

Personal Experiences, Public Issues: Refugees, Immigrants, and You

Workshop I - Friday, April 1, 9:00am-10:30am

Objective

In this workshop, participants will engage with the film “Echando Raices = Taking Root: Immigrant and Refugee communities in California, Texas and Iowa”, a documentary produced by the American Friends Service Committee (clips available on [AFSC's YouTube Channel](#), look for the Echando Raices playlist). The film features a range of refugee and immigrant narratives and addresses a variety of social problems, personal challenges, and political realities that the communities face. After the film, participants will engage in a discussion with the facilitators discussing the challenges and opportunities of the undocumented population presented by the film and as experienced in service.

This workshop will enable participants to:

1. connect personal experiences with relevant public and political issues;
2. identify challenges and opportunities for immigrants, volunteers, and support agencies; and
3. create a knowledge base to support our service, advocacy, and impact.

Materials

- [Refugee/Immigrant Issues Powerpoint on Slideshare.com](#) (slides 1-6)
- Computer with Internet access
- Projector
- Flip Chart/Markers or Whiteboard
- Echando Raices documentary (which you can take out from your campus library, [purchase online](#), or view about 30 minutes of clips on [YouTube](#))

Handouts

(see participant packet for these worksheets)

- Challenges & Opportunities Sheet

Brief Outline

This workshop will include the following sections:

1. Introductions | 10 minutes

2. Film: Echando Raices | 60 minutes

3. Discussion | 20 minutes

Facilitator Guidelines

1. Introductions | 10 minutes

In this section, the goal is to briefly introduce each other and engage participants by asking them to share their own service experiences and policy/advocacy interests as they relate to refugees and immigrants.

Begin by introducing yourself and the primary goal of the track (official track summary):

This track is designed for students, administrators, or partners who have an interest or experience in working with refugee or immigrant groups. Typically, students engage with these populations through their service in schools, refugee/immigrant support agencies, English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, or health clinics. Not only does this topic cross over a wide range of social services, but it has reached national news this past year through debates over the DREAM Act and related policy, making refugee and immigrant rights one of the foremost political discussions around contemporary civil rights in the United States. This track will enable participants to share their experiences, discuss the issues, and learn about opportunities for advocacy and social action.

Then, introduce the goal of this particular session (listed above in the “objectives” section), also listed on [Slide 2](#).

Using [Slide 3](#) as a guide, ask participants to introduce themselves, including:

- Name
- School/Organization
- Personal Experience (i.e. service work)
- Public Issue (i.e. what policy/advocacy work they’re most engaged in)

2. Film: Echando Raices | 60 minutes

Introduce the people and places that are featured in the film, using [Slide 4](#):

- Central Valley, California: indigenous latino groups fleeing persecution, economic and political disenfranchisement for agricultural work
- Houston, Texas: urban [im]migrant groups confront each other in an unfamiliar place
- Central Iowa: latino groups work in the meat packing industry, strong cultural clashes with the white population

Encourage students to consider the “voices” heard throughout the film and the various structures, systems, policies, and problems that they refer to throughout their stories (such as labor rights, environmental welfare, health, etc.).

Ask participants to think about these issues in terms of “challenges” and “opportunities”. What are the struggles facing these communities? What opportunities exist to improve them?

Then, watch the video. If you do not have access to the full video (60 minutes), then arrange the [YouTube playlist clips](#) for about 30 minutes of video. In that case, you can extend the discussion to 50 minutes, including more audience participation.

As you watch the video, take notes on some important quotes or observations. You can draw on these later during the discussion if participation is lacking.

3. Discussion | 20 minutes

After watching the video, ask participants to share some initial reactions. Use some of your notes to add to their responses or illicit further feedback.

Then, using [Slide 5](#) as a guide, create a chart on the whiteboard like the one below. Start with the challenges for each group, and then move on to opportunities. The chart below has been filled out with some ideas that you can use in case participation is lacking.

Encourage students to record responses on their Challenges and Opportunities handout:

	Challenges	Opportunities
Refugees & Immigrants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • naturalization process • language/cultural barriers & assimilation • [mis]representation • access to social services (healthcare, education, driving license, transportation, etc.) • access to basic human needs (housing, food, clothing, etc.) • labor force (job security, exploitation, job skills) • psychosocial effects & intervention (trauma, migration, separation) • diaspora communities (economic and personal connections to home country) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • economic impact (low-skill job, paying taxes) • social capital (empowerment, social mobility) • intellectual capital (access to higher education) • cultural enrichment • raising minimum wage
Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of training/resources (providing services, overcoming cultural/linguistic barriers) • lack of issue/policy knowledge • lack of access to relevant organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • issue expertise • professional preparation • academic resources
Support Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • underfunded • low capacity (staff, resources, programs, updated research) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • federal funding, grants • community support • buy-in from key stakeholders • knowledge of relevant policy

Once completed, explain that this framework can serve as a model for how we think about the remainder of the track. Ask students to reflect on their own challenges and opportunities and

think about what knowledge or skills they may need to develop in order to a) better support immigrants and refugees and b) build capacity for support agencies.

Time permitting, use Slide 6 as a guide to wrap up the discussion and lead into the rest of the track:

Thinking about these challenges and opportunities...

- What is our role in supporting immigrants and refugees?
- How can we support each other? Our sites and agencies?
- What skills, tools, or knowledge do you need in order to enhance your impact?

Participants' answers to the last question may offer you some insight on what areas you should focus on throughout the track. Feel free to modify future discussions or approaches based on the needs that participants have expressed.