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“We Refugees” Unit

Week 3—Day One (Thursday)

- 1) Introduce unit objective and plan
- 2) “We Refugees” reading/discussion (Handout A)
- 3) HW-web scavenger hunt-United Nations and United Nations High Commission for Refugees sites (Handout B)-due Monday

Week 4—Day Two (Monday)

- 1) Review scavenger hunt
- 2) Explain group project-public service announcements (Handout C)-due next Monday

Week 5—Day Three (Monday)

- 1) Share public service announcements, classmates take notes (Handout D)
- 2) HW-Reading and notes for UNHCR Executive Committee meeting (Handout E)

Week 5—Day Four (Tuesday)

- 1) UNHCR Executive Committee meeting, (Handout F-not included-to be created prior to actual meeting, specifics dependent on issue being addressed)

Week 5—Day Five (Wednesday)

- 1) Closing of unit
- 2) *They Poured Fire on Us From the Sky: The true story of three Lost Boys from Sudan* reading/discussion (Akaj, Benjamin, Bernstein, Judy A., Deng, Alephosian, Deng, Benson. *They Poured Fire on Us From the Sky*. New York: Public Affairs, 2005.) (Handout G-not included-the three pieces to be used are the Introduction and the two memoirs titled “Being a Refugee” and “Hopeless, Hopeful”)



Excerpt of Hannah Arendt's "We Refugees" (1943)

Arendt, Hannah. "We Refugees". *The Jewish Writings*. New York: Schocken Books, 2007.

In the first place, we don't like to be called "refugees." We ourselves call each other "newcomers" or "immigrants." Our newspapers are papers for "Americans of German language"; and, as far as I know, there is not and never was any club founded by Hitler-persecuted people whose name indicated that its members were refugees.

A refugee used to be a person driven to seek refuge because of some act committed or some political opinion held. Well, it is true we have had to seek refuge; but we committed no acts and most of us never dreamt of having any radical political opinion. With us the meaning of the term "refugee" has changed. Now "refugees" are those of us who have been so unfortunate as to arrive in a new country without any means and have to be helped by refugee committees.

Before this war broke out we were even more sensitive about being called refugees. We did our best to prove to other people that we were just ordinary immigrants. We declared that we had departed of our own free will to countries of our choice, and we denied that our situations had anything to do with "so-called Jewish problems." Yes, we were "immigrants" or "newcomers" who had left our country because, one fine day, it no longer suited us to stay, or for purely economic reasons. We wanted to rebuild our lives, that was all. In order to rebuild one's life one has to be strong and optimistic. So we are very optimistic.

Our optimism, indeed, is admirable, even if we say so ourselves. The story of our struggle has finally become known. We lost our home, which means the familiarity of daily life. We lost our occupation, which means the confidence that we are some use in this world. We lost our language, which means the naturalness of reactions, the simplicity of gestures, the unaffected expression of feelings. We left our relatives in the Polish ghettos and our best friends have been killed in concentration camps, and that means the rupture of our private lives...

Our new friends, rather overwhelmed by so many stars and famous men, hardly understand that at the basis of all our descriptions of past splendors lies one human truth: once we were somebodies about whom people cared, we were loved by friends, and even known by landlords as paying our rent regularly. Once we could buy our food and ride on the subway without being told we were undesirable. We have become a little hysterical since newspapermen started detecting us and telling us publicly to stop being disagreeable when shopping for milk and bread. We wonder how it can be done; we already are

some damnably careful in every moment of our daily lives to avoid anybody guessing who we are, what kind of passport we have, where our birth certificates were filled out—that Hitler didn’t like us. We try the best we can to fit into a world where you have to be sort of politically minded when you buy your food ...

I never can forget that young man who, when expected to accept a certain kind of work, sighed out, “You don’t know to whom you speak; I was Section-manager in Karstadt’s (a great department store in Berlin).” But there is also the deep despair of that middle-aged man who, going through countless shifts of different committees in order to be saved, finally exclaimed, “And nobody here knows who I am!” Since nobody would treat him as a dignified human being, he began sending cables to great personalities and his big relations. He learned quickly that in this mad world it is much easier to be accepted as a “great man” than as a human being ...

It is the same story all over the world, repeated again and again. In Europe the Nazis confiscated our property; but in Brazil we have to pay 30 percent of our wealth, like the most loyal members of the *Bund der Auslandsdeutschen*. In Paris we could not leave our homes after eight o’clock because we were Jews; but in Los Angeles we were restricted because we are “enemy aliens.” Our identity is changed so frequently that nobody can actually find out who we really are.



United Nations High Commission for Refugees

Website Scavenger Hunt

United Nations At A Glance—Overview

“The United Nations is an international organization founded in 1945 after the Second World War by 51 countries committed to maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations and promoting social progress, better living standards and human rights.”

“Due to its unique international character, and the powers vested in its founding Charter, the Organization can take action on a wide range of issues, and provide a forum for its 192 Member States to express their views, through the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and other bodies and committees.”

“The work of the United Nations reaches every corner of the globe. Although best known for peacekeeping, peacebuilding, conflict prevention and humanitarian assistance, there are many other ways the United Nations and its System (specialized agencies, funds and programmes) affect our lives and make the world a better place. The Organization works on a broad range of fundamental issues, from sustainable development, environment and refugees protection, disaster relief, counter terrorism, disarmament and non-proliferation, to promoting democracy, human rights, governance, economic and social development and international health, clearing landmines, expanding food production, and more, in order to achieve its goals and coordinate efforts for a safer world for this and future generations.”

(Source: www.un.org/un70/en/content/history)

To begin this unit and acquaint yourself with various designations of stateless people in the world, you are going to navigate the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) website. As you will read about the UNHCR is the UN office that focuses on issues of stateless people.

Please follow the instructions below and write responses in the spaces provided or you may type responses your own paper if you prefer. All responses must be in your own words unless otherwise specified.

1) Begin by opening up the UNHCR website (www.unhcr.org).

2) Click on the “About Us” tab and open up the “History of the UNHCR” window. Read the text titled “A Global Humanitarian Organization of Humble Origins” and summarize the history of the UNHCR.

3) On the same page, click on “The 1951 Refugee Convention” link and write the definition of the Convention.

4) Click on the “What We Do” tab. Read the text titled “Help the Uprooted and Stateless” and summarize the goals of the UNHCR.

5) On the same page, copy the titles of the headlines listed under “Latest News.”

6) Click on the “Where We Work” tab. Read the text titled “Around the World in Many Ways” and summarize what you read.

For the next section, you will be focusing exclusively on the 10 groups listed under the “Who We Help” tab.

Beginning with “Asylum Seekers” and concluding with “Women” please define who the group is, what their particular needs are, and copy the five headlines of the group in the news.

7) Asylum Seekers

Asylum Seekers in the News

8) Children

Children in the News

9) Internally Displaced People

Internally Displaced People in the News

10) Men

Men in the News

11) Older People

Older People in the News

12) People With Disabilities

People With Disabilities in the News

13) Refugees

Refugees in the News

14) Returnees

Returnees in the News

15) Stateless People

Stateless People in the News

16) Women

Women in the News

This assignment will be collected and reviewed on _____ and utilized to begin your public service announcement projects.



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HANDOUT C

"We Refugees" Unit

Public Service Announcement

GROUP PROJECT

Objective In groups, students will create public service announcements (PSA) to be "broadcast on television" encouraging the public to get involved in the UNHCR.

Six weeks after this normal human encounter, Storfer was dead—not gassed, apparently, but shot.

A public service announcement (PSA) A short film or video recording presented by an organization which attempts to persuade the audience to take some specific action or adopt a favorable view towards some service, institution, issue, or cause. Numerous examples of PSAs can be found by searching online.

Project Details

- ➡ The class will be broken into 10 groups. Each group will be assigned one of the groups you read about in the "Who We Help" section of the UNHCR website.

- ➡ Your PSA should cover the following content. Use the multitude of links on the
 - UNHCR website to uncover as much information as possible.
 - current, accurate images of the people you are reporting on
 - written and/or verbal text discussing the overall conditions of these people
 - regions in the world where these people are currently in particular need, you may wish to include statistics, maps, graphs, etc.
 - conclude with sharing "Ways That You Can Help Us" from the UNHCR website (click on "Get Involved" to find this page)

- ➡ Your PSA should follow the guidelines listed below.
 - all written and/or verbal text must be in your own words
 - CD, DVD, or video format
 - 2-4 minutes in length
 - well edited
 - the final image must be a bibliography of the websites and other sources used in the creation of your PSA

- ➡ All PSAs will be viewed in class on _____.



UNHCR: Public Service Announcements

Group	Information learned from viewing PSA	Overall thoughts/impressions
Asylum Seekers		
Children		
Internally Displaced People		
Men		

Group	Information learned from viewing PSA	Overall thoughts/impressions
Older People		
People With Disabilities		
Refugees		
Returnees		
Stateless People		
Women		



UNHCR Executive Committee

Meeting Preparation

Tomorrow in class we will be holding a mock meeting of the UNHCR Executive Committee. We will be discussing the current crisis in _____ (to be determined) and its specific impact on the children in that region. Our goal is to make a concrete recommendation to the United Nations General Assembly and our other intergovernmental and nongovernmental partners.

In preparation for tomorrow's meeting, please complete the following.

1) Begin by opening up the UNHCR website (www.unhcr.org). Click on the "About Us" tab and open up the "Governance and Organization" window. Next click on the "Executive Committee" link. Read and summarize the short description of the "Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme" in your notebook in Cornell note fashion.

2) Next open the section titled "Children" under the "Who We Help" tab. Under the "Children in the News" section, read and take Cornell notes in your notebook on the article titled "_____".