral-duty>
2. Rabbi Jennie Rosenn's Op-Ed "Syrian Refugees Are Not Jewish But We Are" (October 2015)
<http://www.thejewishweek.com/editorial-opinion/opinion/syrian-refugees-are-not-jewish-we-are>
3. Mark Hetfield's Interview with Dara Lind (September 2015)
<http://ussanews.com/oped/?p=65522>

Ask participants to find a *chevruta* (ideally a different person than the person they worked with in the first module). Hand out the source page ("What Is Our Obligation to the Stranger?"). Instruct participants to use the text navigator on the front page to move through the text study, beginning with the pink source in the middle from Genesis 18:1-8 and then focusing on 1-2 of the blue commentaries using the prompt questions as a guide for conversation. The text navigator suggests that participants spend 5 minutes on the main text, 3-5 minutes skimming the commentaries, and 10 minutes discussing the commentaries. Roam around the room as the *chevruta* discuss the texts to keep time, make sure that everyone is making their way through the sources in a timely way, and answer any questions.

This text study is meant to be a jumping off point. Depending on how much time you have, you can encourage *chevruta* to discuss fewer or more of the commentaries, as the questions for each commentary text are printed for everyone to see. Certainly encourage participants to take the text study with them and to return to it to continue deepening their learning on this topic.

After 20 minutes, wrap up the discussion by bringing the group back together and asking everyone to reflect together on the following question for 5-10 minutes, referencing the texts they have just studied. Given what you have read about the Jewish responsibility to welcome the stranger, how might you act on the values or concepts communicated by these texts? Really encourage participants to reference specific texts and the values and concepts in those sources.

Advocacy and Wrap Up (30 minutes)

PLEASE NOTE: Due to the quickly changing nature of the advocacy issues pertinent to refugees in the current political climate, please contact HIAS educator Rabbi Rachel Grant Meyer (Rachel.Grant.Meyer@hias.org) one week before you plan to implement this program to make sure that you have the most current advocacy module. Also, given the political climate surrounding refugees, it has never been a more important time for American Jews to raise up their voice in support of welcoming refugees to the United States. Beyond this program, there are a myriad of ways that congregations can get involved in deeper advocacy projects to make sure that a clear moral call from the Jewish community is heard on Capitol Hill. If your congregation is interested in advocating to members of Congress or local officials, please be in touch with Rebecca Kirzner (rebecca.kirzner@hias.org), HIAS director of campaigns. Rebecca can provide guidance, resources, and updated talking points. She can also consult with you on how to structure your advocacy to best fit your community.

1. Transition (2 minute)

Say to the group:

“Hopefully, everything you have learned this morning/evening/afternoon has inspired you to want to take some action on behalf of refugees – whether to say that this is an issue you care about and are interested in learning more about or to take the step of writing or calling your members of Congress to ask them to continue supporting the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. We are going to take some time now to move towards action.”

2. Concurrent Options: Write Letters and Make Calls to Members of Congress AND Photo Booth for Refugees (20 minutes)

“Right now, in the U.S., there is heightened awareness around refugee issues and a need for a strong Jewish voice in support of welcoming refugees. Globally, there are 65 million people who have been displaced from their homes due to conflict and violence, a number that grows by the thousands daily. The United States has a history of offering safe haven to refugees, and HIAS believes we could be doing much more to take leadership in alleviating the crisis. For the last decade, the Presidential Determination on refugee admissions has been around 75,000 total. The U.S. government recently announced that they will raise the cap to 85,000 for 2016 and to 100,000 for 2017. While this is a nice symbolic gesture, it is not nearly enough in the face of a global refugee crisis worse than at any time since World War II.

Sadly, though, in the past few weeks, very reasonable fear surrounding terrorist attacks abroad has led to a very unreasonable backlash against refugees. The US Refugee Admissions Program is a very sophisticated system with multiple layers of rigorous security checks. It is also a humanitarian program that helps thousands of vulnerable people rebuild their lives in safety and with dignity.

The American Jewish community has a very strong and influential political voice with regard to refugee issues, and it is critical that we make it very clear to our members of Congress and senators that we want to welcome refugees to the United States, and that we firmly oppose any measures that would halt or restrict resettlement or funding for any groups of refugees.

This morning/afternoon/evening, we have the opportunity to join HIAS, the only Jewish refugee resettlement organization, in their advocacy efforts to take a major step in the right direction. We have set aside some time to write letters to our representatives and place phone calls to our representatives in the hopes of gaining their support for refugees.

There are also signs that say “My People Were Refugees Too.” Please take one and complete the sentence “I Care About Refugees Because . . .” and take a picture of yourself holding the sign. You can take pictures in small groups as well. We will Tweet/Instagram/post the pictures to the synagogue’s Facebook group with the hashtags #MyPeopleWereRefugeesToo, #ICareAboutRefugees, and/or #RefugeesWelcome. Feel free to put them on your personal social media accounts as well.

Finally, can I have one or two volunteers to put together a short write-up of the day’s program and send it to the local Jewish press with some of the pictures as well as submit it to the synagogue newsletter?”

Distribute the attached tips for writing to/calling members of congress and give everyone 20 minutes to write letters and make phone calls – it is absolutely OK to do both!

(NOTE: The letter-writing and phone call-making should happen concurrently with the picture taking so that those who are not yet ready to write letters or make phone calls still take some action. Also, please send all pictures to Rebecca Kirzner at Rebecca.Kirzner@HIAS.org so that HIAS can use them in our ongoing advocacy efforts.)

3. *Wrap Up (8 minutes)*

If you did not take a picture as a group holding your signs earlier, now is the time to do so!

Invite participants to turn back to their *chevruta* from the beginning of the program. Give each partner 2 minutes to share 1 way that they will commit themselves to supporting the world’s refugees in the year to come.

Finally, gather in a circle and read the “Blessing for Welcoming.”