

FORCED TO FLEE:

A Simulation On
Decision-Making During
Conflict and Migration.



Learning Objective: To transform thinking and inspire action around conflict, migration, and refugees

Skills: Group work, critical thinking, decision making, managing resources, reading/vocabulary

Recommended Time: 1 hour
(additional time for vocabulary, stories, and facts)

Recommended Grade Level: Grades 7-12
Ages 11-18, Young Adults

Subjects: Social studies / global issues

Keywords: Conflict, migration, refugees, simulation, group activity

Materials:

Activity

- 4 LOCATION cards (1-HOME, 2-MILITARY ROAD BLOCK, 3-THE BORDER, 4-ACROSS THE BORDER)
- 4 CHOICE cards
- 12 OPTION cards (4 x's option A, 4 x's option B, 4 x's option C)
- 1 IDENTITY DOCUMENTATION
- 15 Resource Cards
 - 5 Food Cards
 - 5 Health Cards
 - 5 Money Cards

**You may wish to print out LOCATION, CHOICE, and each Resource card on different coloured paper to easily identify them*

- Debrief and Discussion Questions

Additional Options:

- Stories and Pictures
- Facts
- Vocabulary

You Need: 2-4 supervisors/instructors/leaders to run each location and collect or distribute resource cards. (A volunteer student could also be used for this role.)

Set-Up: Place the LOCATION cards in four different areas of the room, with HOME placed where you will be starting the activity (could be centre or front of room). Each LOCATION should have a CHOICE card as well as OPTION A, OPTION B, and OPTION C cards. IDENTITY DOCUMENTATION cards should be placed with the leaders at the first two locations (HOME or MILITARY ROAD BLOCK), as that is where groups have the opportunity to purchase identity documentation.

**Note:* It is simplest if the same number of OPTION, CHOICE, and IDENTITY DOCUMENTATION cards are printed out as there are groups. (This avoids groups having to wait if they end up at the same place at the same time.)

CHOICE cards are placed face up at each LOCATION and OPTION CARDS are placed face down at each location in separate piles for OPTION A, OPTION B, and OPTION C. (The location for these cards is written on the top right corner of them.) Ideally there would be one leader or supervisor at each LOCATION, however the game can be done with 2 (for example, if one leader covers LOCATION 1 and 3 and the other is responsible for LOCATION 2 and 4). Leaders help to distribute OPTION cards and collect payment as required at each location.

Students must be split into groups of 3-8 people. Each group should be given 5 food cards, 5 health cards, and 5 money cards which they must manage throughout the game.

Objective: Each group of students represents a family. The objective is to set up your family for the best future possible post-conflict, which includes maintaining a steady supply of food, health and money cards.

Instructions: (You may want to review the vocabulary with your group before doing the activity.) A leader reads out the first LOCATION card: HOME and then distributes the corresponding CHOICE card (with that location listed on the top right corner) to each group. The group reads that card together and makes a decision as to what OPTION card they want to choose. Decisions may be based on the information given on the CHOICE card, the known “cost”, as well as anticipated costs to health, food, or money and future outcomes.

Once a group or family has made a decision they pay the fee (if any) in money cards (e.g. Cost = 1 is the payment of 1 money card) to the leader in exchange for the OPTION card. The group then reads the outcome of their decision on the OPTION card and exchanges food, health, or money cards with the leader as indicated on that OPTION. They may have lost additional resources based on the consequences of their decision, or had the opportunity to gain them.

*Note: Resources listed on the bottom of the OPTION card are additional to the original cost of that option specified on the CHOICE card. These may differ from the original cost indicated on the CHOICE cards, as the consequences of choices made have hidden costs.

If a group does not have the specific resource card (food, health, or money) that they are asked to pay (because they have run out of these cards), they can give one of the other resource cards instead (assuming that they would be able to exchange money for food or save money by not seeking medical services). If they have no resources when asked to pay, they must exit the game, for they have left themselves nothing to survive off of. If injuries are sustained (as noted in the OPTION card), members of the group must take on those injuries (closing their eyes and being led by others, putting an arm around their back, or limping, until they have the opportunity to receive medical treatment).

Once the family has exchanged resources with the leader at that location, they can migrate to the location specified at the bottom of their OPTION card. They then repeat the process of reading the LOCATION and CHOICE cards and selecting an OPTION until the natural end of the activity.

Debrief and Discussion Questions: Once each group has selected their final OPTION card which directs them to join other families for discussion and debrief, each group should share the journey they took through conflict and migration (the decisions they made and the outcome of their decisions).

- What resources do you have left for your future? What do you think the future has in store for your family?
- What influenced the decisions your team made?
- For those of you who made it to the BORDER, how did it feel to be told that you couldn't cross the border immediately and would have to wait?
- At what point did you have the lowest levels of food? Health? Money? Do you think this is reflective of reality?
- If you had to sacrifice resources, which would you choose to sacrifice first (food, money, or health)? What would be the repercussions of this decision? How might that affect your plans for the future?
- At what points were there opportunities to gain resources? Were they equal to the amount of times you had to lose resources?
- What other things, aside from food, health and money, might you gain or lose in these situations? (Knowledge, relationships, clothing, property...)
- This game assumes that you all have the same decision-making power in a family. How might this be different if you were a child in the family? What about a senior or elderly person? Would there be additional or differing challenges that you would have to face? Would you have the same fears or desires?
- After doing this exercise, can you identify some reasons why refugees may be crossing Canada's border through what may be considered as “illegal crossings”? (They have not experienced honesty, trustworthiness, or reliability through legal institutions and authorities of their home and/or destination country; decisions to migrate across borders are made long before they arrive at a country's border; they may receive more immediate entry or support (even though they may still be deported).

Share the stories and facts with your class to enhance discussion and learning.

Trigger Warning: *This is a simulation designed to mirror real-life issues faced by refugees. As such, it may create feelings of stress, panic, anger, or sadness, particularly for those who have experienced similar situations. Please give participants the option to take a break if they feel the need to do so.*

Vocabulary:

(All vocabulary is written in bold throughout the activity)

Asylum-Seeker: Someone who says he or she is a refugee, but whose claim has not yet been evaluated. On average, about 1 million people seek asylum on an individual basis every year.

Food Assistance (or Food Aid): Food assistance (or food aid) programs provide food for people who are hungry because of emergency crisis situations like war, droughts, or floods. Food assistance can be in the form of food (cooked or uncooked), cash, or vouchers. Canadian Foodgrains Bank works closely with its members and their local partners to provide millions of dollars in food assistance around the world every year.

Food Ration: A fixed amount of food given to a person or household in emergency situations or when sufficient food is not accessible. Rations are often distributed by aid groups or government agencies at refugee or internally displaced persons camps or to communities who are facing severe food shortages.

Humanitarian Organization: A group of people (such as a business, society, or association) which is engaged in promoting human welfare and social reforms, particularly the saving of human lives or the alleviation of suffering.

Human Smuggler: Someone who facilitates the transportation, attempted transportation or illegal entry of a person or persons across an international border, in violation of one or more countries' laws.

Identity Documentation: Any document which may be used to identify a person or verify aspects of a person's personal identity. This may include an identity card, a driver's license, or a passport. Establishing one's identity may be essential for a wide range of activities, including the registration of births and deaths, marriage, obtaining employment, housing, hospital care or rations, qualifying for social benefits, schooling, or requesting official documents and permits.

Internally Displaced People (IDPs): Unlike refugees, IDPs have not crossed an international border to find security but have remained inside their home countries.

Migrants: People who choose to leave their homes, in order to improve their lives.

Refuge: A place that provides shelter or protection from danger.

Refugee: People who are forced to leave their homes to save their lives or preserve their freedom.

Refugee Camp: An area which serves to shelter people displaced by war, political oppression or religious beliefs. Many refugee camps also offer food, healthcare, and education for people living there, donated by humanitarian organizations or UNHCR.

While they offer some services and security, refugee camps can be cramped, dangerous and difficult places in which to live.

Resources: The supply of money, materials, and other assets that can be drawn on by a person or organization in order to function effectively. This can include human resources (e.g. health or relationships/connections), physical capital (e.g. money or property) and knowledge.

Road Block: A barrier set up to inspect traffic and monitor migration. In this game, families run into a "military road block" set up by the government.

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees): The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was established on December 14, 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly. The agency is mandated to lead and co-ordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees.

LOCATION: THE BORDER

You and your family have finally made it to the border. Your health, money and food **resources** have declined. As you near the entry/exit point you see crowds of other people, also having fled the conflict with only basic supplies. The path to the border checkpoint is blocked off with a razor wire fence. You are told that this country is not accepting any more **refugees** because it already has more than it can handle. You are told to wait until the gates are opened to allow more **refugees** through.

LOCATION: HOME

There has been a bad drought in your country this year and your family, like many others, was not able to grow enough food for themselves or to sell it in the marketplace for money. Some people from another community went to the government to protest. They said that the government was not doing enough to help people in that country, and they asked for help to feed the hungry and assist those in poverty. The government replied by sending out soldiers to fire into the crowd of protestors, killing many people. This made more people angry with the government and some groups became violent as well. Within a matter of weeks, the country you live in has transformed from one of relative peace, to one of conflict. People are fighting in the streets and bombs are falling daily. Many of your friends and family have already been killed. Your family can no longer go to school or work because they fear for their safety. You are having a hard time getting enough food. What will your family choose to do?

LOCATION: ACROSS THE BORDER

Now across the border, you are approached by a representative of the **UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)** who would like to escort you to the **refugee camp** to register as **refugees**. This is one of the largest **refugee camps** in the area, with thousands of people living in a tight space under tarps and in tents. By registering as a **refugee** you will have lots of support from UNHCR and other **humanitarian organizations** who will supply you with **food rations** and healthcare. There are also a number of schools set up in the camp that children may attend. However, you would have limited ability to come and go from the camp once you are there, and you worry about being stuck there for a long time. If you do not stay at the **refugee camp** you will have to find temporary settlement elsewhere or continue your migration to another country. What will you do?

LOCATION: MILITARY ROAD BLOCK

Unfortunately while travelling to the border you have ran into a **road block** set up by the military. They question where you are going and why. The women are being harassed. The military wants to see your **identity documentation**. They go through your stuff and will not let you pass until you give them money or food.

Location: The Border

CHOICE: Wait or Find Your Own Way

Some people have told you that they have been waiting there for days. You have also heard that some people are crossing the border through unofficial crossing points, across cornfields or sneaking through the forest. You and your family are tired and hungry. You are running low on **resources** and some of you are not well.

What will you do?

- A) Wait with others until you are permitted to cross the border:
Cost = 0
- B) Take your family through the cornfields and try to get into the next country at an unofficial border crossing: **Cost = 0**
- C) Take the longer route and sneak through the forest, hoping you can surpass official border crossings to get into the next country:
Cost = 0

Location: Home

CHOICE: Stay or Leave?

If you and your family decide to leave home, who will take care of your house and property? It is likely that either government forces or rebel groups will take it over and you may not be able to return to it. You will be leaving behind many friends and family and you don't know when you will see them again. In order to leave your country and go to another you need proper **identity documentation** (such as passports and proper travel visas), but not everyone in your family has this and it is difficult to obtain during the conflict. You can order documentation but this can be expensive and means you will have to risk your lives while waiting for the documentation to arrive, -though it may allow you to cross the border more easily.

What will you do?

- A) Stay: **Cost = 0**
- B) Order and wait for identity documentation: **Cost = 4**
- C) Leave immediately with no documentation: **Cost = 0**

Location: Across the Border

CHOICE: Register at the Refugee Camp, Settle Elsewhere Temporarily, or Continue Migrating

You have heard a little bit about **refugee camps**. You are concerned about your family staying in such crowded and difficult living conditions. You are worried that by registering at the camp, your personal information may be shared with the military in your home country. What if you are not allowed to return to your house and community? Some of the members of your family who are still residing in your home country may be at risk. Maybe you will be arrested at the camp, particularly if you have no **identity documentation**. Outside of the **refugee camp** however, you have no guarantee of support. You will have to pay for transportation and find food and water. There is a chance that you may be able to get some from **humanitarian organizations** if they are working in the area. This may be your opportunity to settle into a space of your own and try to live a more normal life together. Outside of the **refugee camp** however, you will have to pay lots of money for healthcare and there may be no opportunities for children in your family to go to school. If you continue to migrate you must pay for transportation to the next city. You may find a place that is more welcoming to **refugees** and will provide your family with a good life, but it will likely cost you time and money and may involve taking great risks.

What will you do?

- A) Go to the refugee camp. **Cost = 0**
- B) Find temporary shelter elsewhere in that country. **Cost = 2**
- C) Continue migrating to another country. **Cost = 3**

Location: Military Road Block

CHOICE: Pay or Find another Way

You have packed your bags and come all this way only to be hindered by your own government military. You do not want to give them food or money because you have little to spare and you don't know how long you will have to travel before finding **refuge**. You have few options. You can pay a **bribe** to the military so that you may continue your journey or you can pay a **human smuggler** to sneak you past all of the **road blocks** and into the next country. You have heard that this may be an easy way to avoid the border crossing and get to safety faster but the smuggler will only take you if you have **identity documentation**.

What will you do?

- A) **Bribe** the military: **Cost = 2**
- B) We have no documentation and will stay at a nearby village until we obtain it: **Cost = 4** (Only an option if you have no documentation)
- C) We have documentation and will pay a **human smuggler** to take us across the border: **Cost = 3** (Only an option if you have documentation)

Location: Home

OPTION C: Leave immediately (do not order documentation)

Cost = 0

You have decided to leave your home immediately before something bad happens to your family. You can only pack a limited supply of food. Though you are able to flee to safety more quickly, you may run into problems crossing the border without proper **identity documentation**. The neighbouring country has already accepted plenty of **refugees** escaping the conflict and you hope they will understand. You quickly grab the belongings you can carry and walk for days, purchasing more food as you need it. You eventually run into a **MILITARY ROAD BLOCK**.

-1 Food Supply
0 Health
-1 Money Supply

Location: Home

OPTION A: Stay. Cost = 0

You have decided to stay in hopes that the conflict will end soon so that you can carry on with your normal life. Unfortunately things keep getting worse instead of better. Some of the men in your family are being pressured to fight and the women are harassed or assaulted if they leave their homes. Nobody is able to plant or harvest food with all of the fighting so food is not available in local stores. Both rebels and the government army are blockading or stealing **food assistance** being sent by **humanitarian organizations**. Suddenly a bomb falls overhead. Your neighbours were all killed but luckily your family has escaped with only injuries. Two people in your family can no longer use one of their arms and one other has lost their vision. You have no choice but to flee for help. You quickly grab the belongings you can carry and walk for days, eventually reaching a **MILITARY ROAD BLOCK**.

-2 Food Supply
-4 Health
0 Money

Location: Military Road Block

OPTION A: Bribe the military.

Cost = 2

You have agreed to **bribe** the military so that you may continue your journey to safety. They force you to share some of your food as well. You are fortunate to get out, away from the conflict quickly but you have less money left over for the remainder of your journey. From the military checkpoint you catch a bus which takes you to **THE BORDER**.

-1 Food Supply
0 Health
0 Money Supply

Location: Home

OPTION B: Order identity documentation. Cost = 4

You have decided to order proper documentation. While you wait for it to arrive, your food supply has diminished, and you struggle to find enough to sustain your family. Rebels break into your house one night and three of your family members are injured by them. Two of these three people now have limps which will not be fixed until they have an opportunity to receive medical attention. After waiting for weeks, your **identity documentation** finally arrives. Now, it is more likely that you will be able to leave your country and enter another without any problems. However because the documentation cost you money, you have less money left over for food, transportation and rent while you travel. Gather your family and belongings and make your way to the **MILITARY ROAD BLOCK**.

-2 Food Supply
-3 Health
0 Money Supply

Location: The Border

OPTION A: Wait with others until you are permitted to cross the border. Cost = 0

You do not want to take the risk of sneaking across the border or missing your chance when the gates are opened. You and your family find a small space and try to get comfortable using the few belongings that you have brought. The days are very hot and you have little shelter. A **humanitarian organization** offers you some food. Fortunately after 3 days of waiting, international pressure has resulted in the opening of this border. You and your family push your way through the crowds and ACROSS THE BORDER.

+2 Food Supply
-2 Health
0 Money Supply

Location: The Border

OPTION B: Take your family through the cornfields and try to get into the next country at an unofficial border crossing. Cost = 0

You have decided to follow others who are crossing into the country through the cornfields. After an hour of walking you hear yelling. Military from the neighbouring country are patrolling the area and sending all **refugees** back to the official border entrance. You and your family have been sent back and must wait with other **refugees** at the fence until you are permitted to cross. (Refer to Option A)

-1 Food Supply
0 Health
0 Money Supply

Location: Military Road Block

OPTION B: We have no documentation and will stay at a nearby village until we obtain it. Cost = 4

You have found a place to stay in a nearby village where you can obtain **identity documentation**. The family you are staying with is charging you a little bit of rent money for your stay. While waiting you must feed your family and help contribute to the home-owners food needs. You pay for your documents and decide whether your family will return to the checkpoint and **bribe** the military to let you cross (Option A) or pay a **human smuggler** (Option C) to take you across the border. What is your choice? (Take that Outcome card)

-2 Food Supply
0 Health
-1 Money Supply

Location: Military Road Block

OPTION C: We have documentation and will pay a human smuggler to take us across the border. Cost = 3

You have decided to take your chances and pay a **human smuggler** to take you across the border. At least this way you will avoid military **road blocks** and issues with border crossings and hopefully make it to safety more quickly. You are instructed to wait on a street corner in the middle of the night. A man pulls up in a van and you quickly get it. He tells you that you are putting his life at risk and must pay him more if you want to continue. You are forced to give him extra money. The van picks up others along the way. You are dropped off in a deserted area and told to follow a path walking miles on foot until you get to water. You are told to crowd into a boat. You are terrified because many of your family members do not know how to swim but this is your only chance. The conditions on the boat are terrible. There are no washrooms or spaces to lay down and the ride is very rough. At one point people were thrown from the boat and lost at sea. Over your long and treacherous journey, your food supply has diminished. You have managed to keep your family together but you are all very ill. Finally you reach land. Disembark the boat and make your way ACROSS THE BORDER.

-2 Food Supply
-4 Health
-1 Money Supply

Location: Across the Border

OPTION B: Find temporary shelter elsewhere in the country. **Cost = 2**

You continue on your journey on foot or by hitchhiking a ride where you can. You have managed to get a tent from a **humanitarian organization**, and find a place to set it up on some poor, unused land, outside a large city, where no one will ask you to pay taxes. You are constantly trying to find work so that you can feed your family. You have to walk very far for water. Thankfully, a **humanitarian organization** like one of the members of Canadian Foodgrains Bank, offers your family **food rations** once a month. You have no electricity or plumbing and very limited access to healthcare. Your children cannot go to school and stay home all day. You wonder about your home. This place is very different. Will you be able to return? What does your future hold? Join other families to discuss this and debrief.

+2 Food Supply
0 Health
0 Money Supply

Location: The Border

OPTION C: Take the longer route and sneak through the forest, hoping you can surpass official border crossings to get into the next country. **Cost = 0**

You have decided to take your chances and sneak across the border. You wait until dark and then gather your family and slowly make your way through the forest. At one point you hear noises and see flashlights and quickly hide in the brush. Thankfully you are not caught. After hours of walking you are exhausted but finally make it to a small town. You run into a man from your country who tells you that many **refugees** are living together at the edge of the town. You follow him there and see many people from your homeland living under tarps and scraps of materials. They have no access to plumbing or electricity, but they have built a small community where they can support each other and occasionally get **food assistance** delivered from **humanitarian organizations**. You purchase some bread for your family to eat. You have finally made it ACROSS THE BORDER.

-1 Food Supply
-1 Health
-1 Money Supply

Location: Across the Border

OPTION C: Continue migrating to another country. **Cost = 3**

You continue walking for miles and miles with your family. You take a bus or train when you can afford it. You try to look for people who will pay you cash for work so that you can have enough money to continue traveling, but they do not pay you much and you have to work hard. You hope all of this effort will give your family a better future, but you don't know where you will end up or if you will make it. You wonder about your home. This place is very different. Will you be able to return? What does your future hold? Join other families to discuss this and debrief.

-1 Food Supply
0 Health
+1 Money Supply

Location: Across the Border

OPTION A: Go to the Refugee Camp. **Cost = 0**

The representative from UNHCR takes you and your family to the **refugee camp**. You see thousands of people. You are given **food rations** and have access to clean water. Your entire family lives in a tent together and there are many other tents placed side-by-side. A couple of temporary buildings having been constructed as hospitals and schools so your family has access to health and education. The adults in the family cannot find work though, and you are not permitted to leave the camp unless under special circumstances. You wonder about your home. This place is very different. Will you be able to return? What does your future hold? Join other families to discuss this and debrief.

+3 Food Supply
+3 Health
0 Money Supply

*You may want to print out IDENTITY DOCUMENTATION on
a bright coloured paper so that it is easily recognizable*

IDENTITY DOCUMENTATION

RESOURCE CARDS

You may want to print out each resource card on a different colour of paper so that they are easily identifiable

FOOD

FOOD

FOOD

FOOD

FOOD

RESOURCE CARDS

You may want to print out each resource card on a different colour of paper so that they are easily identifiable

HEALTH

HEALTH

HEALTH

HEALTH

HEALTH

RESOURCE CARDS

You may want to print out each resource card on a different colour of paper so that they are easily identifiable

MONEY

MONEY

MONEY

MONEY

MONEY