

Pack your bag and run

Link: https://www.etc-graz.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Manual 2012 Eng FINAL.pdf (p.478) [with minor adaptations]

Group size: Any

Duration: About 10 minutes

Objectives:

To develop knowledge and understanding about refugees and their rights, to promote solidarity with people who are forced to suddenly flee their homes.

Description:

This activity simulates the emotional and practical decisions a refugee must face and their unforeseen consequences.

1. Read/explain the following scenario:

You are a teacher in ____. Your partner disappears and is later found murdered. Your name appears in a newspaper article listing suspected subversives. Later you receive a letter threatening your life for your alleged political activity. You decide you must flee.

PACK YOUR BAG: You can only take five categories of things and only what you can carry. List what you would take.

- 2. After a few minutes, call on participants to read their lists aloud. For every list (usually 95%) this does not include the newspaper article or the threatening letter. Say, "Asylum denied!"
- 3. Read the legal definition of a refugee. Discuss how this definition is applied in real life and why most participants were denied asylum because they had no proof of well-founded fear of persecution to qualify for refugee status.
- 4. Discuss making decisions under pressure, reasons for personal choices, and emotions evoked by the decisionmaking process. Conclude by explaining the purpose of this activity.

Debriefing - Evaluation:

In the feedback round, ask participants to summarise their experiences:

- How fair was the treatment of the refugees?
- Should a country have the right to turn refugees away?
- Refugees have a human right to protection. Were these refugees given their right to protection? Why/Why not?
- Are there any displaced persons in your country currently?
- What can be done to stop people from becoming refugees in the first place?

Possible adaptation: Escape from the country of origin by a university student (and not a teacher). Focus on lack of documents proving frequency of university (instead of the newspaper).

