

Journey with Me: *Refugee Stories that Change Lives*



Figure 1 Flickr user Kris Krug

-A Facilitator Guide-

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This workshop was built on a learning-centred approach as designed by Global Learning Partners. To be effective, facilitators will honour the following principles of adult learning: safety, respect, inclusion, engagement, relevance, authenticity, transparency, and autonomy.

For more about this approach, visit:

www.globallearnigpartners.com

Endorsement

Local churches across the country are opening their homes and their hearts to refugees. These churches, of every denomination, are looking for resources to help them deepen and discover their way to becoming Samaritan churches. *Journey with Me* is a marvelous resource offering spiritual wisdom and practical tools for church groups who are in the process of welcoming the stranger. We all owe a debt of gratitude to the Christian Reformed Church which has generously shared this resource with other churches.

Mary Jo Leddy
- author, theologian, social activist
and widely respected for her work with refugees at Toronto's Romero House

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Journey with Me: Refugee Stories that Change Lives

A refugee justice workshop

Welcome to this refugee workshop. Congratulations! By engaging in this learning event, you have just taken a positive step towards addressing refugee justice in Canada and the world.

WHO is this for?

Journey with Me: Refugee Stories that Change Lives has been created for **Christians** who care about refugees and the injustices they face in Canada while fleeing conflict-ridden, oppressive, and desperate circumstances in other parts of the world. This workshop is for all churches and Christian groups and organizations. Some participants of this workshop may already know quite a bit and others may know very little. Some are passionate about taking action about the topic and others may be hesitant to commit to anything at all. Some always read or listen to news items about refugees and others rarely choose to do so. All are participating in this workshop because they feel called or curious to know more.

This workshop can be used with **a group of 5-500**. It is designed in such a way that it is flexible and versatile, and can include all interested participants. However, the ideal size to maximize learning is **15-20**. This will allow everyone to fully participate in the workshop throughout.

This workshop has been designed for youth and adults – not children. Although it can be adapted for a younger audience, the target audience is 14 and older.

Journey with Me: Refugee Stories that Change Lives is great for a variety of groups. Some possibilities include:

- Bible study group
- Part of a seasonal workshop
- Young adults class or event
- Teen event
- Board meeting
- Special event or workshop
- Staff meeting
- Staff professional development day
- Lunch & Learn
- Retreat.

The facilitator of this workshop should be passionate about refugee justice but does not need to be an expert on the topic. Of course it is helpful that the facilitator is somewhat informed, however, the idea of this workshop is that everyone is learning and journeying together. Ideally, the person leading the workshop is a trained facilitator (inquire with the Centre for Public Dialogue about how to become trained), but this too is not essential.

Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue (CRCPD) www.crcna.ca/PublicDialogue provides “...a place of conversation, learning and action on God's call to justice and peace”. The centre’s goal is to present a positive voice of faith in Canadian public life, and to live out the links of justice, hope and reconciliation in advocacy and citizenship (adapted from the website). This workshop is an important learning tool in the resources it offers members of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) and the Reformed Church of America (RCA), and is one of many other resources on its webpage http://www2.crcna.org/pages/publicdialogue_toolkit.cfm.

The Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue and the Office of Race Relations collaborated in the formation and facilitation of a **Refugee Justice Task Force**. This group was mandated to produce learning resources on refugee justice that will influence people to walk alongside their refugee neighbours, invest and engage in the lives of newcomers, extend hospitality, and assist in the mobilization of citizens to speak for policy change. Given the profound success of the *Blanket Exercise*¹ as a learning and mobilization tool in our communities, CRCPD believes that a similar interactive and experiential tool can be a valuable contribution to our Refugee Justice Task Force objectives. This workshop is a critical learning tool for churches.

¹ The *Blanket Exercise* is an interactive telling of the shared history of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. <http://www.kairoscanada.org/dignity-rights/indigenous-rights/blanket-exercise/>. It was developed by KAIROS and is widely used in many churches and faith-based groups across Canada.

WHY are we doing this workshop?

Well, the short answer is: Refugees are our neighbours. When we think of refugees we often hear the Biblical call to “welcome the stranger.” And welcoming the stranger is a good first step. But in this increasingly interconnected world, these strangers are our neighbours and we need each other. When one part of a community struggles, the entire community is incomplete - the entire community hurts. Our hope is that this workshop will help Christian citizens to work with their Refugee neighbours for justice.

So to begin, let’s consider some context.

Canadian Context²

As people have been forced to flee from their homelands over the years, Canada has been a welcoming country to many who have sought protection, safety and an opportunity to begin their lives again. Some of the first refugee populations to seek protection in Canada were British loyalists, Quakers and slaves who fled the American Revolution in the late 1700s. These populations were followed in the 1800s by people fleeing Poland, Italy and the Ukraine. In the decades following World War II and becoming a signatory to the Geneva Convention, Canada opened its doors to refugees fleeing Vietnam, Cambodia, Hungary, Uganda and Iraq, to name a few. Between the period 1975 to 1981 Canada responded with compassion and concern to the thousands of Indo-Chinese³ who fled the region during the Indo-Chinese war. Within 18 months Canada resettled 60,000 Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian refugees. Canada has resettled and welcomed survivors of oppressive regimes and war efficiently and successfully. In 1986, the people of Canada won the United Nations Nansen Medal for its major and sustained contribution to the cause of refugees. By 2010 Canada had resettled or granted asylum to refugees from more than 140 countries.

Despite Canada’s history and reputation as being a welcoming society for refugees there has been a change in direction over the past number of years. The doors have been closing and the rules have become much tighter largely as a result of policy that has served to make entry and integration into Canada more difficult. Bill C-31⁴ implemented in 2012 introduced changes to Canada’s refugee determination system including changes such as tight timelines that deny refugee claimants a fair chance to prove their claims. As well, the bill introduced “designated country of origin” that serves to limit appeals and create a list of safe countries from where refugee claimants are far less likely to be accepted. Bill C-49⁵ was introduced in 2011 to deter

² Much of this information has been taken and adapted from www.ccrweb.ca .

³ At the time these people were referred to as “boat people.”

⁴ See the Resources section for specific information on this Bill.

⁵ See the Resources section for specific information on this Bill.

human smuggling. However, this bill in essence is a bill that mostly targets vulnerable refugees, not the smugglers. Refugees are subject to arbitrary detention, separation of families and long-term restrictions on landed status. Recently, in October 2014 Bill C-43⁶ ***an omnibus budget bill*** was tabled. The bill contains provisions that would allow provinces to reduce access to social assistance for refugee claimants and other people without permanent status in Canada. If the bill is passed there could be major consequences for refugee claimants and others without permanent status.

For refugees sponsored under the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (PSRP) there too have been significant policy changes that have impacted the sponsorship and resettlement of refugees. The PSRP was founded on two key principles ‘additionality’ and ‘naming’ the refugees to be sponsored. Privately sponsored refugees have been resettled over and above the refugees resettled by the Canadian government (Government Assisted Refugees). As well sponsors could propose or name the refugees to be resettled. Sponsors could respond to the needs of refugees in communities of particular concern to them.

However, the government has introduced measures that have increasingly focused and restricted the PSR Program. In 2011 the government introduced a complex system of caps and allocations which have limited how many, and from where, refugees can be sponsored. In 2015 60% of the available sponsorship spaces are reserved for Ministerial priorities. As a result of these measures many refugees identified by sponsors and in need of resettlement cannot be sponsored because there are no allocation spaces available. There is a growing trend of the government deciding who is to be resettled with the expectation that sponsors will provide the financial and human resources all while the government itself is resettling fewer refugees. The focusing of the resettlement program also means that regions of the world that are not considered priority will be sorely neglected.

On June 30, 2012, the federal government implemented cuts to its Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP), which covers basic health care for refugees, refugee claimants and certain other non-citizens. A recent Federal Court decision called the implementation of this recent government policy to be “cruel and unusual” and a Federal Court order required that IFH be restored. IFH has been restored but not to the same level as it was. These changes unjustly discriminate against people in need and, worse, leave some people to suffer debilitating illnesses or to die without treatment. Combined with these policy initiatives is government language like “bogus refugees” and “queue jumpers”. This language is pejorative and misleading. It pits refugees against the rest of Canadians and it pits refugee claimants against refugees seeking resettlement. This negative language suggests that those who wait in camps

⁶ See the Resources section for specific information on this Bill.

overseas are the “real” refugees while those who make their claim in Canada jump the line and are not as deserving. The truth is that all refugees are people who have been forced from their homes by human rights abuses. All refugees have a right to protection wherever they are. We should not expect refugees to wait passively for someone to help them.⁷

What Do the Numbers Say?⁸

UNHCR figures show that the number of refugees in the world today has been steadily increasing. Looking at figures in 2003, 2008 and 2013 the trend is as follows: 9,592,796; 10,489,811 and 11,703,179⁹. However, despite increasing numbers of refugees globally the number of resettlement spaces has remained constant at 80,000 for the past several years. Thus the resettlement gap (resettlement need versus resettlement spaces) has widened. As reported in the UNHCR handbook, “... the overall number of places for resettlement has not kept pace with the increased resettlement need. In 2010 UNHCR estimated that over 800,000 refugees are in need of resettlement over the next several years. With only approximately 80,000 places available there is a huge gap of vulnerable refugees without a solution.”¹⁰

In looking at the same 10 year period, the number of refugees resettled to Canada has largely remained the same: 2003 10,760; 2008 10,807¹¹; and, 2013 12,173¹². However, when compared to earlier years in the 1980s and 1990s the number of resettled refugees has significantly declined. This is of concern because the number of refugees globally continues to increase and with the Syrian and Iraqi crises the number of refugees globally has increased significantly since 2012.

The number of refugee claimants arriving in Canada has been going down dramatically (10,000 fewer in 2010 than in 2009). Refugee claims in Canada were decreased in the first half of 2013, and 50% less than 2012. The drop in numbers follows the introduction in December 2012 of changes to the refugee determination system and the introduction of Bill C-31. At the current rate, there will be fewer claims in Canada in 2013 than in any year since the early 1980s.¹³

⁷ For more information concerning myths about refugees, see <http://ccrweb.ca/sites/ccrweb.ca/files/static-files/documents/FFacts.htm> and <http://ccrweb.ca/en/myths-facts>.

⁸ The information in this section comes mainly from www.ccrweb.ca, www.unhcr.ca and www.cic.gc.ca.

⁹ UNHCR Statistical On-line Population Data Base <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a013eb06.html>.

¹⁰ UNHCR Resettlement Handbook, Revised edition 2011, Geneva, pp69.

¹¹ Facts and Figures 2012 – Immigration overview: Permanent and temporary residents <http://www.cic.gc.ca/English/resources/statistics/facts2012/index.asp>

¹² Preliminary tables – Permanent and temporary residents, 2013 <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/facts2013-preliminary/index.asp>

¹³ For further information about what Canada is and isn't doing in regards to refugees see *How Generous is Canada* <http://ccrweb.ca/en/how-generous-is-Canada>.

It is important to note that change is constant when working with refugees. The global environment and the policy context continue to evolve and shift. It is challenging for this document to be consistently up to date and current. To keep abreast of issues and trends please refer to the resources section on page 20 of the Workshop document. Please note the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) has an excellent website with relevant and current information on a broad range of refugee issues.

Canada's Faith Communities

It is vital for the churches to realize the current realities of refugees and immigrants to Canada so that Christians know the facts and feel what it means to be a refugee in Canada, and therefore more intentionally and effectively support refugees in their resettlement to Canada. The Biblical stories of seeking refuge (Israelites to and from Egypt, Jesus' family in exile, and Paul's travels) are compelling examples. Generosity, welcoming the stranger and justice for all regardless of circumstances are core values of the Gospel.

Christian churches and other faith communities have traditionally provided the main support for the private sponsorship of refugees program. Many churches have compelling stories to tell about their own immigrant member experiences. For many Christian churches from immigrant communities whose average age is becoming older they are seeing present and future growth in welcoming and joining with members from more recently arrived immigrant communities.

This workshop is designed to provide time for reflection on what the Bible says about refugee justice, learn through experiential activities, and dialogue what it feels like to be a refugee in Canada today, engage us in the issues facing refugees globally and in Canada, and to consider ways to get personally involved together with your church community.

What RESULTS are we hoping for?

By engaging in this workshop with heart, mind *and* body, we are hoping for some or all of the following changes/ impact:

- Individuals will listen more and assume less, when in conversation with a refugee
- Individuals will have more empathy, love and kindness for their refugee neighbours
- Individuals will be confident to take up conversation about issue of refugee justice i.e. 1-1, groups, at church, etc.
- Canadians will respond to campaign requests i.e. through social media, petitions signing, letter writing, marches, etc.
- Canadians will feel empowered to discuss refugee issues with their elected representatives

- Individuals and churches will seek out other resources to help them engage further with refugee justice issues i.e. another workshop, a guest speaker, etc.
- Churches will be more fully inclusive and accepting of refugees
- Churches will join existing campaigns dealing with refugee justice
- Churches will visit, promote, and more vigorously support the work of organizations working with refugees
- Churches will sponsor a refugee individual or family to come to Canada and assist with their resettlement to Canada.

WHEN should we do this workshop?

Journey with Me: Refugee Stories that Change Lives can be used at any time of the year and at any event. However, some dates to keep in mind are:

March 8 – International Women’s Day

April 4 – Refugee Rights Day in Canada¹⁴

June 16 – Day of the African Child

June 20 – World Refugee Day

October 17 – International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

December 10 – International Human Rights Day

This is a 90-minute workshop. The hope is that this will easily fit into an already existing gathering or event. It is also hoped that this time frame minimizes barriers preventing individuals to participate and maximizes the places and times it can be used.

This workshop can also be facilitated in 60 minutes (taking out a few tasks like 2 & 6) or in 120 minutes, giving more time for all tasks.

Journey with Me: Refugee Stories that Change Lives is not meant to teach all there is to learn about refugee justice. It is an introduction and we encourage additional workshops and learning after some time has passed. This is a step in the direction of empowering empathy.

¹⁴ April 4, 1985 was a milestone for refugee rights in Canada. On that day, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects the right of refugee claimants in Canada to life, liberty and security of the person, and that claimants are therefore entitled to an oral hearing, in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice and international law. This ruling has become known as the ‘[Singh decision](#)’ in recognition of Harnhajan Singh, Sadhu Singh Thandi, Paramjit Singh Mann, Kewal Singh, Charanjit Singh Gill, Indrani and Satnam Singh who brought their cases to the Court.

No breaks are necessary and the workshop should run continuously from start to finish. Here is the suggested timing:

- Welcome and intro (5 min)
- Task 1 – An Overview of Our Time Together (5 min)
- Task 2 – Why Does This Matter (10 min)
- Task 3 – What the Bible Says About Refugees (15 min)
- Task 4 – Walking in Some Else’s Shoes Role Play (35 min)
- Task 5 – What Are You Going to Do (15 min)
- Closing and prayer (5 min)

The timing of the workshop will depend on the following:

- size of the group
- the people in the group
- the amount of time you have
- which section receives the most emphasis
- whether the workshop is done in its entirety or part.

NOTE: *All tasks are optional and can be used in their entirety or part. However, the action plan at the end of the workshop is crucial, and is where evidence of learning and change will be found. We recommend you have a plan for follow-up on this section and reporting to the church and/or Centre for Public Dialogue.*

WHERE should it be?

The ideal location for *Journey with Me: Refugee Stories that Change Lives* is an open space with movable furniture. Since you will need to set up multiple areas of engagement, using a church sanctuary is discouraged. Find a space that has usable walls, is comfortable and welcoming, and in which your group can easily fit and move around.

When selecting the building, consider the group that has been invited. If they are a Bible study group you may want to use a room in the church—the extra space will be appreciated. If they are at a conference or Board meeting, the room may be given to you. No matter the group, remember to intentionally match the size and type of group, with the venue and space.

Food can help people relax and offers an easy way for people to interact and talk. For this reason, we encourage offering food and/or drinks before and after the workshop.

What CONTENT will be learned?

The Content	The Achievement-based Objectives <i>By the end of the course, you will have...</i>
Refugees in the Bible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examined a list of Bible verses and discussed what you believe God is telling us about refugees and how we are called to respond.
Refugee terminology and facts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed, discussed and role played various facts about refugees in Canada.
Empathy for refugees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared our connections with refugees and refugee issues “Walked” in a refugee’s shoes and shared feeling about this experience Unpacked the potential ripple effect (both positive & negative) of our treatment of refugees in Canada.
Resources available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considered ideas for highlighting refugee justice more in your church or other communities, and named additional ideas Reviewed resources available Written a personal or group action plan using select ideas and resources to further the work and/or learning in this area.

The Learning Tasks

Below are some ideas for teaching each of the learning tasks:

Welcome and Prayer

It is important to greet people warmly and share why/how this learning event is happening. Share your excitement – it will be contagious!

TASK 1 Overview of Our Time Together

It is helpful to share an overview of the workshop before starting. Don't stay here long, but help the group feel the sequence of learning: "We will start by hearing what God is saying to us in the Bible, then learn what our church is doing, and end by naming what we as individuals can do. Most of the time will be spent trying to understand what is like to be a refugee in Canada." If you are changing something in the workshop, here is where you can mention that (and why).

TASK 2 Why Does This Matter

This is a warm-up and will help anchor the learning in our personal realities: "What we just saw clearly points to how refugees are part of our lives, communities, country and world."

TASK 3 What the Bible Says about Refugees

What better place is there to start: root it in the Bible. Some learners will be keen to share their experiences and other stories. That time will come, but for now focus the conversation about the Bible and what God is telling us about refugees.

TASK 4 Walking in Someone Else's Shoes

This is the main focus of this workshop; participants will only start to feel what it is like to be a refugee in Canada, *by being one*. After the role play it is important to help everyone switch out of the role they have been playing (so some this may be difficult!) – have them stand and turn around, or you may wish to offer a short prayer of thanks to the refugees who shared their stories. This is the critical section of the workshop and should not be shortened or cut.

TASK 5 What Are You Going to Do

This is the personal piece, and critical for helping the learning grow beyond the workshop. Take time to personally complete this, and (equally important) share with someone close by.

Closing Poem and Prayer

This won't take much time but an important way to end your journey together.

Key Terms

A refugee is a person forced outside of his or her country of nationality who is unable or unwilling to return because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.

A refugee claimant is a person outside of his or her country of nationality who has made a claim to be a refugee, and is waiting for the claim to be investigated. Refugee claimants have the right, under Canadian and international law, to remain in the country until the claim has been reviewed and either accepted or rejected. Sometimes the term “asylum seeker” is also used.

A privately sponsored refugee is a refugee who has been resettled to Canada under the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (PSRP). Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) organizations with support from Canadian citizens provide financial and settlement assistance for refugees they sponsor usually for one year after arrival.

An immigrant is a person who chooses to leave one country to settle permanently in another. To immigrate to Canada, people must apply and be selected while living outside of Canada.

An internally displaced person (IDP) is a person who has fled war, famine and persecution, but has not left his or her country of origin. Many IDPs have fled for similar reasons as refugees, but they remain inside the boundary of their country and are under the care of their government. Most IDPs hope they can return home soon. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has a limited mandate to care for IDPs.

A migrant is a person who moves to another country without being granted the rights of permanent residence. Migrants often leave their homes due to extreme poverty, environmental catastrophes, and forced displacement due to projects such as dams, mines or the introduction of foreign markets. In Canada, most migrants come under temporary worker programs such as seasonal agricultural or live-in caregiver programs, which afford few rights or protection from abuse. Undocumented migrants are another growing reality in Canada. They are economic “refugees/migrants” who tend to live under the radar.

A migrant worker is a person who has left his or her homeland and has moved, sometimes seasonally, in order to find work.

A permanent¹⁵ resident is a person who has been granted permanent resident status after having come to Canada as an immigrant or as a refugee. This term has replaced the term “landed immigrant”.

An application for permanent residence on Humanitarian and Compassionate Grounds (H&C) is an application that may be available to someone who is seeking permanent residence on the following grounds: the best interest of the child, establishment in Canada or hardship (different than risk) in their country of origin. In the past H&C has been a viable option for refugee claimants who have received negative decisions; however, it is becoming less accessible due to significant restrictions that were put in place in 2012.

¹⁵ Although based on changing legislation, “permanent” may not be so permanent any more.

Facts about refugees and refugee claimants in Canada¹⁶

1. Refugees and others seeking protection pose very little risk to Canada's security.

Refugees and others seeking protection in Canada are not threats to security – they are seeking security and protection from threats to their own lives.

Refugee claimants all go through a front-end security screening. Through this process, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) checks all refugee claimants on arrival in Canada. Since the screening was put in place in 2001, the number of claimants found to represent any kind of security concern has been statistically insignificant. |

It is far more difficult to enter Canada as a refugee than as a visitor, because the refugee determination process involves security checks by CSIS and the RCMP, fingerprinting and interviews. It is not likely that a person intending to commit a violent act would expose themselves to such detailed examinations. The *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* excludes refugee claimants if they are found to be inadmissible on the basis of security, serious criminality, organized criminality or human rights violations.

2. Harsh policies won't stop refugees from using smugglers.

People fleeing persecution often have no choice but to turn to smugglers to help them escape. Many – maybe most – refugees have used smugglers to get to Canada. How people arrive in Canada - by plane, land or boat - tells us nothing about why they left. To decide if they need our protection we need to know why they left and what dangers they would face if they returned. We have a refugee determination system to find this out.

It is unfair and immoral to punish refugees and others seeking protection in an attempt to deter smugglers. It is also not going to work. Refugees are fleeing desperate situations and will do whatever they need to do to save their lives. They rarely know anything about the policies in place in the country they arrive in – sometimes they don't even know where they are going.

Australia tried the strategy of punitive measures to discourage refugee arrivals: it didn't work. When the Australian government abolished their "Temporary Protection Visas" in 2008 they explained that they had not achieved their intended purpose: "The evidence clearly shows, however, that TPVs did not have any deterrent effect. Indeed, there was an increase in the number of women and children making dangerous journeys to Australia."

3. The families of refugees and other newcomers to Canada make important contributions.

¹⁶ <http://ccrweb.ca/en/myths-facts>

Families make significant positive contributions to Canadian society, both economically and socially. The Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (2003) found that immigrants tend to establish themselves more easily if they are supported by families.

According to a Statistics Canada study, family class immigrants are less likely to be low income than skilled workers immediately after they arrive in Canada.

Contrary to popular belief, parents and grandparents who are sponsored to come to Canada are not always elderly. According to a recent study (A Preliminary Investigation of the Contributions of Sponsored Parents and Grandparents in Canada), almost half (40%) of sponsored parents and/or grandparents work or are self-employed after two years in Canada.

People contribute to society in many ways, and not just economically. In particular, sponsored parents and grandparents make significant non-economic contributions by caring for other family members. The saved costs of childcare, healthcare and psychosocial support have broader benefits for our communities, as well as the economic performance of family members and other immigrants. Sponsored family members contribute in many other ways as well - as leaders, artists, community workers and elders.

4. Refugees receive limited, if any, social assistance from government authorities.

For several years, a persistent chain email has been circulating claiming that refugees receive significantly more money in income assistance than Canadians collecting a pension. The information, which is based on a letter published in the *Toronto Star* has been disproven by the federal government and the Canadian Council for Refugees.

Refugees come to Canada in different ways, but no matter the category, refugees receive very limited income assistance from the government.

The true picture is that:

Refugee claimants and refugees recognized by the Immigration and Refugee Board receive no special income assistance. They may, depending on provincial regulations, be entitled to social assistance like other residents.

Privately sponsored refugees are not entitled to government assistance (including provincial assistance) during the period of their sponsorship (usually for one year after arrival in Canada). Their income support must be provided by their sponsors – volunteer community groups.

Government assisted refugees have access to financial assistance from the federal government through the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP). This financial assistance is generally for one year maximum and is received only if they do not have their own financial resources or income. The exact rate depends on the size of the family and is tied to social assistance rates. In Ontario, for example, a single person receives \$781 per month. In addition, government-assisted refugees are entitled to a one-time set up allowance, to cover such things as clothes, basic household effects and

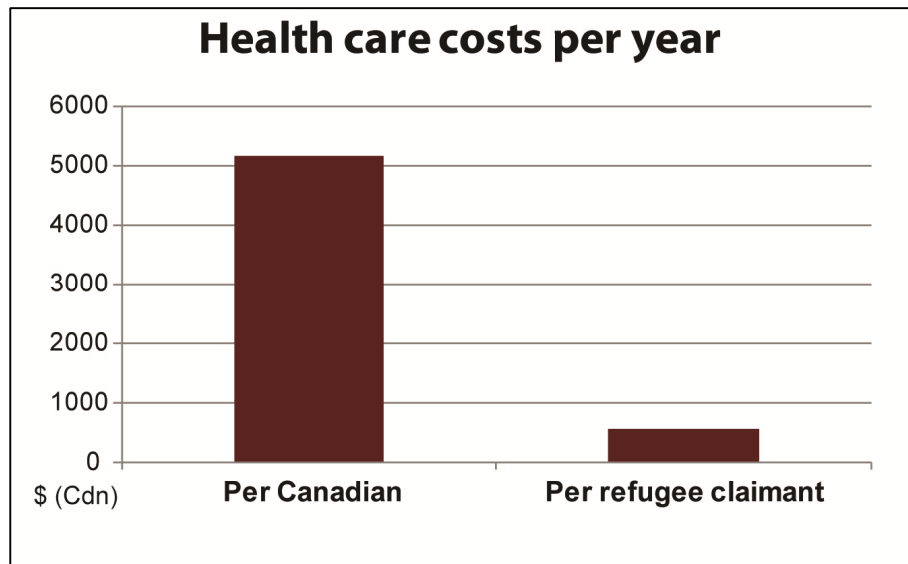
staples, and telephone installation. For a single person there is a maximum one-time allowance of \$905, plus a \$564 loan for house rental and telephone line deposits.

Most resettled refugees arrive in Canada with a significant debt burden, since they are expected to repay the Canadian government for their transportation to Canada as well as the cost of their medical examination before coming to Canada. This means refugee families often begin life in Canada with a debt of thousands of dollars. Interest is charged on this loan at a rate set by the Department of Finance each year.

Visit this webpage for more information on transportation loans for resettled refugees and the devastating impacts they have: <http://ccrweb.ca/en/transportation-loans>

Visit this webpage for resources to set the record straight (including a sample email response) and more information: <http://ccrweb.ca/en/refugees-and-income-assistance-rebutting-chain-email-pensioners-myth>

5. The cost of healthcare for refugees and refugee claimants amounts to a fraction of that of other Canadians.



The cost of healthcare for refugees and refugee claimants amounts to just 10% of that of other Canadians. (See <http://ccrweb.ca/sites/ccrweb.ca/files/ifhreporten.pdf>)

In addition, newcomers to Canada use fewer health services as compared to Canadians, especially in their first few years after arrival. This phenomenon has become popularly known as the 'healthy immigrant' effect.

6. International law recognizes that refugees often don't have the required documents to enter a foreign country.

The UN *Convention relating to the Status of Refugees* (article 31) and Canadian law (*Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* s. 133) prohibit governments from penalizing refugees who enter or remain illegally on their territory.

Many Jews fleeing Nazi persecution in the mid-twentieth century used false documents to reach safety and to find protection as refugees. The Swedish protective passports (schutz-passes) distributed by Raoul Wallenberg is one such example. In recognition for his efforts to help smuggle persecuted Jews to safety, Raoul Wallenberg became Canada's first honorary citizen.

People fleeing persecution often have no choice but to turn to using false documents or smugglers to help them escape. Repressive governments often refuse to issue passports to known political dissidents – or to imprison them if they try to leave the country. Sometimes refugees are stripped of their identification as they flee from conflict or they have no time to collect their official documents before fleeing for safety.

How people arrive in Canada tells us nothing about *why* they left. To decide if they need our protection we need to know why they left and what dangers they would face if they returned. We have a refugee determination system to find this out.

7. Refugees live in many different circumstances, not just in camps.

Refugees are people who have been forced from their homes by human rights abuses. All refugees have a right to protection, wherever they are. Saying that some refugees are more deserving than others is the same as saying that some human beings are of less value than others.

Canada has legal obligations towards refugee claimants in Canada under the *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* (article 33) and the *Convention against Torture* (article 3). The Supreme Court of Canada has also confirmed that the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guarantees the right of refugee claimants to fundamental justice, in a process where their claims for protection are heard and evaluated impartially.

Not everyone who makes a claim in Canada will be found to be a refugee, but each person needs to be heard to ensure that no one is sent back to face persecution or torture. Canada does not have the same legal obligations towards refugees outside Canada who apply for resettlement.

8. Most countries in the world have signed on to protect refugees.

International law says nothing about where, or from what country, a refugee must ask for protection. Refugees do whatever they can to reach a country they hope will be safe – and that country has an obligation to protect any refugees on their territory.

In the case of many refugees in Asia, almost none of the countries in their own region have signed the *Convention relating to the Status of Refugees* and many of them offer little or no protection to refugees. In Thailand, for example, Sri Lankan refugees face at best a precarious life without status, or else arrest, detention and possible return to Sri Lanka. Staying in Thailand is not a solution.

Since Canada is far from most places that refugees are fleeing, very few refugees can make it here. It would be unfair to suggest that even those few should not come here, but rather go to other countries that already receive many more refugees than Canada.

9. There is no waiting line for refugees.

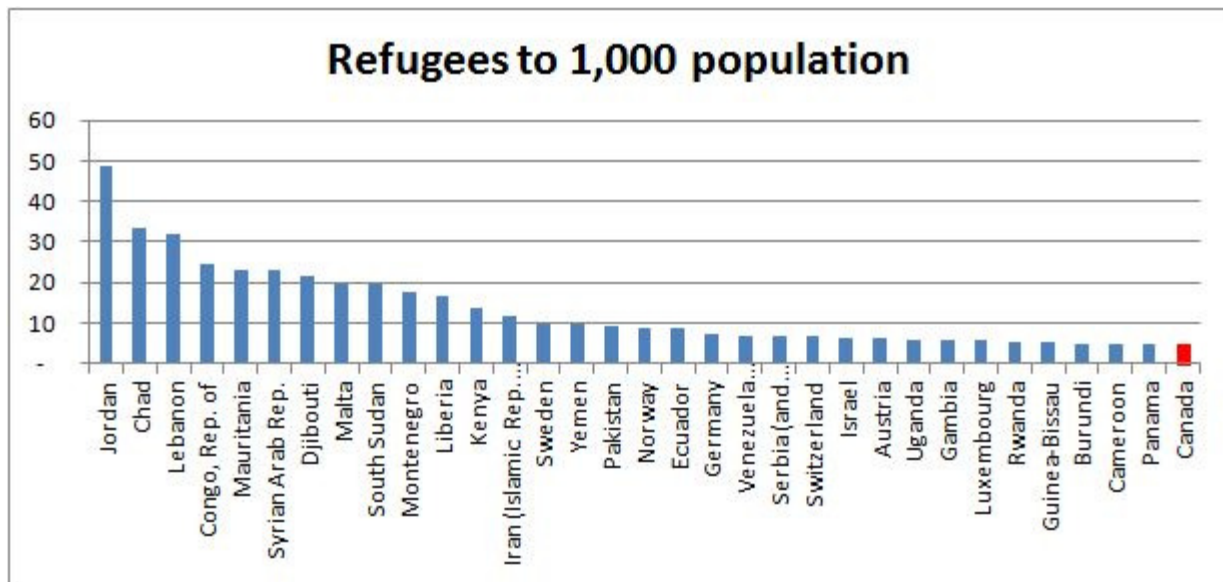
International law guarantees to people fleeing persecution the right to go to another country and seek asylum – that is why we have a refugee determination system.

If your life is in danger, you run. You don't stand still and wait for help to come to you. Different rules apply to refugees because their lives are at stake.

These different rules were adopted following the Second World War when many countries, including Canada, had closed the door on Jewish refugees. Canada recently commemorated the tragic turning away of the MS St Louis, many of whose passengers were killed by the Nazis after Canada denied them entry. We do not want to go back to those days.

10. Canada has fewer refugees per capita than many other countries.

Canada has just 5 refugees per 1,000 people, compared to more than 20 refugees per 1,000 in Jordan, Chad, Lebanon, Congo-Brazzaville, Mauritania, Syria and Djibouti. Jordan has 49 per 1,000!

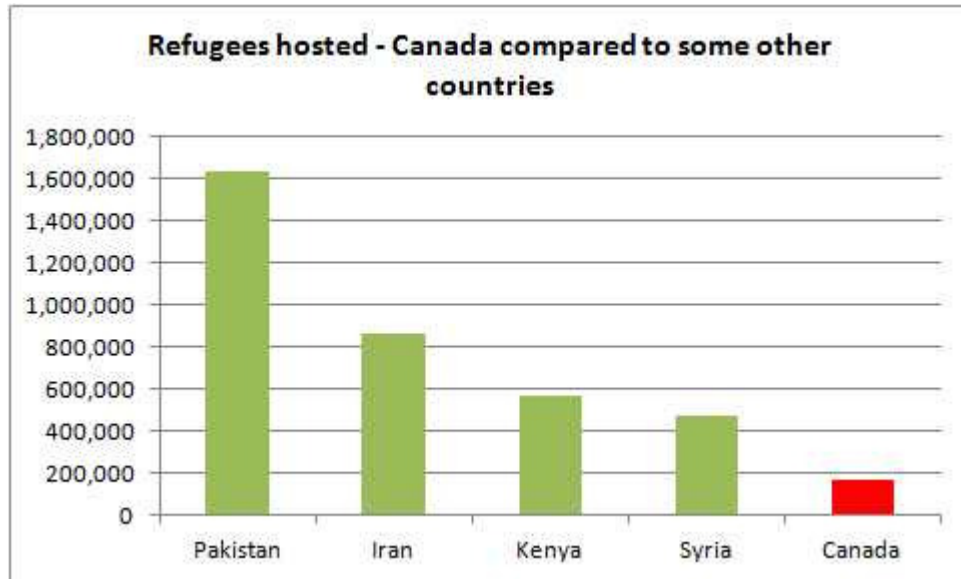


Canada comes 33rd when we rank countries according to the number of refugees per capita.

Other countries ahead of Canada include Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, Israel and Austria.

(Source: UNHCR, Global Trends 2012: Excel Annex tables, Table 24)

Many countries in the Global South, such as Pakistan, Iran and Kenya, host far more refugees than Canada. Pakistan, for example, is home to 10 times as many refugees as Canada.



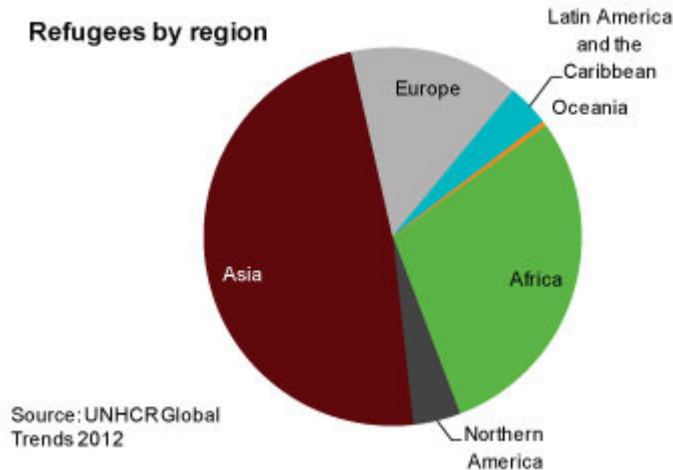
The numbers shown in the chart are only for refugees – there are also over 17 million internally displaced people.

Overall in 2012, 23,000 people were displaced each day. 23,000 is the total number of refugees given permanent residence in Canada in the whole year.

Sources: http://popstats.unhcr.org/PSQ_POC.aspx and Global trends: <http://www.unhcr.org/51bacb0f9.html>

11. Most refugees are in the Global South.

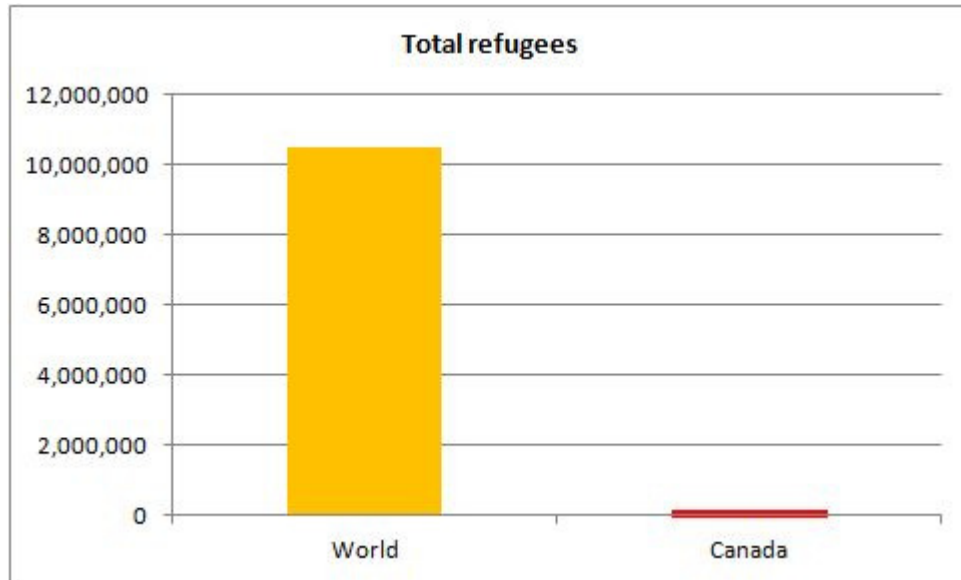
The vast majority of the world's refugees are in the Global South. Only a tiny minority of refugees are found in Canada and the rest of the wealthiest countries.



48% of refugees are in Asia, 29% are in Africa. Just 4% are in Northern America (USA, Canada and Bermuda).

12. Canada: home to just 1.5% of world's refugees.

Canada hosts about 1.5% of the world's refugees, according to the UNHCR.



There were 10,500,241 refugees in world in 2012, according to UNHCR Displacement Trends 2012.

The UNHCR estimates that there were 163,756 refugees in Canada, though this number may be too high. The UNHCR estimates the number of refugees hosted by Canada based on the number accepted over 10 years, but many of these refugees would have become Canadian citizens during the 10 years and shouldn't still count as refugees.

13. Canada welcomes only a tiny percentage of the world's refugees.

Canada offered a permanent home to just 2% of the total number of new refugees forced to flee their countries in 2012.

Just counting the new refugees in 2012, there were 1,100,000 persons newly displaced in the world, according to UNHCR Displacement Trends 2012. 23,094 refugees became permanent residents in Canada in 2012 (resettled refugees, refugees recognized in Canada after making a claim and dependants of refugees).

Planning Check List

Date:

Facilitators:

Location:

What (action item)	When (date)	Who (person)
Send flier/ invitation to church(es), group(s), individuals	1-2 months before	
Decide on facilitator(s) best suited for the event	1 month before	
Decide and arrange venue	1 month before	
Meet with co-facilitator (face-to-face, Skype or phone)	2 weeks before	
Conduct needs assessment	2 weeks before	
Visit event site, if possible	2 weeks before	
Adapt workshop, as needed	1 week before	
Confirm date, time, place and number of participant with organizer	1 week before	
Check all supplies, including photo release forms, handouts, and enough scenarios for all participants	2 days before	
Set up the room	At least 1 hour before	
THE WORKSHOP		
Check in with a few participants	Immediately after session	
Check in with co-facilitator, if applicable	Immediately after session	
Check in with event organizer(s) and those involved	Immediately after session	
Address any remaining logistics issues i.e. costs, follow up work	Within the week after	
Send (by email or mail) the signed Photo Release Forms, photos, and reporting form to the Centre for Public Dialogue	Within the week after	

Steps of Planning Worksheet

This worksheet is meant to assist you in your planning so you can make the workshop meaningful and relevant for each individual and group to maximize learning and increase the possibility of real change. It will help you check your assumptions.

	What we know	What we need to do/ change for their workshop
The People: How might any of the people involved impact what you are planning		
The Situation: What is calling for this event with these people at this time		
The Impact: What realistic impact are you hoping for		
The Time and Timing: How may the time available impact the workshop		

<p>The Place and Space:</p> <p>How may the place or space impact the workshop; what may need to change</p>		
<p>The Content:</p> <p>What skills, knowledge, attitudes are especially needed here; what do you want to emphasis</p>		
<p>The Objectives:</p> <p>Which objectives may not work with this group; what may need to change</p>		
<p>The Plan:</p> <p>What will need to change as a result of what you learned in the last 7 steps</p>		

Materials Needed

The following materials are need for this workshop:

- Workshop design, 1/participant
- Facilitator guide, x2 (as samples)
- Flip chart stand, x2*
- Flip chart paper, for 2 stands and 2 sheets per table
- Dark markers, for table and facilitator
- Baskets to put markers and pens in, 1/table
- Refugee profiles, 1/participant (with extras) or 1 packet of profiles/table
- Pens or pencils, 1/person
- Tape
- Name tags, 1/person
- Clock
- Feedback sheets, 1/person
- Photo release forms, 1/participant (see below).

Optional

- Camera (NOTE: ensure that everyone signs a photo release form)
- Music, can play as people are arriving
- Colourful table cloth for resources table
- Resource table, with books, other workshops, articles and other items from the toolkit
- Candy for baskets.

*=2 flip chart stands make it easier to record all the emotions felt (in Task 4), especially with a large group since you have to write very large for all to see.

Set Up

During your room set up, do the following:

- Arrange the tables so everyone can see each other and the front
- Place one basket in the middle of each table with markers and pens for all
- Place 2-3 sheets of flip chart papers in the middle of each table
- Place packet of profiles and workshop designs in the middle of each table
- Set up flip chart with pad of paper stands at the front
- Ensure a clock is clearly in view to you.

Announcement

Here is an announcement you may wish to use:

Journey with Me: A Refugee Workshop—“The Lord watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow” (Ps 146:9). Join us on **[date]** to learn about the situations that our refugee neighbours face in Canada today and how we can journey with them. This interactive 90-minute workshop offers real-life stories of refugees, Biblical reflection on what God is calling us to do, and time to share stories and plans for action. Sign up with **[name of contact person]** by **[deadline to sign up]**.

Photo Release

I hereby consent to be included in any **photographs** taken by/for [church or organization] during the *Journey with Me: Refugee Stories that Change Lives* workshop, and further, authorize the use and reproduction of any of these photos for use in [church or organization] educational activities or promotional materials.

I hereby do NOT consent to be included in any *photographs* taken by or for [church or organization] during the *Journey with Me: Refugee Stories that Change Lives* workshop.

Date: _____

Please print your name: _____

Signature: _____

Reporting to Centre for Public Dialogue

It is very helpful if you complete the below reporting template to aid the Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue (CRCPD) in recording, future planning and appropriate follow-up & support. Thank you for taking the time to do this!

1. WHO did you teach, and how many were in the group?

2. WHY was this event organized?

3. WHERE exactly was this event held?

4. WHEN was this event held, and how much time did you have?

5. Some important areas of learning are:
For the learners

For the facilitators

6. Some important areas of concern or challenge are:
For the learners

For the facilitators

7. What does the CRCPD need to do/clarify re: process and support for facilitators?

8. What does the CRCPD need to do re: support and accompaniment for the church/group or learners?

9. What did the church/group or learners commit to doing and who will hold them accountable (or check on their commitments)?

WHAT needs to be done	WHEN will it happen	WHO will do it

10. What is the next learning opportunity for this church or community, as you see it now?

11. What else would you like to share?

Tips for Effective Facilitation

Facilitating well can make all the difference in learners feeling safe in a learning event or not. This is a skill *and* an art. Here are some tips to help:

1. **Affirm all answers, questions and comments.** Participants need to know that every answer, regardless of how strange or different, will be heard and respected. When learners know that all answers are valid they will be more open to speaking their minds.
2. **Encourage cross-talk.** People are accustomed to the “teacher” as the focus of a session and all discussion. Facilitators need to encourage the group to answer and respond to each other’s ideas and questions rather than a back and forth with them.
3. **Ask open questions.** Open questions encourage dialogue and invite ideas, opinions and discussion. Since open questions have no ‘yes/no’ answers, learners are invited to engage with the content and each other, explore and make sense of the topic for themselves i.e. “What in this experience about refugee justice was important to you to hear or experience?”
4. **Weave.** Weaving past and future information and stories into what you are doing will help learners see connections i.e. “Remember when ... said...?” “By the end of this session we will all have a personal action plan... .”
5. **Talk less, listen more.** The more learners can discussion, debate, and assess new content, the more they learn. This means: less of you, more of them.
6. **Use invitational language.** Invitational language is respectful and inviting. Try phrases like: “Who doesn’t mind sharing their idea with the group?” or “Who can read that for us?”
7. **Use your co-facilitator.** Discuss how you can best support each other and work as a team i.e. one can script on the flip chart while the other facilitates the dialogue.
8. **Echo and summarize what is shared.** This can be very affirming and help people feel respected.
9. **Wait at least 5 seconds for an answer after asking a question.** Silence is a difficult thing when we are facilitating. However, people need time to think of what they want to say, whether they want to share and or ask a question. Counting to yourself can help you remember to wait.

10 Core Principles

The following core principles will help to maximize learning. Here are some practical ways to help these come alive.

1. **Respect.** Learners want to feel their ideas, experiences, knowledge, culture and everything about them is respected and honoured. Affirm everyone.
2. **Safety.** Learners need to feel emotionally, physically, and psychologically safe enough to share personal stories, ask difficult questions and offer challenging ideas i.e. state up front that emotions will surface, and that's okay.
3. **Authenticity.** Being fully present with the learners - feeling their emotions and sensing their struggles – will ensure your responses and questions are meaningful and relevant to each person in the room at that time i.e. watch your eye contact and voice tone.
4. **Humility.** We are all learners in this journey, so showing humility about what we know and don't know is important i.e. it's okay to say "I don't know the answer to that..."
5. **Deep listening.** Sometimes what *is not* said is just as important as what *is* said. Deep listening will help learners feel safe i.e. listen with your whole body.
6. **Relevance.** Learners need to understand how each session is relevant and important for them and their lives. If someone cannot see the relevance, they will unhook and not learn i.e. invite participants to personalize as much as possible.
7. **Engagement.** Learners need to be engaged in their learning for learning to occur i.e. encourage everyone to fully participate.
8. **Inclusion.** Learners want to feel included and valued i.e. thank people for all input, even when they push back or challenge what is said.
9. **Transparency.** Learners feel safer when they know what to expect (good or bad) i.e. In the middle of this workshop we are going to spend some time seeing how it feels to be a refugee in Canada.
10. **Learning styles.** All learners have different learning preferences: auditory, visual, or kinesthetic. For this reason the *Journey with Me: Refugee Stories that Change Lives* offers a variety of ways to engage with the material i.e. ask questions specific to the learning style: what did you *do*, what did you *see*, and what did you *hear*.

Types of Probing Questions

The following questions will help you encourage BE participants to share more deeply, especially in a debriefing time:

1. Tell me more about...
2. Why do you say that?
3. It must have been very difficult for you to... . Tell me more about how you...
4. What else can you tell me about...
5. What else...
6. Help me understand...
7. Can you give me another example of...
8. Tell me why...
9. So why do you think that ...
10. I'm not sure I understand... Can you tell me more about that?
11. I'm not certain what you mean by... Can you give me some examples?
12. What stands out in your mind about that?
13. So what I hear you say is... What am I missing?
14. What makes you feel that way?
15. You just told me about... I'd also like to know about...
16. What would ... say about what you just said?
17. How do *you* feel about that?
18. What exactly did you mean by ... ?
19. And, what happened after that?
20. Why do you think that is/happened?
21. For you, what prevented... from happening?
22. What would it take for us/ you to do that?
23. And, what might a refugee think about that?

10 Ways to Minimize Resistance

Resistance is normal: resistance to what is being taught or how it is being taught. What we want to do is minimize it so that it does not interfere with learning. Here are 10 ways to do this:

1. **Early invitation and plan.** Tell learners in advance what they will be learning and doing. Getting rid of the element of surprise will minimize resistance for some.
2. **Safety.** Learners need to feel emotionally and physically safe enough to engage with the content and learn. If they don't, they may start to resist the process and unhook.
3. **Respect.** Showing respect to all learners can minimize resistance. People can react to feeling left out or unvalued.
4. **Affirmation.** Everyone likes to be appreciated and affirmed. The more you do this, the less resistance you will have from your learners.
5. **Relevance.** When learners do not understand how something is important in their life they may resist the learning experience. Help all learners know *why* this content is important in their lives and why it matters. Seeking out more information on your local context about refugees can also help address relevance.
6. **Choice.** Offering learners choices on how to learn or how to participate or where to sit, can minimize resistance. They will appreciate having input in their learning experience.
7. **Transparency.** Explain to learners why you are doing something if it is different from what they are used to. Once they understand there is a reason, there will be less resistant.
8. **Welcome it.** Never avoid resistance because it will most likely build and come back to you, *stronger*. Welcome and celebrate it because often the best learning coming when an idea or way of doing something is first resisted. Just don't get 'hooked' by it.
9. **Check in.** You can check in with learners privately before the session, during a break or with the entire group at the end of a session. If you let them honestly tell you how they feel and they see you responding to what they tell you, resistance will be minimized.
10. **Stick to the program.** Don't change the agenda unless you have a good reason and explain it to the group. It's a strong learning design and you need to trust it – it was created to maximize learning.

How to Facilitate the Role Play

The role play is a key element and activity in this workshop. It will help ensure heart-learning and deepen dialogue around content to be explored. Even participants who have worked with refugees for many years, have commented on the importance of this part of the workshop sharing “It’s strange but even after all these years of working in this field I have never really stopped to think how it must *feel* to be a refugee” and “I am ashamed to say that this role play finally made all the cases I work with from day-to-day *real*. These are people just like me!”

Here are some tips to maximize the potential of the role play:

1. **Take time to set the stage.** Explain that for the next 15 minutes they will not be themselves, but they will be a refugee. Tell them you will give them a few minutes to read their character description and then they should do their best to become this person. They should work to feel how this person feels, speak how he/she might speak, and share whatever makes sense for this person. Take time to share importance of really working to step into this person’s shoes and explain that after the role play there will be time to debrief and share what it was like.
2. **Tell them these are real people.** Each of these people has been helped in some way by a church in the area and the stories they read are true.
3. **Don’t hover.** Let the groups enter deep dialogue where emotion can grow around the issues discussed. If you enter their “space” you may stop the dialogue or distract the group. Only re-enter the group when it is time to call them back.
4. **Call the group back gently.** Many individuals will be deep in discussion, so you will want to use a soft voice and posture to call their attention.
5. **Help everyone out of their role.** If the role play is a success everyone will have assumed the character and feelings of someone else. It may not be easy to flip the switch to being themselves again. One way to help them is to ask them to stand up and turn around or shake themselves. When they sit back down they will be more able to re-enter as themselves.
6. **Acknowledge the roles they were in.** Say things like “You may be feeling a little shook up by what you just experienced...” or “You may not be feeling that great right now... but we are going to move into sharing some of what you just experience”.

Scripture Passages

Below is a long list of scripture passages relevant to refugee work. Although it is not exhaustive, it will get you started. Use them in a bulletin announcement, on a poster, in the workshop, in a Bible study, or for personal devotions to prepare yourself to facilitate. The Bible speaks clearly about God's expectations of us and our relationships with our refugee brothers and sisters.

Psalm of Refuge

Psalm 9 "The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble..."

Psalm 16 "Keep me safe, my God, for in you I take refuge..."

Psalm 17 "Hear me, Lord; my plea is just. Listen to my cry..."

Psalm 18 "I love you, Lord, my strength..."

Psalm 31 "In you, Lord, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame..."

Psalm 34 "I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips..."

Psalm 36 "I have a message from God in my heart concerning the sinfulness of the wicked: there is no fear of God before their eyes..."

Psalm 46 "God is our refuge and strength; an ever-present help in trouble..."

Psalm 61 "Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer..."

Psalm 71 "In you, Lord, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame..."

Psalm 91 "Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty..."

Psalm 118 "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever..."

Psalm 142 "I cry aloud to the Lord; I lift up my voice to the Lord for mercy..."

Other Scripture Related to Immigration and Refugees

Genesis 1:26-27 "Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image...'"

Genesis 12:1 "The Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country, your people, and your father's household to the land I will show you...'"

Exodus 2:15-22 "... Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian..."

Exodus 22:21 “Do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner, for you were foreigners in Egypt...”

Exodus 23:9 “Do not oppress a foreigner; you yourselves know how it feels...”

Leviticus 19:9-18 “When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field... leave them for the poor and the foreigner...”

Leviticus 19:33-34 “The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born...”

Numbers 15:15 “...You and the foreigner shall be the same before the Lord...”

Deuteronomy 10:18-19 “[God] defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you...”

Deuteronomy 24:17-22 “Do not deprive the foreigner or the fatherless of justice...”

Deuteronomy 27:19 “Cursed is anyone who withholds justice from the foreigner...”

Ruth 2 “[Ruth] asked him, ‘Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me – a foreigner?’”

1 Chronicles 29:14-16 “We are foreigners and strangers in [God’s] sight...”

Psalms 146 “The Lord watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrated the ways of the wicked...”

Psalms 147:1-6 “... [the Lord] heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds...”

Proverbs 14:31 “Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker...”

Proverbs 22:8-9, 16 “Whoever sows injustice reaps calamity...”

Proverbs 31:8-9 “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves...”

Isaiah 1:17 “Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed...”

Isaiah 3:14-15 “... ‘What do you mean by crushing my people and grinding the faces of the poor?’ declares the Lord, the Lord Almighty...”

Isaiah 10:1-4 “Woe to those who make unjust laws...”

Jeremiah 7:5-7 “...Change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly...”

Jeremiah 22:3, 13-17 “This is what the Lord says: Do what is just and right... do no wrong or violence to the foreigner...”

Malachi 3:5 “... ‘I will be quick to testify against... those who deprive foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me,’ says the Lord Almighty.”

Matthew 2:13-15 “... So he got up, took the child [Jesus] and his mother during the night, and left for Egypt...”

Matthew 25:31-46 “... The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me...’”

Luke 4:14-21 “... ‘The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor...’”

Luke 10:25-37 “Who is my neighbour?”

Romans 12:13 “Share with the Lord’s people who are in need...”

Romans 13:1-7 “... The authorities that exist have been established by God...”

Ephesians 2:11-22 “... For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility...”

Hebrews 13:1-2 “Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters...”

James 2:5-9, 14-17 “... God [has] chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith...”

1 John 3:14-18 “... And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters...”

1 John 4:7-21 “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God...”

Prayer #1

All-embracing God, no one is a stranger to you and no one is ever far from your loving care. In your kindness, watch over refugees and exiles.

For those separated from their loved ones when they fled war and conflict, re-unite them and give them protection.

Inspire us to make our churches places of refuge for those in search of safety and peace. Help us to show by our words and our actions the welcome you gave to the strangers you met.

We pray this,

In the name of our God who shares divinity with us,
In the name of our God who shares humanity with us,
In the name of our God who unsettles and inspires us,
We give our praise and thanks. Amen.

From the Presbyterian Church of Canada workshop
Making Connections: Staying Rooted in an Uprooted World.

Affirmation of Faith

Leader: It is the will of God that no one should go away thirsty.

All: *It is the will of God that all who ask will be received.*

Leader: It is the will of God that none should be driven out of their homes and communities.

All: *It is the will of God that Christ's love be available to all the world.*

Leader: It is the will of God that we should be light to a waiting and broken world.

All: *It is the will of God that we love the world as Christ has loved us.*

From liturgy: *Offering Hospitality to Refugees* www.crcna.org

Prayer #2

God, our creator and sustainer,
you loved us long before we knew ourselves to be lovable
and love us still.

Give us, we pray, a greater awareness of your love for all people,
and a confidence in the action of your grace in us
and in your church.

Grow in us a greater awareness of the oppression
and acts of greed that create refugees.

Give us the courage to welcome the stranger among us
and the wisdom to speak up on their behalf.

We praise you for your mysterious ways among us:
for your presence in the midst of human affairs
even in ways we do not understand.

By the power of your Spirit, may we grow in the truth that compels us to act justly;
giving expression to the compassion of your son Jesus.

We pray in Christ's name, Amen.

Adapted from *More than Words: Prayer and Ritual for Inclusive Communities* by Janet Schaffran
and Pat Kozk. Oak Park, IL: Meyer-Stone Books, 1988, p110.

Prayer #3

Lord Jesus, you swept away centuries of prejudice and legalism when you reached out and accepted people as they were.

Help us understand that there is not one of us who deserves your grace, yet you grant to us all, whether Muslims, Jews, Christians or non-Christians; whether believers or non-believers; rich or poor; black or white; status or non-status¹⁷; the love of God.

Strengthen us Lord, where we are weak, and give us courage to withstand the seduction of a society obsessed with wealth and power. Help us build bridges instead of erecting barriers. Help us live in peace and harmony with your creation where no one is a stranger anymore.

We pray this,

In the name of our God who shares divinity with us,
In the name of our God who shares humanity with us,
In the name of our God who unsettles and inspires us,
We give our praise and thanks. Amen.

From the Presbyterian Church of Canada workshop
Making Connections: Staying Rooted in an Uprooted World.

Call to Worship

Leader: Lord, we are your gathered people, come together to be one with refugees, asylum seekers and displaced people whose lives have been dislocated by war, famine and injustice. By our presence here we express our solidarity with them in their search for a new life, a new home, a new promise.

All: Lord, clear our eyes that we may see the suffering of the refugee.
Open our ears that we may hear the cries of those deep in despair.
Release our feet that we may walk on paths where some comfort we may spread.
Unloosen our tongues that we might speak your words of hope and love.
Open our hearts that we may be truly hospitable to the stranger in our midst.

From liturgy: *Offering Hospitality to Refugees* www.crcna.org

¹⁷ "Non-status Indians" commonly refers to people who identify themselves as Indians but who are not entitled to registration on the Indian Register pursuant to the *Indian Act*. Some of them may be members of a First Nation. www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca

Prayer #4

Holy God, you are a God on the move.
You move in the world and in our lives.
You shape and direct your creation and us.
Your people have always been on the move.
Moses led your people out of slavery in Egypt.
Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt with Jesus to escape the murderous King Herod.
Today people continue to move.
War, poverty, oppression and injustice drive people from their homes and countries.
We pray that you will move with today's refugees and migrants.
Comfort and sustain them.
For all who serve those forced to move in our world, and for all who are on the move.

We pray this,

In the name of our God who shares divinity with us,
In the name of our God who shares humanity with us,
In the name of our God who unsettles and inspires us,
We give our praise and thanks. Amen.

From the Presbyterian Church of Canada workshop
Making Connections: Staying Rooted in an Uprooted World.

Affirmation of Faith

Leader: It is the will of God that no one should go away thirsty.

All: *It is the will of God that all who ask will be received.*

Leader: It is the will of God that none should be driven out of their homes and communities.

All: *It is the will of God that Christ's love be available to all the world.*

Leader: It is the will of God that we should be light to a waiting and broken world.

All: *It is the will of God that we love the world as Christ has loved us.*

From liturgy: *Offering Hospitality to Refugees* www.crcna.org

Prayer #5

God of mercy and grace, we see genuine mercy that renews our spirits to right the wrongs in our world, to love the unloved to free the oppressed. Deliver us from cheap grace; grace without repentance, grace without the cross, grace without transformation.

By global comparisons, we are people of power and privilege. Too often we have left politics to politicians, preaching to preachers, and the affairs of other nations to fate. We commit ourselves this day to engage in your world, to hear the cries of your people, certain of the presence of your Holy Spirit leading us.

Loving God, help us understand that you are present with us in every encounter with others whose lives have been touched by death. Help us to listen for your voice God, beneath the human word spoken to us. May we be bearers of life and may we know your life-giving love in our lives.

We pray this,

In the name of our God who shares divinity with us,
In the name of our God who shares humanity with us,
In the name of our God who unsettles and inspires us,
We give our praise and thanks. Amen.

From the Presbyterian Church of Canada workshop
Making Connections: Staying Rooted in an Uprooted World.

Prayers of Intercession

Leader or reader:

Let us pray for refugees and displaced people throughout the world. Let us pray for those who have fled (from...) and who are (in...) or other parts of the world.

We especially pray for those known personally to us whom we now name before you (name aloud the people or community group).

We pray for them in their need for the basic necessities of life – shelter and food. Grant that they may have the skills and equipment to build shelters and to grow food.

We pray for ourselves that we can also be like Zacchaeus and welcome people into our homes.

From liturgy: *Offering Hospitality to Refugees* www.crcna.org

Prayer #6

Almighty and merciful God,
whose Son became a refugee
and had no place to call his own;
look with mercy on those who today
are fleeing from danger,
homeless and hungry.

Bless those who work to bring them relief;
inspire generosity and compassion in all our hearts;
and guide the nations of the world toward that day
when all will rejoice in your Kingdom of justice
and of peace.

We pray this,

In the name of our God who shares divinity with us,
In the name of our God who shares humanity with us,
In the name of our God who unsettles and inspires us,
We give our praise and thanks. Amen.

From *A Prayer for Refugees*. The first two stanzas of the prayer are from www.cofe.anglican.org/worship/prayers/

Prayer for Women Refugees

by Jane Deren

On the road, seeking safe shelter;
In makeshift tents, feeding children;
In resettlement centers, rebuilding community;
In strange neighborhoods, looking for a compassionate face:
Long lines of women refugees,
Thousands, millions, all searching for that grace called home.

Grant them healing and wholeness, God of the vulnerable.
As you cherished Mary, cherish these women.

Grant us eyes to see them and the will to reach out,
So they may know they are not forgotten
But are welcomed in the global community,
Sisters to us all.

For the Courage to Do Justice

O Lord,
open our eyes that we may see the needs of refugees;
open our ears that we may hear people's cries for justice;
open our hearts that we may assist sojourners near and far.

Show us
where love, hope and faith are needed.

Use us as ministers of your healing.

Let us not be afraid
to protect the weak because of the anger of the strong,
or to defend the poor because of the power of the rich.

Sustain us so that in these coming days
we may be able to do some work of peace for you.

We ask these things in your blessed name. You taught us to pray....

<http://gbgm-umc.org/umcor/refugees/rworship.stm>

Prayer for Refugees and Victims of War

Lord God,
no one is a stranger to you
and no one is ever far from your loving care.
In your kindness, watch over refugees and victims of war,
those separated from their loved ones,
young people who are lost,
and those who have left home or who have run away from
home.
Bring them back safely to the place where they long to be
and help us always to show your kindness
to strangers and to all in need
Grant this through Christ our Lord.

<http://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=1460>

Prayer of Confession

Leader: Knowing that our God walks with us in our confusion, our doubts, our failings, our struggles, we now come humbly before God to ask for mercy.

Leader: For the times we fail to offer hospitality to those in our world who suffer injustice, oppression, and poverty, we pray:

Response: *God, have mercy on us and your people*

Leader: For the times we lack courage to address the causes of injustice, oppression and poverty, we pray to our God:

Response: *God, have mercy on us and on your people.*

Leader: For the times we give in to despair and resignation when confronted with the injustice of our world, we pray to our God:

Response: *God, have mercy on us and on your people.*

Leader: For the times we allow our fears to triumph over the call to solidarity, we pray to our God:

Response: *God, have mercy on us and on your people.*

All: Merciful God, receive our petitions. Heal the brokenness in our hearts and in our world caused by injustice, indifference, selfishness and fear. Open our hearts to hear the cries of your suffering people. Support us as we seek to respond in solidarity and with hospitality. Amen.

From liturgy: *Offering Hospitality to Refugees* www.crcna.org

Don't Call Me a Stranger

Don't call me a stranger;
I need to feel at home;
Especially when loneliness cools my heart.

Don't call me a stranger;
The soil we stand on is the same;
But mine is not "the promised land."

Don't call me a stranger;
The colour of my passport is different;
But the colour of our blood is the same.

Don't call me a stranger;
The language I speak sounds different;
But the feelings it expresses are the same.

Don't call me a stranger;
I toil and struggle in your land;
And the sweat of our brows is the same.

Don't call me a stranger;
Borders, we created them;
And the separations that results is the same.

Don't call me a stranger;
I am just your friend;
But you do not know me yet.

Don't call me a stranger;
We cry for justice and peace in different ways;
But our God is the same.

From *Study: Making Room Good Samaritan*.
Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, Philippines, 1995 (abridged version).

Resources

Statistics

<http://ccrweb.ca/en/statistics-graphs>

Myths

<http://ccrweb.ca/sites/ccrweb.ca/files/static-files/documents/FFacts.htm>

<http://ccrweb.ca/en/myths-facts>

<http://ccrweb.ca/en/myths-facts?page=1> - this is a repeat of the one above

How Generous Is Canada

<http://ccrweb.ca/en/how-generous-is-Canada>

Information about **Bill C-11**

<http://geramilaw.com/easyblog/entry/bill-c-31-and-the-ministers-power-to-designate-foreign-nationals-why-it-is-both-unconstitutional-and-contrary-to-canadas-international-law-obligations.html>

[http://www.unicef.ca/sites/default/files/imce_uploads/DISCOVER/OUR%20WORK/ADVOCA CY/DOMESTIC/unicef canada bill c-31 submissionfinal.pdf](http://www.unicef.ca/sites/default/files/imce_uploads/DISCOVER/OUR%20WORK/ADVOCA CY/DOMESTIC/unicef%20canada%20bill%20c-31%20submissionfinal.pdf)

Information about **Bill C-31**

<http://ccrweb.ca/en/comments-amendments-bill-c-31>

<http://ccrweb.ca/en/myths-and-facts-c31>

<http://ccrweb.ca/en/protect-refugees-c31-statement>

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Docid=5391960&file=4>

<http://ccrweb.ca/en/refugee-reform>

Information about **Bill C-43**

<http://ccrweb.ca/en/budget-bill-targets-refugees>

<http://www.amnesty.ca/news/public-statements/denying-social-assistance-to-refugee-claimants-violates-international-law-bil>

Information about Bill C-49

<http://ccrweb.ca/en/refugees-arriving-boat-and-bill-c-49>

Information about IFH

<http://ccrweb.ca/en/ifh>

[Should give more up to date information – get info from RSTP and CIC](#)

Syrian Crisis

<http://ccrweb.ca/en/responding-syrian-refugee-crisis-backgrounder>

<http://ccrweb.ca/en/responding-syrian-refugee-crisis-backgrounder> - same link as above

Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program

<http://ccrweb.ca/sites/ccrweb.ca/files/psr-overview-challenges.pdf>

SHAMISO - female

I am a 47-year-old woman from Zimbabwe. My family cares about democracy and could not support the authoritarian regime that has taken over our beautiful country. I was a teacher and taught my students about human rights and the political history of our country so they could grow up knowing how to speak out against injustice. For this, I was attacked by supporters of the government.

We needed to leave the country for the safety of myself, my husband and my four children. We knew that our names were on a list of dissenters ineligible for passports so we had to pay a neighbour to find us fake ones.

We crossed the border into South Africa and then flew to Canada because we had heard that Canadians are good people who will offer us protection. When we arrived in the Toronto airport and asked the border agent for refugee protection, an officer took my whole family to a room that seemed very much like a prison. He told us that our documents are false and that we came here illegally.

We are waiting here in detention, unsure of whether or not we can enter Canada or if we will be deported back to danger because of our documents. I am staying in one room with my children and am unable to see my husband. My children are very frightened but I know that I must be strong for their sake. Why don't people understand that false papers were the only way that we could leave?

EMMANUEL - male

I am being deported back to the Central African Republic (CAR) because my request for refugee status was denied. My fear of political instability and religious intolerance was not enough to justify refuge in this country. My negative decision included the reason that I was not personally targeted, but face “generalized risk.” Don’t they understand, it’s a place where people stop you in the street to check if you are Christian or Muslim. If you give the wrong answer, the outcome may be death, torture or the loss of limbs!

I have always been a hard worker and studied hard to become a teacher. When my society fell apart and children stopped attending school, I sold some possessions and collected enough money to buy a couple of vehicles and start a taxi service. It soon became too dangerous to stay in the country, and I found my way to Canada.

One year later, I had received a negative refugee decision and a deportation order arrived at my home. The violence in the CAR was in all major Canadian newspapers and hardly any flights were going there because it is so dangerous. With an outcry from my church community and with the assistance of committed and wise legal counsel, my deportation was temporarily postponed. However, my safe future in Canada is not guaranteed.

Why is it so very difficult for a peace-loving 50-year-old man like me, who was one of the lucky few who escaped this brutal civil war, to find refuge in this country?

ANJELICA - female

I am 29-years-old and a single mother of five. I was born in Guatemala and was raised there until the age of 15. My family and I left to the United States because of the political unrest and terrible crime that took away the life of my father, one of my brothers and many others in my village. In the United States we lived undocumented because it is widely known that US immigration would not grant Guatemalans refugee protection.

I met a man in the US and married him. We had four children and we adopted my brother's child when he and his wife died in a car accident.

The stress of living undocumented lives was too hard on my husband and he began to drink and use violence against me. I became terrified of him! I could not go back to Guatemala so I came to Canada two years ago with my five children and made a refugee claim.

I was devastated to learn that my refugee claim was denied. The official who made the decision said that my testimony was not credible because there were obvious holes in my story. I realized that she had expected me to tell her about the things that are too hard to talk about because of my own fear and shame. Now it is too late to add anything and expect them to believe me.

I work full time, which means I have to leave my children alone a lot. One of them has terrible nightmares that I will be taken away some day. I feel like a terrible mother for all I have put them through. As a last resort, I applied for something called a "humanitarian and compassionate application." It was also denied. I don't know what to do!

MARCELA - female

My husband and I have lived in Toronto for the past fifteen years where we came as refugee claimants because of the political unrest in Southern Mexico. We had one child in Mexico, another in the United States and the last one in Canada.

We initially paid immigration consultants thousands of dollars to help us with our case, as no one told us that we were eligible for Legal Aid to pay an experienced lawyer. In the end the consultant handled our case really poorly including not even showing up for the refugee hearing! When our claim was denied, we knew it was too dangerous to go back so we made the difficult decision to live *underground*.

Without a legal work permit, we were taken advantage of by many employers --we worked long hours for low wages in unsafe conditions. When my husband fell off a ladder in his construction work we were left with \$10,000 in hospital bills.

It was only with the support of our church that we were able to survive during those difficult months. We feel so grateful to have been embraced by such a welcoming community. Three years ago, we made something called a “Humanitarian and Compassionate application,” a request for residence based on our establishment in Canada and the best interest of our children. Our daughter and son have already finished their high school but cannot go to university. They are both terribly depressed and unable to understand why they cannot live as other teens. We hope that our volunteer work and other contributions to this wonderful country will be recognized so that we can live with secure status and without the constant fear of deportation.

MIRIAM - female

I am from Iran. As a woman my husband and his family didn't allowed me to work. I was the best wife I could be but whenever I did not act the way my husband wanted me to - he beat me. The last few times I was with him he threatened to kill me. I was so afraid that I left.

Sadly, I could not take my children because only my husband can authorize them to cross borders. I made a refugee claim in Canada and was given a hearing date 60 days later. In that time, I was expected to find a place to live, apply for social assistance, apply for legal aid, find a lawyer, collect and submit evidence and prepare for the verbal testimony of my hearing. I was all alone, I didn't speak English and I had no one to explain all of the above expectations to me. The people at the women's shelter tried to help me, but they didn't know very much about the refugee system. When my hearing finally came, I had to tell my story to a male board member, which made me very uncomfortable. Afterwards, he told me that I was *not a refugee* because I could not prove the danger I was in. I was just told I should have no problems going back.

But I know that if I do, I will die.

I was asked to present myself to something called the "Canadian Border Services Agency" and there they apprehended me because I did not want to sign a form saying I was willing to be deported and that it was safe to go back. Why would I sign something that was not true?

They are now holding me in a detention centre until I sign. I have been there for months now. I cry every day because I miss my children so much. But I can't go back if I want to live...

ZOLTAN - male

I am a 41-year-old Roma man from Hungary who worked fighting for the rights of Roma people in Europe. I have lived my life by the belief that all people deserve to be treated with dignity, regardless of ethnicity, language or culture. I came to Canada with my wife and daughter after our family was physically attacked by a group of Neo-Nazi thugs and our lives were threatened because of my human rights works.

While living in a refugee shelter in Toronto, a Hungarian speaking man told us that he worked for a great refugee lawyer and I became a client of his. My refugee claim was denied after my lawyer did not appear at the hearing and failed to submit the evidence of my human rights work. I learned that he had also failed to properly represent hundreds of other Roma refugees.

We tried to make a complaint against our lawyer, but we were given a deportation order before our complaint has even been considered. We love Canada as we feel safe and accepted here in a way that we do not in Hungary. We also have become very involved in the Roma community and believe that we can do a lot of good advocacy here. We hope that there is something that we can do to stay.

CARLOS - male

I am 35 years old and a refugee from Colombia. I have a chronic liver condition that has been made a lot worse by the stress of a rejected refugee claim and a failed appeal. I'm now stuck with bills for everything from doctors' visits to blood transfusions to obtaining my medical history. Immigration told me that with my failed refugee status, I am only eligible for health insurance if I have an illness that is considered a Public Health and Safety threat—like Tuberculosis. In some provinces, the provincial governments may still pay health costs for failed refugee claimants, but I live in Alberta where they do not. I probably need a liver transplant and I worry I will never get on a donor list. Thankfully, if I make it to that stage, livers can be donated from living donors.

The Christian organization that welcomed me and my family (and many other refugees!) can't continue to pay my healthcare bills. Even a single heart attack would deplete the small fund they have to deal with refugee healthcare bills.

I'm now applying for disability support as well as the ability to stay in Canada on Humanitarian and Compassionate Grounds, which I am told is unlikely to be approved as I may be viewed as a "medical burden" on Canada. Transplants are very rare in Colombia and I fear I will not make it to my next birthday.

ABRAHIEM - male

My family and I came from Sudan. We were refugees and sponsored by a rural church that treated us like family.

It wasn't long after we arrived here that tension developed between me and my wife and soon I was no longer able to stay in our home. One of the refugee committee members said I could make my home with them.

Besides learning the usual things to adjust to a new culture I had to learn about divorce and child support – it was all very confusing. It was here that I was also taught “women’s work” as cooking, baking and cleaning house.

After a number of months I moved out on my own and found a good job so now I can support myself, my new wife and son besides my other obligations. Though our life was not as it should have been, we were not judged. Instead we felt supported and loved by the church community. I have been deeply moved by what we experienced.

GUSTAVO - male

My wife and I have learned many things about Canada since we arrived 1 year ago. We are lucky that our English is okay and we have found ways to communicate online with our family in Colombia.

I miss my country a lot! We have been helped in our new country by a lot of kind people. But we have also had so many challenges.

The most difficult is living in an apartment that has so many bugs. We have bed bugs that keep us awake at night, cockroaches in our cupboards and mice running around the floors. We have a one year lease and don't know how to get out of it. We hear from other refugees that other apartment buildings are the same – we can't pay much and landlords don't really care! They know we are new to Canada and pretend not to understand what we have to say. It's hard!

In the meantime my wife is ready to pursue her studies in tourism (her career in our home country). She is unable to access student loans to go to college because she hasn't been in Canada long enough.

We want to be successful in Canada and be good citizens, but we are confused about how to do this. We keep meeting barriers...

ANGELA - female

A genocide was happening in a neighboring country! People were streaming into the country for safety but unfortunately the differences were also emerging on our side of the border. Then the day of peril struck...an errand took me away from my home, and my entire extended family was slaughtered.

What I saw when I returned home left me extremely traumatized! I fled to Canada as soon as I could.

My first months in Canada were spent navigating an unfamiliar medical system with medication that left debilitating side effects. My doctor told me that I was really suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

In contrast, my refugee claim hearing was positive and I was soon reunited with my two sons! My husband however, couldn't handle all the stress. He is working to make it on his own back home.

Meanwhile my health challenges continue and I find it difficult to get what I need, see who I need to see, and figure out what I need to learn. It doesn't seem as difficult for Canadians... I don't know what I am doing wrong.

Now I am also starting to worry about the effect that my mental health is having on my children.

ELAINA - female

My name is Elaina. I came from Colombia with my six children as refugees eight years ago. We came under the JAS Program* because of ‘extreme needs’.

A church sponsored us at that time and is still helping us financially and supporting us as a family of friends.

One of the hardest things in taking care of ourselves in this new country is finding care for our special needs son. We all need to work so we can pay the bills, but our son needs someone with him at all times. Back home there were so many family members around to help out.

Today I am in the hospital because my son needed surgery. After this week he will need to stay in the hospital for several months of tests. My other children will be in school and I just don’t know how to do all I have to do. I am the only person who knows how to communicate with my son so I need to be with him.

For now, our older daughter will move back home from Alberta to help out.

In this difficult time, I can still say God has been good to us.

* A Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) case is the sponsorship of a refugee who requires special assistance to settle in Canada. The government provides financial support and the sponsor provides community, emotional support, and orientation and ensures access to appropriate services. JAS sponsorship support lasts 2-3 years (in contrast to the year-long commitment of other sponsorships. These refugees may need special assistance due to factors such as large/unusual family configuration, trauma due to violence or torture, medical disability, and/or effects of systemic discrimination.