

RIGHT TO REFUGE COMMUNITY TOOLKIT JUNE 2017



Hi everyone,

Welcome to our 2017 Right to Refuge community toolkit.

Everyone deserves to live in safety. Every day, ordinary people are on the move to find a place where they can live in peace. People seeking asylum have the right to seek refuge when their safety is threatened.

While there is growing awareness of the global refugee crisis and the need for an appropriate response from the world community, successive governments including our own have chosen to deliberately deny people's basic right to freedom and safety.

This toolkit, along with our Right to Refuge community workshop is designed to give you the skills and resources to change the conversation around people seeking asylum.

The toolkit includes: event ideas, advice for mapping your community and a campaign update.

Good luck with your community activism!

Camille Furtado
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Find flyers, posters, a petition and useful Right to Refuge resources on the Oxfam Community Resources website.

www.oxfam.org.au/community

THE STORY SO FAR...

Right now, more than 65 million people worldwide have been forced to leave their homes to be free from war and persecution. Millions more are on the move because of natural disasters and poverty.

These people seeking refuge are ordinary people, who have seen their lives upended by extraordinary circumstances.

In many cases, they've lost their homes, loved ones and life as they knew it.

As generous people, we can and should do more to help these people. But the Australian Government is choosing not to do this.

There are many complex issues surrounding the right to refuge. For us at Oxfam we know that poverty plays a significant role as a driver of conflict and displacement. This is compounded by the Australian Government's response because:

- we are not resettling enough people;
- we do not provide enough visa places for refugees; and
- we do not provide enough aid to those countries taking in the majority of refugees and displaced people.

CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES/ A BETTER RESPONSE TO THE REFUGEE CRISIS

Oxfam Australia's campaign objectives for the Right to Refuge campaign are:

1. Treat all people seeking refuge in Australia with dignity and respect and in accordance with the Refugee Convention
2. Increase Australia's intake of people seeking refuge
3. Increase access to additional visa categories including skilled visas, family reunification and student visas
4. Increase aid to countries hosting large populations of people who have been forced to flee

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Community activism plays a key role in achieving these objectives. You can make a difference by reaching out to your friends, family, colleagues and other networks to shift the public conversation on the issue. We need a critical mass of people, supporting a better plan for the world's most vulnerable people to create the change we want to see.

We believe that by putting people's experience at the centre of the conversations we have with our friends, family, and co-workers we will see a shift in the attitudes of everyday Australians and our politicians will face increasing pressure to reconsider the politicisation of the refugee debate. We will then see a change in the government and opposition policies to ensure people can live in safety, free from poverty.

This is a sector-wise approach, organisations and activists like you will be working together to shift the balance of public opinion.

PERSUADE PEOPLE THAT THERE IS A BETTER PLAN

Research shows that these four steps can help us persuade people to join the campaign. Integrate them into all your work, from talking to people to the types of events you hold.

1. **There's a real and serious problem:** the current refugee policy is bad because it is harmful to people who want to live free from danger.
2. **Build empathy and human connection:** humanise people who are seeking safety by telling their stories and sharing the success they've found in their new lives in Australia.
3. **There is a better way:** presenting another way that is fair, protects people seeking safety and enriches our country.
4. **Everyone has a role to play:** together we can make a change by talking to our family and friends, signing petitions, putting on events and attending public events.

People in our communities need to know that politicians will only change if more everyday Australians speak up and stand up for compassion and a fair-go for people seeking safety. It's time we stopped letting politicians create havoc with people's lives and get on with a long term, common-sense plan for people seeking asylum.

Turn over to identify the steps you can take to shift the conversation.

1

Attend a Right to Refuge Conversation workshop! Find your local workshop [here](#)



2

[Create a plan](#) by mapping your community and networks



3

Have [conversations](#) with people in your community and identify that there is a better and more human approach to supporting people seeking protection



4

[Host an event](#) in your community



IDENTIFYING AND REACHING OUT TO THE PERSUADABLE PEOPLE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

To create lasting change you need to inspire your supporters, anger your opponents and persuade the centre group to support you and your ideas.

The centre group are the group we refer to as the 'persuadables'. These are Australians who are generally politically inactive, but whose opinions hold a lot of power. In recent times they have been called the 'silent majority'. We're hoping that this silent majority will become a little less silent on the issue of people seeking asylum.

Thanks to extensive research, we know that the persuadables on refugee issues make up 56% of the Australian voting population; our supporters (or 'the base') are 20%; and our opponents are 24%.

The persuadables are people who are not super engaged with refugee policy and reluctantly tolerate the government's inhumane approach because they can't see a better alternative.

These are people in your community that are unlikely to have been to a refugee event before or be existing Oxfam supporters. They come from all walks of life. They could be members of your local cricket team, parents and grandparents, neighbours, members of faith groups, local business owners. You know your community best and should use your local knowledge to identify the persuadables within your community.

HOW DO WE REACH THE PERSUADABLES IN OUR COMMUNITY?

Community activities are what the Oxfam Community Network is known for. With a bit of planning, you can tailor your activities to target the persuadable people in your community.

[Click here for some tools to help you map your community and reach the right people.](#)

AT YOUR EVENT

Your event will be a success if you:

Have an Action for participants to get involved in: ask them to sign a [hard copy petition](#) or sign up to the Oxfam Community Network before they leave. This means they can stay engaged with Oxfam campaign or become active in your local area.

Focus on Values: Bombarding people with facts is a great way to make them tune out. Instead, think about the language you use for your event. Make it deliberate to tap into people's values e.g. speak about equity and a fair-go. It's less like trying to change their minds, and more like making them realise they already support refugees, because they already value compassion, equity, etc.

Remember that you can contact your community campaigner to help your group plan the most strategic event

EVENT IDEAS AND EASY ASKS:

- Partner up with local community groups to host events – use your mapping tools to identify Country Women’s Association, Rotary clubs, Surf Life Saving Clubs, School P&C committees, public libraries, sports clubs.
- Go along to local events such as school fetes and local markets.
- Try and get local businesses to promote you e.g. Display a banner for you or have flyers on their counter.
- Invite them to a restaurant that may set the scene for a conversation e.g. Afghani, Ethiopian, Iranian.
- Invite people to events where they are able to meet people from refugee backgrounds e.g. Welcome Dinners, multicultural events.
- Ask people to put up posters in their workplace.
- Invite them to your campaign event.

WORDS THAT WORK

Here are some basic words and phrases to use, based on communications research led by the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC).

REPLACE	EMBRACE
Asylum seeker(s)	People seeking asylum
Australia(ns) should/must/can	We should/must/can
Fix our broken system, tackle the problem	Create a fair and efficient process, fairly examine each (person's) case
Comply with international human rights law, humanitarian and legal obligations	Treat others the way we want to be treated, do the right thing
Physical and sexual abuse, torture, inhumane, shunt people to remote prison camps	Turn back to harm, denied basic rights
Security, survival	Live in peace, care for children, live free from danger, safety
Be settled in Australia, be placed onshore	Integrate into our communities
Fleeing persecution, violence and torture	Seeking safety, rebuilding lives where it's safe, looking to set up a safe home
It is not illegal to seek asylum, not a security issue, not a threat, no need to fear, <i>myth busting</i>	It is legal to seek asylum, it is an issues of basic rights, foundation of human dignity
Survive, not seeking a better life	Flourish, prosper, thrive
Injustices being perpetrated, harm being inflicted, conditions worsened	Government choosing to detain, [Name] decided to deny rights

Sometimes it can be tough dealing with people who think that refugees are jumping the queue etc. Check out our [handling objections guide](#) to help manage these objections if they come up in your conversations.