

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

*Opening a Conversation
about and with Refugees and
People Seeking Asylum*



COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Community Conversations are powerful expressions of sharing, learning, and commitment to action on social justice issues. At each gathering, refugees and/or people seeking asylum are invited to share their stories.

Participants also share their own stories and can ask questions of an expert. The goal is to build solidarity, to find common ground in our shared values, and build the capacity of our parish or school to stand with refugees and people seeking asylum.

Community conversations take place within a local community, parish or school, about, and with, refugees and/or people seeking asylum and last between 90 minutes and 2.5 hours. They emphasize respectful dialogue and mutual sharing of personal stories around values that are important to us.

JRS Australia and Sydney Alliance can provide the following to hosts:

- One or more refugees/people seeking asylum who are prepared to share their story.
- A suggested format for the conversation (with a focus on sharing stories and connecting with values).
- An expert to respond to participants' questions and reflections.
- Someone to facilitate, or co-facilitate, with a local leader if desired.

Participating organisations, parishes and schools are asked to:

- Provide a venue and time to gather for the conversation.
- Promote attendance to the event.
- Meet at least twice with JRS Australia or Sydney Alliance leaders beforehand to adapt the agenda to their community and values, and at least once afterwards for debriefing and follow up.

So far, JRS Australia has organised many Community Conversations at parishes and schools. We welcome interest from other organisations or groups. *Pictured: women's rights advocate and Hazara community leader, and Community Conversation speaker, Hava Rezaie.*

HOST A CONVERSATION.

Parish/other groups: jrsreception@jrs.org.au

Schools contact: anne.nesbitt@jrs.org.au

Or simply call: 02 9356 3888



<https://www.facebook.com/JRSAustralia/>



https://twitter.com/JRS_Aus



<https://www.jrs.org.au/>

The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic organisation that accompanies, serves and advocates for the rights of refugees, people seeking asylum and other forcibly displaced people.

SCHOOL STUDENTS HEAR THE VOICES OF REFUGEES

JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE (JRS) AUSTRALIA

REFUGEE VOICES

The "Refugee Voices" program offers young people the chance to hear a person who has been forcibly displaced from his/her home speak about their experience. This unique program gives school students a first hand account of a woman or a man that has experienced persecution, injustice and has been forced to flee their home. By hearing the stories of refugees, young people can be inspired to take action.

Pope Francis tells us to welcome, protect, promote and integrate and offer humanity to people who have been forcibly displaced. *"To all of you [refugees and migrants], and to those who have devoted their lives and their efforts to helping you, I give the assurance of my prayers and I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing."*

"The Refugee Voices program..challenged the whole community to act on their values. Students were able to connect with real face to face stories to challenge their understanding of justice... It was here that authentic cross curriculum engagement was enabled and students were motivated to address contemporary issues which we face." ~ Anthony Matthews; Religious Education Coordinator, St Oliver's Primary School.

JRS Australia can provide the following to the hosting school:

- One or more refugees/people seeking asylum who are prepared to share their story.
- Presentation of the current global context and the context in Australia regarding forced displacement.
- Presentation tailored to link to essential criteria covered in the Australian Curriculum.
- JRS staff to facilitate and respond to students' questions following presentations.
- Resources including a list of actions that students can undertake.

Schools are asked to:

- Provide to JRS Australia beforehand a brief with their goals and intentions for the program.
- Provide a venue and a minimum of one hour to present the Refugee Voices program.
- Provide an audience of students open to respectfully listen to a personal story.
- Encourage and support students who want to continue to examine Australia's response to the current situation.

Speaker Cost: \$400 per hour-long presentation with a person with lived experiences as a refugee or asylum seeker (+\$75 for an additional presentation on the same day). This fee goes directly to the refugee speaker. We also ask for an additional minimum donation of \$100 to support JRS' work in the community with refugees and people seeking asylum.

HOST REFUGEE VOICES.

Find out more by calling (02) 9098 9336 or email our JRS Schools Coordinator: anne.nesbitt@jrs.org.au

"Refugee Voices was so engaging.. The speaker gave us insight into refugees in our world today. For him to open up and share his experiences with us helped our cohort understand more about the difficulties of a refugee's journey." ~Year 8 student