

Young people in Lebanon: Sharing messages with refugees

Have you watched our Flame 2017 film *Young people in Lebanon: Sharing messages of hope with refugees*? Keen to find out more about the fantastic young people featured? Read on!

"WELCOMING OTHERS MEANS WELCOMING GOD IN PERSON"

Pope Francis¹.

How can I use these stories with my class or youth group?

- Start by asking the group: what do you already know about refugees?
- Divide into small groups, give each group one of the five stories. Ask each group to read the stories and then feedback to the whole group the three most important points from their story.
- You may prefer to look at the background info all together first, then read and feedback stories 2-5 in small groups.
- After reading the stories, discuss the following questions:
 1. What surprised you from the stories you have heard?
 2. What do you think it's important for other young

people to know about from the stories you've read?

3. About half of refugees are under 18. Why do you think they might be especially vulnerable to not being treated correctly?
4. Pope Francis said: "*Welcoming others means welcoming God in person.*" What do you think he means? What do you think of this quote?
5. Why is it important for young people to take the lead in working to make the world a fairer place?

- Use another CAFOD activity to explore the experiences of refugees. Such as *On the move* simulation game, *Refugee pilgrimage for young people* or *Moving people* short play. cafod.org.uk/secondary
- Take action! Tell others about the stories you've heard here, over a coffee or on Twitter, tagging @CAFOD. Write a message of hope to refugees, or do some fundraising to support CAFOD's work with refugees. cafod.org.uk/greatgeneration

¹ Pope Francis. 'Message of his Holiness Pope Francis for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2016.'

STORY 1: BACKGROUND INFO

Who are refugees?

ON AVERAGE 24 PEOPLE EVERY MINUTE ARE FORCED FROM THEIR HOMES².

That is like a whole class.



Refugees are people who have been forced from their homes. Their lives are in danger and/or they lack basic human rights. For example, due to war. In order to reach safety, they have no choice but to leave their homes. They move to a nearby country, or further afield. They remain vulnerable to not having their human rights met³.

In addition to refugees, there are *internally displaced people* (IDPs). IDPs face the same problems as refugees. They have been forced from their homes, but remain within their own country. They are equally vulnerable⁴.



² UNHCR, 'Global Trends 2015', p.2.

³ UNHCR. Available from: unhcr.org/uk/news/latest/2016/7/55df0e556/unhcr-viewpoint-refugee-migrant-right.html. Accessed 5.10.16.

There are refugees all over the world. The top ten countries refugees come from are: Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, DR Congo, Central African Republic, Myanmar, Eritrea and Colombia⁵.

For a long time CAFOD has been working all over the world to support people forced from their homes.

ABOUT HALF OF REFUGEES ARE UNDER 18⁶.

Refugees face immediate challenges such as: their lives being in danger; risky journeys; not having shelter; not having enough food or clothing or not being able to receive the medical treatment they need. They are at risk from violence and exploitation.

Refugees often face social and emotional challenges, like being separated from family and friends without being able to contact them or discrimination. Children may miss out on education and need support to process their experiences as a refugee.

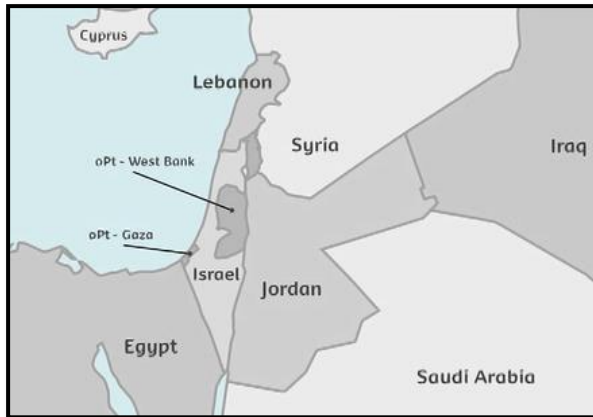
Refugees may face long-term challenges like unemployment, not having the correct identity papers in order to work or access services in another country. Separation from home and family may last many years.

⁴ UNHCR. Available from: unhcr.org/uk/internally-displaced-people.html. Accessed 5.10.16.

⁵ UNHCR, 'Global Trends 2015', p.16-18.

⁶ UNHCR, 'Global Trends 2015', p.3.

Refugees in Lebanon



Occupied Palestinian territory (oPt): Gaza, West Bank, East Jerusalem.



An English literacy class for people who are refugees, at a Caritas Lebanon centre.

Lebanon is the country with the highest number of refugees to national population⁷. This has a social and political impact on the country. For example, there are some tensions between different groups because services, employment and housing are stretched.

MORE THAN ONE IN FOUR PEOPLE IN LEBANON IS A REFUGEE⁸.

This includes Syrian, Palestinian and Iraqi refugees⁹.

⁷ UNHCR. 'Global Trends 2015', p.18.

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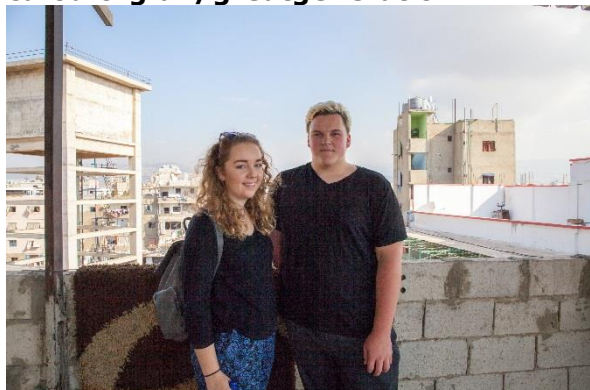
- 'In Lebanon nearly one in five individuals is a refugee (under UNHCR's mandate and not including Palestinian refugees under the UNRWA mandate).' UNHCR. 'Global Trends 2015' p.21.
- 449,957 registered Palestinian refugees. UNRWA. Available from: unrwa.org/where-we-work/lebanon. Accessed 16.11.16.

- Population of Lebanon 5,988,000. UN. Available from: data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=LEBANON. Accessed 16.11.16.

⁹ UNHCR. Available from: reporting.unhcr.org/node/2520. Accessed 4.3.17.

STORY 2: CAFOD YOUNG VOLUNTEERS

cafod.org.uk/greatgeneration



Leah (left) and Ryan (right) are both CAFOD young volunteers.

Leah

During her gap year, Leah worked on the Hexham and Newcastle Diocese Youth Ministry Team. She volunteered as a CAFOD ambassador team. Alongside eight other ambassadors around the country, she realised that the young people she was working with were seeing images of refugees on the news and really wanted to do something to help.

Messages of hope

Leah and the ambassadors started gathering messages of hope for refugees written by the young people they worked with. The messages were to show that young people were thinking about refugees and praying for them.

Message writing became so popular that CAFOD then asked all of its supporters if they'd like to write messages too. Since 2015, tens of thousands of messages of hope have been written.

Many of these messages have been shared with people who are refugees in the UK, Greece and Lebanon.

Leah and the ambassadors even visited Parliament to share the messages with MPs to show them that thousands of young people care about refugees, also that young people want to fight alongside refugees to get their basic rights.

Ryan

Ryan trained as a CAFOD young leader at his school, All Saints, in Sheffield. He learned leadership skills and about issues of poverty and injustice around the world. With other young leaders in his school he encouraged lots of other students to take part in the *One Climate, One World* campaign. He even lobbied his MP.



Meeting with young people in Lebanon

Leah and Ryan visited Lebanon in October 2016 to meet with people forced from their homes. Leah and Ryan listen to them explain their lives and experiences and shared the messages of hope written by young people in the UK. Many of the young people Leah and Ryan met in Lebanon wrote their own messages of hope for their lives and the world.



What did Leah and Ryan do after their encounter with young people in Lebanon?

Ryan now works at Savio House retreat centre. Since visiting Lebanon he has been telling young people in the UK about the people he met in Lebanon. He's encouraging young people to write messages and leading them in prayer for people who are refugees.

Leah has also been sharing the stories of the people she met. A school where Leah did a talk raised over £6000 for CAFOD's work with refugees.

Both Leah and Ryan spoke on-stage at Flame 2017, a Catholic event at SSE Arena, Wembley for around 10,000 young people. They shared the stories of people they met in Lebanon, passed on the messages young people in Lebanon wrote in reply and inspired young Catholics to take action alongside refugees.

Leah says: *"I think that young people in the UK need to understand that the situation is a lot more complicated than you first think."*

"The people we met are living in a very difficult situation. They have every day problems as well as ones that relate to them being a refugee. For example, a mother we met has to choose between paying rent and paying for medication her daughter desperately needs."

Messages of hope from young people in the UK:

Tom says: *"I hope that you find a home, and that war will stop in your country so you can live in peace. We are thinking about you."*

Ella says: *"You are just like me but are treated so differently. Keep believing in your hopes and dreams. We are trying to make a change."*



Eleanor says: *"I know that writing this will seem so small to you after everything that you have been through. However, I hope that it brings you comfort that lots of us in schools around the UK are trying to support your situation. You are in my prayers."*

STORY 3: ASSOCIATION NAJDEH

Association Najdeh primarily supports Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Association Najdeh is a CAFOD partner.

Palestinian refugees



Occupied Palestinian territory (oPt): Gaza, West Bank, East Jerusalem.

Over five million people are registered as Palestinian refugees by the United Nations¹⁰. They live in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the occupied Palestinian territories.

They are mostly the descendants of those who fled violence during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War¹¹.

Who does Association Najdeh work with?

Association Najdeh primarily supports Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and those arriving more recently from Syria. Most of these families have been living in refugee camps for generations. They face many challenges.

Such as: unemployment; lack of health, education and social security services; overcrowding and poor quality housing; damaged water and sewerage systems and

lack of open space in which children can play; psychological challenges from their experiences as a refugee; domestic violence and curfews.

Those from Syria are 'double refugees' who sought safety in Syria and have had to move again to Lebanon.



Shatila refugee camp, Lebanon

How does Association Najdeh support refugees?

- Training, such as hairdressing and beauty, to help people find work and increase self-confidence.
- Kindergarten for three to five year olds.
- Activities and support for children and adults to cope with their experiences as a refugee.
- Activities to help children learn about their rights.
- Work programmes, for example, cleaning the camp for basic pay.
- Emergency cash given to families.
- Training and awareness-raising on women's rights through interactive theatre, posters, newsletters and committees.

¹⁰ UNHCR. They are registered with UNRWA. 'Global Trends 2015', p.2.

¹¹ In Mandatory Palestine. UNRWA. Available from: unrwa.org/palestine-refugees. Accessed 28.2.17.

Meet some young people



Mohammed says: *"I'm a Palestinian refugee. I have been born and raised in the camp."*

"Living in the camp is very miserable. There is no work, you have no right to own property or a car. We have no rights."



Yasmine says: *"I came here from Syria six years ago. I am happy to work with Najdeh. They've helped make me who I am. I've learned what to do and I'm not shy anymore!"*

"I come here every day. I do lessons, dance and other activities. I've got great friends here."

"I'd like to return to Syria and live peacefully."

What messages of hope have they sent to young people in the UK?

Madleen says:
"Thanks for everyone standing beside us."



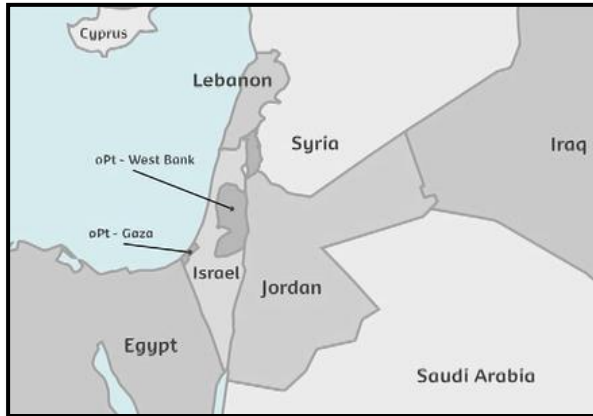
Ali says: *"We need the world to treat us as human beings."*

Niveen says: *"I dream that one day I could return back to my home town in Palestine. I hope to be a successful woman."*



STORY 4: CARITAS LEBANON

Caritas Lebanon centres support migrant workers, refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable people in Lebanon. Caritas Lebanon is a CAFOD partner.



Occupied Palestinian territory (oPt): Gaza, West Bank, East Jerusalem.

Syrian refugees

cafod.org.uk

The civil war in Syria started in 2011. As a result, hundreds of thousands have been killed and millions forced from their homes.

Millions of people need urgent access to food, water, shelter and protection¹².

There are almost five million refugees from Syria registered in countries near Syria, such as Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan¹³. There are 6.5 million people displaced within Syria¹⁴.

A much smaller number have travelled further afield to Europe¹⁵.

How are Caritas Lebanon centres supporting refugees?



- Supporting Syrian and Iraqi refugees to access Education and health services.
- Helping to keep vulnerable women and children safe. For example, from domestic violence or child labour.
- Running Arabic and English literacy classes for children and adults.
- Working with Lebanese government on long term solutions to problems refugees face. For example, to enable children who are refugees to go to school.
- Training, such as cooking, hairdressing, computing to help refugees find work.
- Campaigning against early marriage (under 18s). For example, through a flash mob dance by young people.
- Social activities, such as self-defence and other sports.
- Often people who run activities are refugees.

¹² CAFOD. cafod.org.uk/News/Emergencies-news/Syria-Q-A. Accessed 28.2.17.

¹³ UNHCR. Available from: data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php. Accessed 28.2.17.

¹⁴ UNHCR. Available from: unhcr.org/sy/29-internally-displaced-people.html. Accessed 1.3.16.

¹⁵ 884,461 Syrians seeking asylum in Europe between April 2011-October 2016. UNHCR. Available from: data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php. Accessed 01.03.17.

STORY 5: CARITAS LEBANON YOUNG VOLUNTEERS



Who are Caritas Lebanon young volunteers?

Young people, mostly 18-25 years old from Syria and Lebanon.

What do they do?

Work together and get to know each other! This is really important, as there are some tensions between different nationalities in Lebanon.

They run projects that help others. Such as:

- Summer camps for Syrian and Lebanese children, with sport, dancing, mask-making. These camps help children of different nationalities become friends.
- Short projects like: painting a prison or community centre and food box distribution.
- Activities to make people happy, such as carnival activities.
- Educational activities for young people such as: showing films and discussing them; puppet shows on personal hygiene and poetry competitions.

Peter says: "I'm from Lebanon and I was born here. I'm willing to help anyone in my community that needs help."

"Refugees do not have the choice to stay or leave their country. They have to leave their country because of war. That's why we should not think of them as another religion or another nationality coming to take our work or our country. We need to think of them as people who need our help."



What messages of hope have they sent to young people in the UK?



Aya says: "I hope to make everyone feel peace inside."

Adnan says: "I hope the war will end soon because the children of the war have the right to live their childhood."



Hanna says: "I hope that one day we will reach our target of zero poverty."

"GET INVOLVED!"

Pope Francis¹⁷.

Photo credits: p.2, p.4 right: Ben White, p.5 right: Leah Turnock Parker. All others: Louise Norton. All information correct March 2017. JP CAFOD Youth Team.

¹⁷ Pope Francis. 'Address of Pope Francis' at Prayer vigil with the young people at World Youth Day, 27.1.13.