

Refugee and [Im]migrant Voices: Exploring the Narratives of the Uprooted

The Bonner Community Engagement Curriculum

Overview:

In this workshop, participants learn about the distinctions of various [im]migrant groups and the structures and institutions that determine their status and rights. Rather than approaching the history of migrant movements across time and space in a lecture format, students will “uncover” a series of various migrant movements and their affects on migrants themselves. Participants will analyze the photography, poetry, and prose of various refugees and immigrants from around the world. They then create skits to highlight some of the shared experiences of exile as observed in the artwork. The session concludes with an analysis of these shared (and distinct) experiences, extending the discussion to a critical assessment of how service providers, policymakers, and advocates can better approach the issues. This workshop also promotes deeper issue knowledge and critical thinking.

Category:

Diversity, Engagement, Communication, Analyzing, Understanding, Reflection, International/Global Awareness

Level:

Applicable towards all students that have a desire to understand [im]migration and the process a refugee goes through during the legal process, but recommended for more moderate student.

Recommended

Bonner Sequence: This training is recommended for Bonner

Students during the third or fourth year, as part of the Dialogue Across Diversity and Inclusion 4x4 model, Stage 4: Adaptation.



Focus or Goals of this Guide:

- Participants will learn about various types of

Dialogue Across Diversity and Inclusion 4x4 Student Developmental Model			
Stage 1: Exposure	Stage 2: Understanding	Stage 3: Application and Discussion	Stage 4: Adaptation

[im]migration populations

- Participants will analyze the experiences and narratives of immigrants and refugees
- Participants will discover others thoughts/ideas for the inclusion of the [im]migration voice in service, policy, and advocacy

Materials:

- [Refugee/Immigrant Issues Powerpoint on Slideshare.com](#) (Note: This powerpoint contains other slides 7-17 that are needed for this workshop)
- Computer with Internet access
- Projector
- Space for skits
- [Im]migration Distinctions/Handout -this section slides 9-15 specifically of the powerpoint
- "Journey of a Refugee" Handout
- Art Sample Handout - can be projected instead of printing out copies
- Whiteboard/Markers or Flipchart/Markers

How to Prepare:

Review the trainer guide. Go through the slides and the handouts to become familiar with them. You may want to add or customize content for your context (for instance,

for specific immigrant or migrant populations). Prepare the handouts that are need by printing them out and passing them out before the session starts, so participants can follow. Review and modify the workshop to fit the size of participants. Make sure that the area where workshop will take place has space for skits to be presented.

Please note that if the hyperlinks do not work, the links are posted so that they may be copied and pasted into the internet search bar.

Brief Outline:

This workshop is organized around leading participants to acquire the knowledge and understanding between the distinctions of [im]migration through a series of discussions and skit presentation.

The outline for this 80-90 minute workshop has the following parts:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) [Im]migration Distinction | suggested time 15 minutes |
| 2) Art Analysis | suggested time 40 minutes |
| 3) Skit Presentation | suggested time 20 minutes |
| 4) Discussion | suggested time 15 minutes |

Part 1) [Im]migration Distinction

Suggested time: 15 minutes

In this section, your goal is to get participants informed about the topic of [im]migration at a basic, but important level. The idea is to prepare them with the knowledge needed in order to visualize or interpret the [im]migrant experience later on in this workshop. Note: the slides have the definitions of the 5 words that will be discussed as well as a refugee journey example. Go through the slides with the participants as they follow along with their copies of [Im]migration Distinction and Journey of a Refugee into the United States Outline handouts.

See Slides 9-15 for the prompts to describe the following types of [Im]migrants:

- Immigrant
- Migrant
(not in the slide show but still define)
- Refugee
(and refugee journey example)

- Exile
- Asylum Seeker
- Internally displaced person (IDP)

Link for the SlideShare →

<https://www.slideshare.net/BonnerFoundation/impact-2011-refugee-and-immigration-issues-track>

Once you have gone through the slides with definitions and refugee journey example with the participants click on the link below. Within the refugee journey handout, there is an activity where the facilitator can go through a real [Syrian Refugee Journey](#) with the group and the difficulty of the process.

Link for the Journey → <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32057601>

Part 2) Art Analysis

Suggested time: 40 minutes

In this section, the participants will work in seven small groups (one for each of the art sample handouts). Each group will receive an art compilation. Have group review artwork together, analyze the elements of the work, and identify some of the themes at play. The prompts on Slide 16 will be useful in guiding participants through this activity.

Encourage students to consider (write on a board so the group knows what they are considering or write on a flipchart):

- the experience of the artist's intentions and your interpretations,
- the events, beliefs, or people that may have been affected by or are related to the work,
- the artistic choices used and why, and
- the historical, political, social, cultural, or spiritual contexts of the work.

Once groups have analyzed the artwork for about 20 minutes, they will need to start brainstorming and planning their skit. The skit is meant to be creative and captures an aspect of the experience of migration in the artwork – what is the shared or unique experience of migration as depicted in the artwork?

Groups will have to put together a skit around the artwork they have been given. Give groups enough time and space to work in groups to develop 2 - 3 minute skits. Try to give participants a 10-minute and 5-minute countdown so you can stay within time limits.

Part 3) Skit Presentation

Suggested time: 20 minutes

In this section, students will perform their skit and then share what characteristic or social issue within the refugee and immigrant experience they were trying to exhibit. They also may want to share what cultural or historical influences may have been at work in their presentation. Note: Allow the participants that are listening to take notes on the following questions in order for them to be able to have a discussion as a cohort afterwards. The questions below can be written on a board or on a sticky note and be discussed after the presentations are over.

- How did your depictions of the characters in your skits compare with the history and experiences of refugees and immigrants?
- Which characteristics of the art influenced your skit most strongly?
- What are some of the misconceptions of the [im]migrant community that could be challenged with what you learned today?
- What role does art play in movements for refugee or immigrant rights?

Part 3) Discussion

Suggested time: 15 minutes

In this section, you will engage the participants in a brief discussion about the refugee and immigrant experience. Wrap up the workshop with the questions below and reflect on what the participants got out of the training.

Touch on these questions:

- How did your depictions of the characters in your skits compare with the history and experiences of refugees and immigrants?
- Which characteristics of the art influenced your skit most strongly?
- What are some of the misconceptions of the [im]migrant community that could be challenged with what you learned today?
- What role does art play in movements for refugee or immigrant rights?

Credits:

- Developed in 2017 by Baneen Al-Akashi, Bonner at Allegheny College
- Bonner Foundation Follow. "IMPACT 2011 - Refugee and Immigration Issues Track." *LinkedIn SlideShare*. N.p., 31 Mar. 2011. Web. 11 July 2017.
- "Immigration and Refugees." *The Bonner Network Wiki/Immigration and Refugees*. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 July 2017.
- "Syrian Journey: Choose your own escape route." BBC News. BBC, 01 Apr. 2015. Web. 11 July 2017.
- "The Journey of a Refugee to the United States." *World Relief Nashville*. N.p., 11 Apr. 2016. Web. 23 June 2017.

Followed by Handouts:

- [Im]migration Distinction Handout (page 8)
- Journey of a Refugee Outline (page 9) → <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32057601>
- Art Evaluation Sample Handout (pages 10-16)

Find additional training modules here:

- <http://bonnernetwork.pbworks.com/f/Refugee+and+Immigrant+Issues+Track+2011.pdf>

This is a longer packet that has various workshops pertaining to the issue of immigration and migration, if you would like to do more with the topic. These resources were developed and piloted by Bonner Foundation and network staff and students, in partnership with other nonprofit organizations that work on the issue, at previous national conferences. Also within this packet are all the worksheets and links that you may need or would like to add to different presentations. Other trainings that are included in the link:

- **Personal Experiences, Public Issues: Refugees, Immigrants, and You**

Have you ever wanted to learn more about the refugee and immigrant populations that you live, work and serve with? This session kicks off a specialized track devoted to refugee and immigrant issues! In this session, participants will connect personal experiences in service with relevant public and political issues, learning about some of the major themes that will be addressed in the track. Group discussion will also

identify the problems and challenges for the affected populations, the volunteers who serve with them, and the sites and agencies who support them.

- **Uncovering [Im]migrant Voices: Exploring the Narratives of the Uprooted**

In this workshop, participants will learn about the distinctions of various migrant groups and the structures and institutions that determine their status and rights. Then, participants will have the chance to get creative – analyzing the photography, poetry, and prose of various refugees and immigrants from around the world and creating skits to highlight some of the shared experiences of exile as observed in the artwork. This session is a great way to get to know the dynamics of the refugee and immigrant condition from the [im]migrants themselves.

- **"To Legalize or Not to Legalize?": Refugee and Immigrant Political Debates**

This workshop will introduce the various political debates within the refugee and immigration issues in our country, tracing their political history, and seeking out the policy options we have today. Track facilitators will be joined by representatives from policy organizations at the federal, statewide, and local level to discuss the policies and the possibilities for refugee and immigrant populations across the country. Join in on an analysis of policy timelines and discussion around the influences that have shaped the debates over time and the impact it has had on refugees and immigrants.

- **Your Service Toolkit: A Roundtable Discussion on the Essential Skills for Working with Refugees and Immigrants**

Like any service sector, there are specific skills that can enhance your impact. This session will cover some of the most prominent skills needed to be an effective service provider for refugees and immigrants. This roundtable discussion will feature tips, tools, and resources on ESL Training, Cross-Cultural Competency, and Providing Access to Social Services. In addition, participants will gain insight on other skills such as psychosocial counseling, working with youth, and reversing stigmas and stereotypes. This is the chance for track participants to come together and share ideas and program models to enhance impact and build capacity.

- **La Plaza Comunitaria: A Model for Empowering Migrant Workers**

For many years Stetson has been working with the Pierson community located 11 miles from Stetson's Campus. Pierson is known as "The Fern Capital of the World", where the majority of the population is Mexican-migrant farm workers. Stetson University has partnered with La Plaza Comunitaria, in Pierson, offering different services, including English classes, computer literacy classes, and an after school program for youth in the Pierson community. In this workshop you'll learn about

Stetson's partnership with La Plaza Comunitaria and hear from a panel of farm workers who have been exposed to harsh working conditions. They will share their battle for their rights as farm workers.

- **"What Now?" Panel: Making an IMPACT for Refugees and Immigrants**

Join the partner organizations of the refugee and immigrant issues track in a final session that covers the career, advocacy, and networking opportunities for making an impact for refugees and immigrants in our country. You'll hear from a diverse panel of professionals who will share how to translate your service experience into a career and the various ways to make a lasting impact.



[Im]migration Distinctions

Before entering into deeper discussions of the issues, let's get informed about the terms.

Immigrant: a person who comes to a country to permanently settle from another country.

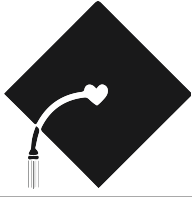
Migrant: a worker who moves from place to place to do seasonal work.

Refugee: a person outside of the United States who seeks protection on the grounds that he or she fears persecution in his or her homeland. To attain refugee status, the person must prove that he or she has a "well-founded fear of persecution" on the basis of at least one of five internationally-recognized grounds: race, religion, membership in a social group, political opinion, or national origin.

Exile: a person who is voluntarily absent from their home country, or a person who has been expelled from their home country.

Asylum Seeker: a person in the United States or at a port of entry who seeks protection on the grounds of persecution or a "well-founded fear of persecution."

Internally Displaced Person (IDP): a person who has been forced to flee his/her home because of war or fear of persecution, but remains in their home country.



Journey of a Refugee Into the United States

A refugee is a person who must leave his or her homeland due to persecution or fear of persecution for religious, political, racial, and/or ethnic reasons. In 2015 it was reported that 60 million people were displaced and 19 million of those were refugees.

Most refugees wait a long time, on average seven years, in a refugee camp. The camps are often guarded and refugees remain in these camps until a new country grants them permission to enter.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) interviews all refugees and the U.S. Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) interviews those who may be headed to the U.S. Only those can prove they are escaping persecution are eligible for entry.

The U.S. admits approximately 70,000 refugees each year, with the exact number determined by Congress. Each arriving refugee is assigned to an agency like World Relief to provide basic services during the refugee's first 90 days in the U.S. TO establish self-sufficiency, newly arrived refugees need housing, transportation, English Language education, and employment.



Art Evaluation Sample Handout

Each group will review artwork together, analyze the elements of the work, and identify some of the themes at play. Make sure to think about the ideas that are written on the board or flipchart and be ready to apply this to the next activity assigned.

1 Limited Control over Consequences



Tibetan Flags
"We always hope for freedom"
Khamsum, Tibetan exile in India

Where should I begin?
because everything said & to be said tomorrow
is not ended by an embrace
nor by a handshake.
It does not repatriate the exile.
It does not bring the rain.
It does not fledge the wind of a lost bird, a fallen bird.
Where should I begin?

Mahmoud Darwish
"Letter from Home"
Leaves of the Olive Tree, 1964

"Exile is predicated on the existence of, love for,
and a real bond with one's native place; the
universal truth of exile is not that one has lost that
love or home, but that inherent in each is an
unexpected, unwelcome loss."

Edward Said, *No Reconciliation Allowed*

Oh life,
once you burned me with fire
and I forgave you
for misunderstanding me
judging me unfairly.
The second time,
you banged a drum,
proclaiming with bagpipes:
"Listen to me, oh forgetful one,
happiness is not for you."
You came to hurt me again:
why choose me from the crowd?
Oh life!
you are so bold
you scream in my face:
"happiness will never be yours."

Mogib Hassan
"Oh life"
immigrant from Yemen

Each group will review artwork together, analyze the elements of the work, and identify some of the themes at play. Make sure to think about the ideas that are written on the board or flipchart and be ready to apply this to the next activity assigned.

2 Insecure Alternatives

“...the spectrum of **choice is gravely narrowed**; the alternatives may be no more subtle than death, imprisonment, or a one-way ticket to oblivion.”

Bharati Mukherjee, *Imagining Homelands*

“An exile reads change the way he reads time, memory, self, love, fear, beauty: in the key of **loss**.”

Andre Aciman, *Shadow Cities*

“Exile, and the pain of radical change, do not necessarily lead to a more radical personality structure or greater openness to the world. On the contrary, upheaval and dislocation can sometimes produce some rather more conservative impulses of **self-defense and self-preservation**.”

Eva Hoffman, *The New Nomads*



Worthless Possession
Sama Alshaibi

This photo “refers to the keys to the homes of Palestine held by the refugees fleeing the incoming Zionist forces in 1948 and the locked doors they left behind. My grandmother points out the irony that she has the key, but the Israelis have her house”.

Each group will review artwork together, analyze the elements of the work, and identify some of the themes at play. Make sure to think about the ideas that are written on the board or flipchart and be ready to apply this to the next activity assigned.

3 Challenged Identities



Headdress of the Disinherited
Sama Alshaibi

“The dowry money headdress is now an artifact lost to our culture. Fashioned after my mother’s faint memory of her grandmother’s, our collaborative effort constructs a memorial to our family’s continual migrations.”

What is a man worth
if he has no homeland,
if he has no flag
& no address?
What good is a man?

Mahmoud Darwish
“Letter from Home”
Leaves of the Olive Tree, 1964

“Immigration, exile, being uprooted and made a pariah may be the most effective way yet devised to impress on an individual the arbitrary nature of his or her own existence...**we ended up being a puzzle even to ourselves.**”

Charles Simic, *Refugees*

Our journey took 24 hours
When we arrived
We had left behind
Our childhood and a wonderland

Hurie Gunes
“Arrival”
Contributor, refugeeweek.org.uk

Each group will review artwork together, analyze the elements of the work, and identify some of the themes at play. Make sure to think about the ideas that are written on the board or flipchart and be ready to apply this to the next activity assigned.

4 Ambiguous Views and Needs

Where should I release all the fire of my passion?
Who might I take with me in ecstasy?
Whom should I bestow my innocence?
Open heart, wild dreams...
where should I lean my head?
Which embrace should give me consolation?
For who should I glow like a star in the sky?
Who should I kiss with my last breath?

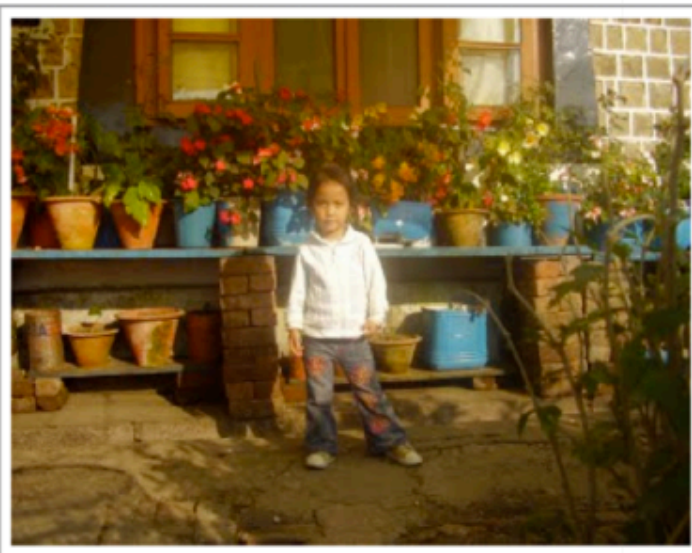
Valbona Voca Bashota
"Passion"
Albanian refugee

I pack two suitcases,
one for myself,
and one for my shadow,
my faithful companion.
Often it's the two of us -
it's better that way.
But when I sleep my shadow
completely disappears.
It's a troubled time.
I just hope the moon is looking out for me.

Moniza Alvi
"Two Suitcases"
Pakistani refugee

"So many people have been displaced in the century, their numbers so large, **their collective and individual destinies so varied...**"

Charles Simic, *Refugees*

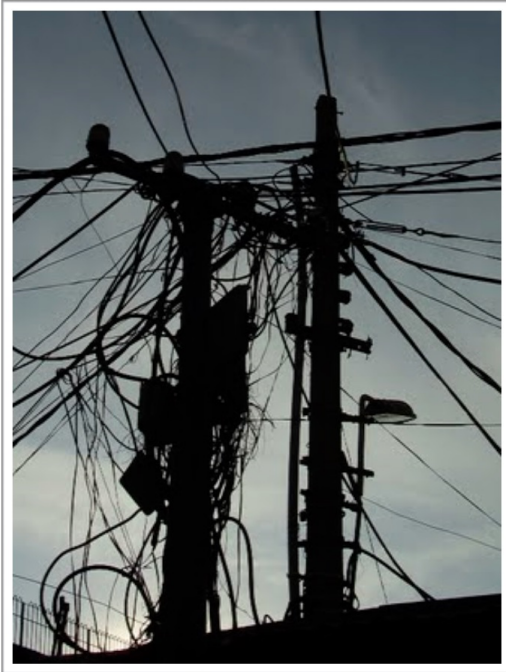


Childhood
Yongdon, Tibetan Exile

"I took this photograph because it reminds me of my childhood. Where I grew up the mountains were covered in beautiful flowers. We never put them in pots because they grew everywhere naturally. I love these flowers because they help me remember home. "

Each group will review artwork together, analyze the elements of the work, and identify some of the themes at play. Make sure to think about the ideas that are written on the board or flipchart and be ready to apply this to the next activity assigned.

5 Subsumed Accountability



Danger in India
Sopa, Tibetan Exile

“Life in India can sometimes be dangerous. This light post is piled high with all kinds of electrical wires. Many monkeys have been electrocuted on these wires. When the monsoons come they are even more dangerous. Last year three houses caught fire because of them. **Since we are refugees there is little we can say or do about it.**”

“I had a small nonspeaking part in a bloody epic. I was one of the bombed and fleeing humanity.”

Charles Simic, *Cameo Appearance*

Oh foolish judge
don't bang with your crude hammer
your slimy impurity
will decide my death.

Wafaa Abed al Razzaq
“The Judge”
Iraqi refugee

Each group will review artwork together, analyze the elements of the work, and identify some of the themes at play. Make sure to think about the ideas that are written on the board or flipchart and be ready to apply this to the next activity assigned.

6 Increased Potential for Maladaptive Behavior



My Country's Embrace
Sama Alshaibi

"The writing on the surface of my skin connects me to the surfaces of our land...graffiti (as art) and vandalism (as a criminal act)...embodies the complexity in defining the perception of resistance."

All I have in my exile are
a bit of dry bread, & longing
& a notebook sharing something of what I contain.
I spat onto its pages
the hatred I couldn't conceal.

Mahmoud Darwish
"Letter from Home"
Leaves of the Olive Tree, 1964



Target Practice
Sama Alshaibi

"By being both the victim and the victimizer, I am able to cross, once again, the delicate line of perspective. Whose story is it?"

Each group will review artwork together, analyze the elements of the work, and identify some of the themes at play. Make sure to think about the ideas that are written on the board or flipchart and be ready to apply this to the next activity assigned.

7 Uncertain Futures



Flying Monk
Woser, Tibetan Exile

My slumber has made way for insomnia,
yours is returned to you beautifully,
My spirit is swaying, deprived,
Only God night watches...
My heart is as if troubled by fear
My thoughts are always traveling but never return...
...my life is a big detour..

Jean-Louis N'Tadi
"Insomnia"
Refugee from the Democratic Republic of the Congo

"Regard experiences then as if they were about to disappear: what is it about them that anchors or roots them in reality? What would you save of them, what would you give up, what would you recover?"

Edward Said, *No Reconciliation Allowed*

Where to?
Where is the next destination?
Where is the final destination?
When will this never-ending path end?
When will this non-stop train stop?

Soheila Ghodstinat
an excerpt from "Silent Friend"
