

# PASSOVER

## HOLIDAY

## RESOURCE

**gishur**  
CONNECTING  
COMMUNITIES



**HIAS**  
Europe

**PAIDEIA**  
The European Institute  
for Jewish Studies in Sweden



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Gishur: Connecting Communities

Passover Holiday Resource

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Developed by Avital Shein with support of HIAS, Paideia, and CEJI, and the Gishur expert group.

Design and layout: Aleksandra Rendak



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The content of this Shabbat Holiday Resource represents the views of the project consortium only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

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Sonja Viličić, European Union of Jewish Students (EUJS), Serbia

Mikolaj Wrzecionkowski, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), Poland

Merrill Zack, HIAS, United States

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# ABOUT GISHUR AND ITS PARTNERS

Gishur offers capacity, community and coalition building to empower Jewish community leaders and activists to challenge xenophobia and to promote inclusion through dialogue with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.

While immigration to Europe has increased in recent years, some in the Jewish community have expressed concerns of potential antisemitic attitudes among asylum seekers originating from Muslim-majority countries. Conversely, other Jews, often themselves descendants of refugees escaping persecution, identify with the plight of newcomers. Although European Jews and recent migrants and asylum seekers often share similar histories and experience various types and degrees of intolerance and discrimination, their relationship is often framed by mutual mistrust. Some Jews fear being exposed to antisemitism because of the impact of Israeli-Palestinian conflict. At the same time, anti-Muslim racism and xenophobia are on the rise and impact refugees and migrants.

Gishur creates spaces for improved dialogue and mutual understanding between Jewish and migrant communities and debunks harmful bias, myths and stereotypes. Through Gishur, community leaders, youth and activists can take an active and meaningful role in standing against hatred through shared values.

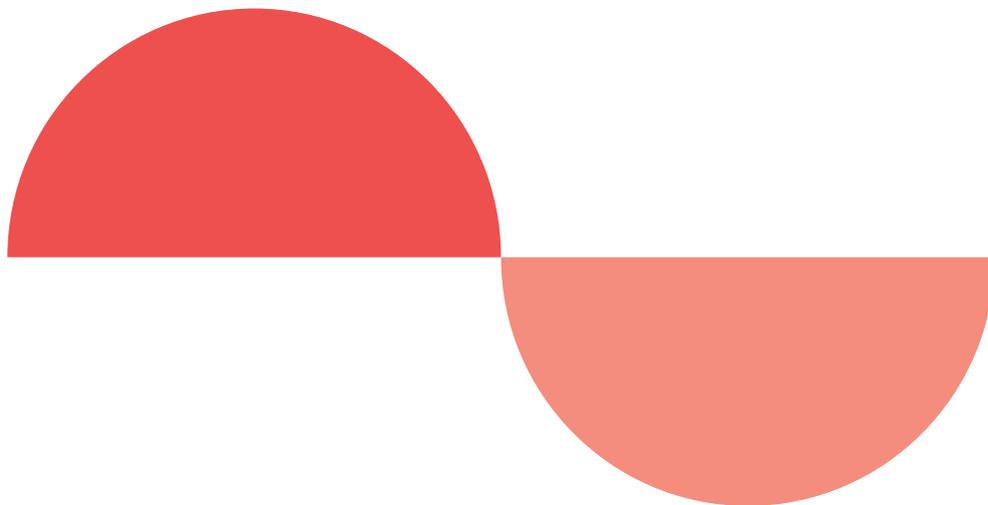
As part of this project, three Jewish holiday resources were developed that promote values associated with social inclusion. These resources are designed to be used by Jewish community leaders, rabbis, youth leaders and activists when organizing local interfaith holiday celebrations.

# GISHUR COORDINATOR AND PARTNERS

HIAS Europe, Gishur Coordinator, is the Brussels-based office of HIAS, providing humanitarian aid to forcibly displaced people around the world. HIAS Europe provides a Jewish perspective to European policymaking on forced migration and humanitarian relief and supports Jewish communities across Europe in their efforts to protect and integrate refugees.

CEJI - A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe stands with people of all backgrounds to promote a Europe of diversity and respect. A Jewish voice at the European level, CEJI's activities include delivering diversity education and enhancing interfaith and intercultural dialogue, while advocating in the EU against antisemitism and discrimination of all kinds.

Paideia - The European Institute for Jewish Studies in Sweden is an academic and applied educational institute of excellence, with the mandate of working for the revitalization of Jewish life and culture in Europe and educating for active minority citizenship. The organization has a pan-European approach, every year offering educational opportunities to individuals from more than 15 different European countries.



# HOW TO USE THE GISHUR HOLIDAY RESOURCES

Gishur holiday resources are designed to be used at an event which enriches a Jewish holiday celebration through awareness raising activities and learning opportunities focused on promoting inclusive communities that are respectful of refugees and migrants of all faiths. Such an event uses the resources as the basis for the planning and execution of these activities with the intention of generating meaningful conversations and stimulating social action.

In the following section you will find practical support for facilitators who are using Gishur holiday resources to plan an event. This section offers advice on planning such an event as well as provides a detailed explanation of the structure of the resources and the best ways to use them.

Additional support is offered in the section titled 'Pedagogical Tools' (in the appendix). There you will find an array of pedagogical tools and techniques that can be helpful when facilitating activities from the Gishur holiday resources.

# THE STRUCTURE OF THE RESOURCES

## •A TOOLKIT

The resources are designed for facilitators and offer a toolkit of activities for a holiday themed event: Shabbat, Passover or Sukkot. The activities offered in the resources aim to create a space for a shared experience, communication and reflection. While you, the facilitator, may choose to use parts of the resource as a handout for your participants, the resources are primarily meant to be used for your planning of the event and its execution.

## •THEME AND KEY IDEA

Each activity has a theme and a key question/idea, and the aim of the activity is to address or answer this question or idea. As a facilitator, keep this theme and question in mind as you guide your participants in the activities and discussions.

## •DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

While some activities centre on the reading of texts, and others have more hands-on components, all activities include some texts and a series of discussion questions. The goal of these discussion questions is twofold: one, they are meant to encourage an open exchange of ideas and experiences among participants, and second, they are meant to guide participants toward thinking and reflecting about the key issue at hand. Ultimately, all the activities aim to work toward the goals of Gishur, namely, to advocate for inclusive communities which are respectful of refugees and migrants of all faiths.

## •TIPS AND VARIATIONS

The resources are designed to be used in diverse settings across Europe. For this reason, each activity offers tips and suggestions for variations that will help you, the facilitator, tailor the activity to the type of event you are hosting for your participants. For example, the activities will offer variations depending on whether you are organizing an interfaith event, that is, an event that brings Jewish and refugee communities together, or one where all participants are Jewish. However, keep in mind that as the person 'on the ground', you are in the best position to judge what activities need to be tweaked to best achieve the desired outcome. In other words, the activities are planned as a guideline to help you, but they should not be taken as a permanent script that must be followed.

# WHEN PLANNING YOUR EVENT, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

## • SIZE OF EVENT

The number of participants may vary greatly depending on the event you are planning. An ideal number of participants for the activities offered here is 15-20 people. This number allows you to divide participants into smaller groups (3-5 people) for more individual engagement but also offers a larger group setting which is good for sharing perspectives and ideas across a wider spectrum of people. If, however, your event will have a higher number of participants, it is important to adjust the planning accordingly. For example, consider having more facilitators on hand, or calculating more time for discussions.

## • NUMBER OF FACILITATORS

It is always recommended to have two facilitators per event. It is also advisable that the two facilitators themselves embody diversity in terms of gender, cultural background or facilitation style. For an interfaith event, it might be particularly helpful if one of the facilitators speaks the language of the participants from the refugee community.

## • LENGTH OF EVENT

As a general guideline, the resources are planned for a two-hour event. However, it is assumed that you will choose only a selection of the activities. Roughly speaking the resources are designed for an event which incorporates 1-2 of the activities included, in addition to the introductory activity.

## • LOCATION

The activities can take place in a diversity of locations. For example, a community social hall, home environment or even outdoors. When an event is planned in a Jewish facility, be mindful that non-Jewish participants (and even Jewish ones) may not be accustomed to the heightened security routines that are often present at these institutions. It is a good idea to prepare your participants for this experience. As part of this preparation, you should be ready to address questions about not only the practicalities of these routines but also about the reasons they are in place.

## • **PRIVACY**

Any collection of data of participants should follow GDPR standards. Any photos or video recordings require authorization from participants. Public visibility, including sharing of images on social media, can impact the willingness of certain participants to be part of this project. Keep in mind that people may be subject to criticism from within their own community for participating in this type of event. At times, fear of public exposure could be a reason for certain people not to participate. Hence always be mindful of these issues before publicizing an event and be thoughtful about how you go about it

## • **JEWISH COMMUNITY EVENTS AND INTERFAITH EVENTS**

The resources aim to accommodate both events within the Jewish community as well as interfaith events that bring together Jews with their non-Jewish neighbours, especially those from refugee communities. However, it is always important to keep in mind that an event in the Jewish community will need a different kind of planning and focus than an interfaith event that includes non-Jewish participants, and vice versa. The resources strive to help suggest ways to adjust each activity depending on the type of event you are hosting. But, as a facilitator, you may also find the need to introduce your own adjustments that are appropriate to the type of event you are having.

## • **CHOOSING YOUR PARTICIPANTS**

Whether your event is planned to be an event within the Jewish community or an interfaith event, you may decide to focus your event on a particular type of participants. For example, you may choose to have participants be groups of families, student groups, or adult community members. The resources aim to provide activities that accommodate diverse configurations of participants but still maintain the overall aim of building bridges of understanding between Jewish and refugee and/or migrant communities.

## • **KNOW YOUR PARTICIPANTS**

If your participants come from diverse backgrounds, do some research on the cultures of the people you are inviting to the event. Consider, for example, asking some participants to prepare some items in advance. For example, in a food activity, it can be an enriching experience to include some food items that are brought by the refugee community participants. Adjusting the activities to the specific participants you are hosting is key to making the event meaningful.

## • **LANGUAGE**

In an interfaith event, you may find that your participants do not speak the same language or do not speak with the same facility and fluency. Be sure to always speak slowly and clearly. As was mentioned before, you may also consider having a co-facilitator who speaks other languages, or, alternatively, have a translator on hand. (If using a translator, keep in mind that this will likely add time to your event so plan accordingly.)

# INTRODUCTION TO PASSOVER RESOURCE

The Passover Resource offers an array of activities that bring together Passover-inspired ideas and traditions and an engagement with current refugee experiences and realities. While the resource uses Passover as its starting point, the activities can be done independently from the actual celebration of Passover. They are not meant to be used in lieu of a Haggadah but rather they can be used either at some point during the week of Passover or as part of Passover-themed preparatory events in the weeks leading up to Passover. However, the facilitator may choose to add these activities to an actual Seder in order to enhance the Passover experience (see: *HIAS Haggadah*). In a Jewish context, adding these activities to the Seder can add new meaning to an already-familiar cultural practice. And, in an interfaith context, doing so can enrich participants' welcome and engagement with Jewish traditions. One can also consider adding the activities in this resource to a mock-Seder or pedagogical Seder (one that highlights some key elements and may or may not include a full meal afterwards). In an interfaith setting, the Passover Information Sheet can be particularly helpful.

## ACTIVITY 1

# WHAT DO WE CARRY WITH US?

(25-30MIN)

Key idea:  
**Every individual is an entire world**

## Introduction

All the activities in this resource will require your participants to interact with one another. They will be asked to discuss ideas together but also to share their individual opinions and experiences. It is important that participants feel that they are in a safe space where they can be open and honest without fear of being reprimanded, judged or verbally attacked. Therefore, this activity is designed with two goals in mind: one, to help your participants get to know each other -- like a classic 'ice breaker' activity. Second, the activity creates space for the participants to tell us something about themselves, in their own words, and on their own terms. In other words, it creates a space that allows individuals to speak for themselves rather than having others impose a narrative on them (this is particularly important in interfaith events).

The activity aims to project an understanding that everyone's ideas, stories, and experiences are valued and listened to.

In addition, you can also choose to sharpen the focus of this activity by highlighting participants' experiences of migration or sense of belonging or, more generally, the notion that we all share these in common.

# Activity Goals

Goals particularly relevant in a Jewish community event are marked with   
For an interfaith event, they are marked with 

- Help participants become acquainted with one another.
- Contribute to the construction of a respectful, safe and open space.
-  • Encourage the voices of refugees to be heard on their own terms (specific to events with refugee participants).
- Highlight shared experiences of journeys, migration, connection with roots, history, or sense of belonging.

## Activity Opening (5min)

Begin with a presentation of the purpose of this activity, namely, to know those in the room with us, find our connections and become aware that we come as full individuals enmeshed in stories, relationships and places. Give participants an overview of the activity by describing the steps participants will follow: choosing a personal item (such as keys, ring, book, etc.), sharing in small groups, and (possibly) sharing in the larger group. Begin by asking your participants to take an item from their pocket, bag or purse.

Optional: ask participants to lay the item out for others to see.

### **FACILITATOR TIPS:**

- If a participant is not carrying an item, a piece of clothing they are wearing (shirt, shoes, etc.) can also be used as part of the activity.
- This activity is based on personal belongings as a stimulus for sharing and 'getting to know you'. But you can use any number of other stimuli as well. For example, you can ask your participants to share the last meal they ate, their name, an animal they connect to, childhood toy, etc. While the 'sharing prompts' (see below) would need to be adjusted somewhat, the stimulus should still serve as a springboard to get to know participants and give an opportunity to find similarities among participants.

# Group Sharing (15-20min)

Use the 'Sharing Prompts' to help structure your participants' sharing. As a facilitator, you have several options for how participants will share with one another. Here are a few suggested models for sharing.

**Sharing with the big group:** Go around the room and ask each participant to share with everyone.

**Sharing and presenting 'buddies':** Pair participants up and ask them to share amongst themselves. Then, ask each to present the other person to the big group.

**'Speed dating':** Arrange your participants in two concentric circles, so that those in the inner circle face one person from the outer circle. Ask participants to share with the person sitting opposite them. Then, after about 4-6 minutes, ask everyone in the inner circle to move one place to the right. Now, each participant will be sitting across from a new person. Ask participants to share with the new person sitting facing them.

## FACILITATOR TIPS:

- Always be mindful that not everyone is ready to share or open up to people they do not know. Keep this activity 'light' and make space for 'non-participation' too.
- When sharing in big groups, be aware of your timekeeper responsibility. You will need to be assertive to give everyone the opportunity to speak.

## Sharing Prompts

- What is this object?
- Does it have special meaning to you?
- How did you come to have this item? Does it have a 'story'?
- What might the object tell us about you?
- When looking at or thinking about this item, what feeling does this item inspire in you?
- How does this item connect to your experience of, for example, migration or sense of belonging/home?

## Conclusion (5 min)

Return to the key idea of the activity: Each of us comes to this event with our 'pockets already full'. We come to this space with our histories, our stories, and our ideas about the world and others. We are reminded of the Jewish idea that each individual is an entire world, just as "Adam was one person, from whom the population of an entire world came forth." (Mishnah Sanhedrin, 4:5) When joining together to build bridges, we are strengthened by the notion that each of us is an entire world, each carrying with us the richness of our lives' journeys and stories.

## ACTIVITY 2

# OTHERNESS AND EMPATHY

(60MIN)

Key idea:

**To what extent does the cultural memory of being a stranger create a basis for empathy and inclusion?**

### Introduction

In this activity, we will use the method of *chavruta*. In Hebrew, *chavruta* means 'with others' and it is essentially a learning session in small groups, often revolving around a page with multiple texts on a theme. In this activity, participants will be presented with three texts reflecting the link between the cultural memory of being a stranger in Egypt and the imperative for empathy and inclusion. Participants will be encouraged to discuss the experience of being a stranger both as a personal experience but also as a cultural memory (i.e., a memory that is carried through our cultural practices rather than through personal experience). Specifically, this activity aims to connect the narrative of 'otherness' in Egypt with attitudes towards refugees in Europe today.

### Activity Goals

- Deepen understanding of the link between the cultural memory of being a stranger in Egypt and refugees' experience in Europe today.
- Reflect on Passover as a holiday that calls for empathy and inclusion of others.
- Raise awareness, through a Jewish lens, of the experience of being a stranger and the Jewish value of empathy and inclusion.
-  • Familiarize participants with the practices and meaning of Passover (specific to interfaith events).

## Activity Opening (5min)

Begin with the presentation of the activity's theme and key idea. Namely, the link between personal experience of being a stranger and empathy towards others experiencing it today. Include a brief explanation of the concept of cultural memory: memories that are carried as a group even if one personally did not experience them. Many Jewish cultural practices, in particular Passover, work as tools for transmitting and sustaining these memories.

Describe for the participants the method of chavruta that will be used in this activity. Tell participants that the various texts relate to the key idea of the activity, each providing a different perspective or approach. The texts should be read as a sort of 'textual collage' to help anchor the discussion. Finally, be sure to give an overview of the activity by describing the steps participants will follow: reading in small groups, discussion in small groups, discussion in the larger group, and final conclusion.

## Chavruta (45min)

### Small-Group Discussion (25min)

In groups of 2-4 participants, use the following texts as the basis for a chavruta discussion. Advise participants to read the texts aloud in the group and use the following discussion questions as a guide for conversation. Tell participants that it is sometimes helpful to read the discussion questions *before* reading the texts, as a way to orient oneself through the reading.

(Text and discussion questions can be handed out to participants or displayed on a screen.)

### **FACILITATOR TIP:**

If the activity is part of an interfaith event, form chavruta groups so that each group has participants from a diversity of backgrounds.

## Discussion Questions

Questions particularly relevant in a Jewish community event are marked with 

For an interfaith event, they are marked with 

- How do you imagine the Israelites' experience of being a stranger in Egypt?
- Have you had moments in your life when you experienced being a stranger, or being different from those around you?
- What connections can you draw between the experience of the Israelites in Egypt and your own experience of being a stranger?
-  • Why do you think the experience of being a stranger is central to the celebration of Passover?
-  • Does the theme of being a stranger appear in your cultural or religious traditions?
  - Text 2 from Exodus claims that a personal experience of 'strangeness' helps us understand others' experience of 'strangeness'. Do you agree?
  - Do you think we can empathize with others' experience of 'strangeness' if we didn't personally experience it in our lives?
  - What role does the re-telling of the story of Exodus have in creating an identity and connection to generations past? How does this re-telling help support a sense of continuity within a community?
-  • The texts imply that one's own experience of being a stranger, whether as a cultural memory or as a personal memory, creates a bond with others who have experienced it. How do you think this bond might play a role in your, or your community's, actions with regard to refugees in Europe?
-  • What value do you see in empathy towards others? For example, what do you get out of it?

# Chavruta Texts

## Text 1:

[Y]e know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.  
(Exodus 23:9)

## Text 2:

The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.  
(Leviticus 19:34)

## Text 3:

The traumatic experience of my slavery in Egypt constitutes my very humanity, a fact that immediately allies me to the workers, the wretched, and the persecuted peoples of the world. My uniqueness lies in the responsibility I display for the Other. I cannot fail in my duty towards any man, any more than I can have someone else stand in for my death.  
(Emmanuel Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*, Athlone Press, 1990)

## Alternative 1 for Text 4:

I used to think that the most important line in the Bible was 'Love your neighbour as yourself'. Then I realized that it is easy to love your neighbour because he or she is usually quite like yourself. What is hard is to love the stranger, one whose colour, culture or creed is different from yours. That is why the command, 'Love the stranger because you were once strangers', resonates so often throughout the Bible. It is summoning us now.  
(Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, 'Refugee crisis', *The Guardian*, September 6, 2015)

## Alternative 2 for Text 4:

Standing on the parted shores, we still believe what we were taught before ever we stood at Sinai's foot; that wherever we go, it is eternally Egypt; that there is a better place, a promised land; that the winding way to that promise passes through the wilderness. That there is no way to get from here to there except by joining hands, marching together.  
(Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution*, Basic Books, 1986)

## Larger-Group Sharing and Discussion (20min)

Ask each group to share some key elements of their conversation. You may choose to use the discussion questions as a tool for sharing with the larger group. For example, you may ask 'How did your group respond to this question?' You can further enrich the group contributions by asking questions such as 'Were there different perspectives on the issue within the group?' Finally, as the sharing progresses, you can develop the discussion by pointing out the links between observations made by different groups. For example, 'It is interesting to see that point X has come up in several groups.'

### **FACILITATOR TIP:**

You can add a step to the sharing process, by having smaller groups first share with each other, before sharing with the large group.

## Conclusion (5-10min)

Return to the key question of the activity: to what extent does the cultural memory of being a stranger create a basis for empathy and inclusion? You may ask participants for their reflections on the activity. For example, 'What have you learned?' or 'What has the activity made you think about?' The facilitator's concluding remarks should highlight that in Passover it is not merely that Jewish people remember their own experience of being a stranger (i.e., in the form of a cultural memory), but that this experience is used as an argument towards empathy and inclusion of others. In other words, it is not merely that we remember what it is like to be a stranger, but this experience provides us with a basis for empathy and the inclusion of others. In the context of refugees in Europe, Passover serves as a way to bridge between Jewish traditions and the welcoming of refugees.



## ACTIVITY 3

# MATZAH: A SYMBOL OF LIBERATION AND AFFLICTION

(90 MIN)

Key idea:

**How does the double symbolism of matzah link to different experiences of displacement?**

### Introduction

Matzah stands at the centre of the symbolic foods of Passover. It simultaneously holds within it the symbol of liberation, of the hurried journey from slavery to freedom, and of affliction and poverty. In this activity, we will prepare matzah and use it as a springboard for discussion and reflection. Participants will be invited to explore the meaning of displacement both as a psychological and physical experience.

**Please note: This activity requires special equipment. Before choosing this activity, check the matzah recipe for ingredients and utensils needed.**

### Activity Goals

- Develop a link between the traditions of Passover, specifically matzah, and the experience of displacement.
  - Reflect on the role of food symbolism in Jewish and other traditions.
  - Raise awareness about the presence of the narrative of displacement in Passover and create links between this narrative and the experience of displacement of refugees.
-  • Familiarize participants with the practices and meaning of Passover (specific to interfaith events).

## **FACILITATOR TIP:**

You can do this activity in two variations. Either prepare matzah with participants, or buy ready-made matzah and work through the texts and discussion questions as a chavruta activity (see Activity 2) and add a meal component at the end when participants taste and eat matzah.

## **Activity Opening (10min)**

Begin with the presentation of the activity's theme and key idea: matzah's double meaning of both oppression and liberation. A good way to start is by reading the following two texts (texts can be handed out to participants or displayed on a screen). After reading the texts, give an overview of the activity by describing the steps participants will follow. Point out that the activity is not simply preparing matzah, but that the activity also involves the discussion and reflection which will accompany the preparation.

### **Text 1:**

They baked the dough that they took out of Egypt into unleavened cakes [matzot], for it was not leavened, since they were driven out of Egypt and could not delay; nor had they prepared provisions for themselves.

(Exodus 12:39)

### **Text 2:**

This is the bread of affliction, the poor bread, which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat. Let all who are in want, share the hope of Passover.

(Ha Lachma Aniya)

### **Text 3:**

Here are two, contradictory messages: matzah represents the imminent freedom of the Israelites and the haste with which they had to grab that freedom, and it represents the years of slavery and oppression, a reminder of the scant food they survived on in Egypt.

(David Wolpe, Parashat Bo: Multiple meanings of matzah, *The Jerusalem Post*, January 21, 2021)

# Matzah Preparation (90min)

Throughout the activity, encourage conversation and exchange between participants. Since making matzah together will have several steps, you can break up these conversations so that they fit into the different 'windows' (see below). Use the discussion questions below to encourage conversation among your participants. The discussion questions can be either posted so that they are visible throughout the making of matzah, or they can be given piecemeal by 'announcing' some of them periodically. Alternatively, you can write the questions on cards (perhaps group 2-3 questions per card) and distribute the cards to participants at different stages of the activity.

It is best to make matzah in small groups (3-4 participants). Consider changing groups for dough preparation and shaping of dough.

## **FACILITATOR TIP:**

If the activity is part of an interfaith event, form groups so that each group has participants from a diversity of backgrounds.

## **Suggested Structure for the Activity**

### **Dough preparation (20min)**

Time for more casual exchange among participants or addressing some of the discussion questions in small-group format.

### **Shaping of matzah (10-12min)**

### **Baking (5min)**

### **Cooling (15min)**

Use discussion questions below for small-group discussions.

### **Eating (20min)**

Larger-group sharing: Ask each group to share some key elements of their conversation with the larger group. Then move into concluding remarks or reflection.

# Discussion Questions

Questions particularly relevant in a Jewish community event are marked with 

For an interfaith event, they are marked with 



- Have you ever made matzah before? If so, what memories do you have from those experiences?



- Are there similar breads in your culture or religion?



- Are there other symbolic breads (or other foods) that are used as part of rituals in your culture or religion?

- One of the things that make matzah significant is not its ingredients but rather its method of preparation, that is, the speed with which one must prepare it. What do we feel when forced to make the matzah quickly? Are there other moments when you have felt this way?

- What foods are prepared when we're on a journey? What significance do these foods have for us during the journey itself and after it?

- The double symbolism of the matzah can be used to illustrate how the same object can be experienced differently depending on our state of mind. In the case of the matzah, when eaten during slavery in Egypt, it felt like 'bread of affliction', but when eaten after liberation, in the desert, it felt like 'the bread of freedom'. Have you experienced a similar thing? Namely, that the same food (or item) was experienced differently at different times in your life?

- The double symbolism of matzah can also be used to illustrate two experiences of displacement: One, while in Egypt, the Israelites were considered 'strangers in a foreign land.' Second, while in the desert, the Israelites were on a journey, displaced from what was their home and on their way to a new home. How would you compare these two experiences of displacement? In what ways are they similar/different?

- Text 2 (Ha Lachma Aniya) links the 'bread of affliction' with inviting those who are hungry to our table. What connection do you see between the experience of affliction in Egypt and the attitude we have today (or ought to have) towards those in need?

## Matzah Recipe<sup>1</sup>

The following recipe includes ingredients which should be easily available in your local community. Be mindful that the preparation of matzah must be done in a specific amount of time. It is therefore prudent to explain all the steps of preparation to your participants in advance. That being said, if preparing the matzah in the set amount of time is not possible, it is still a valuable experience to feel the 'haste of preparation.' It is always advisable to work in small groups (3-4 participants).

### **FACILITATOR TIP:**

If the activity is part of an interfaith event, form groups so that each group has participants from a diversity of backgrounds.

### **Ingredients**

- 1 cup of flour + 2 Tablespoons for rolling out the matzah
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup of water

### **Preparation**

- Put a baking sheet in the oven; preheat the oven to 240°C.
- Set 2 Tablespoons of flour, your rolling pin, and a fork down next to a clean workspace.
- Set a timer for 16 minutes (18 minutes maximum). Start the timer.
- Mix 1 cup of flour and  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup of water.
- Knead until it forms a smooth dough.
- Divide the dough into four balls; roll out each ball into a large, thin circle.
- Using a fork, quickly pierce each bread about 25 times on each side to prevent rising. The holes should go completely through the bread.
- With at least 5 minutes left on the timer, remove the hot baking sheet from the oven.
- Place the breads onto the baking sheet. It's okay if they overlap.
- Bake for 2 minutes.
- Open the oven and carefully flip over the breads; bake for an additional 2 minutes until the matzah is lightly browned and crisp.

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<sup>1</sup> Recipe from PJ Library - *How to Make Your Own Matzah*

## Conclusion (5-10min)

Return to the key idea of the activity: how does the double symbolism of matzah link to different experiences of displacement? You may ask participants for their reflections on the activity as a whole. For example, 'What did it feel like to prepare matzah in haste?', 'What value did you find in this experience?' or 'What have you learned from the discussion you had with other participants?' You can also use the discussions among your participants during the preparation of the matzah as an illustration of the way that the bread of affliction can bring us together. In addition, highlight that the symbolism of matzah, as both a bread of affliction and liberation, can be linked to the tradition of welcoming those who are in need. On the one hand, matzah as symbolic of one's own affliction can form the basis for empathy towards those who are in need. And, on the other hand, matzah as symbolic of liberation links to the idea that freedom can give us the opportunity to exercise openness and generosity. We can thus view the tradition of eating matzah during Passover as tied to the Jewish value of openness and welcoming the stranger.



## ACTIVITY 4

# RE-ENVISIONING THE PASSOVER PLATE

(60MIN)

Key idea:

**Expanding the Food Symbolism for Liberation and Oppression**

### Introduction

The Passover Plate is loaded with symbolic food, each telling a piece of the Exodus story. From the *maror* (horseradish) representing the bitterness and harshness of slavery to the *karpas* (green vegetable) representing hope and renewal, the Passover Plate serves as a unique vehicle for reflection and discussion. In this activity, we will re-envision the Passover Plate and use it as an opportunity to reflect on the meaning that liberation and displacement has for participants and how these ideas might be reflected in other items that can be displayed on the Passover Plate or at the Passover table<sup>2</sup>.

### Activity Goals

- Engage with the symbolism of the Passover Plate by re-envisioning the Plate with new or alternate symbols for liberation and oppression.
- Reflect on experiences of displacement while contrasting these with experiences of liberation.
- Raise awareness of contemporary experiences of displacement through already-existing symbols in Jewish traditions, specifically, in the Passover Plate.
-  • Familiarize participants with the practices and meaning of Passover, particularly the symbolic elements of the Passover Plate (specific to interfaith events).

**Please note: This activity includes making a Passover Plate. To do so, materials and some preparations are needed prior to the event. Therefore, before planning for this activity, check what materials and preparation need to be in place.**

## Activity Opening (5-10min)

Begin with the presentation of the activity's theme and key idea. It might be helpful to point out that symbolic food has a special ability to engage us intellectually. Unlike texts or oral re-telling, symbolic food is always a little unexpected, perhaps even odd at first, therefore pushing us towards discussions and reflection that we might have otherwise missed. Explain to participants that the aim of this activity is to extend the traditional symbolism of slavery and liberation in the Passover Plate to refugee and displacement experiences today. Participants will do so by considering items that might serve as a symbol for either other Jewish migration experiences, their own families' experiences, or possibly the experiences of refugees in Europe today.

Give an overview of the Passover Plate. If it is an interfaith event, you can display an actual Passover Plate, including all its symbolic foods. If it is an event with mostly Jewish participants, or participants who are likely to have seen a Passover Plate before, it is probably enough to review the symbolic foods and their meaning orally. Expand the overview of the Passover Plate by referring to the texts below (texts can be handed out to participants or displayed on a screen).

After reading the texts, give an overview of the activity by describing the steps participants will follow.

### Text 1

Rabban Gamliel continues to explain: The reason for matza is because our forefathers were redeemed from Egypt, as it is stated: 'And they baked the dough that they took out of Egypt as cakes of matzot, for it was not leavened, as they were thrust out of Egypt and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual' (Exodus 12:39). The reason for bitter herbs is because the Egyptians embittered our forefathers' lives in Egypt, as it is stated: 'And they embittered their lives with hard service, in mortar and in brick; in all manner of service in the field, all the service that they made them serve was with rigor' (Exodus 1:14).

(Mishnah Pesachim 10:5)

## Text 2

[These] elements have thus become ritual objects and not just foods to be consumed and the ritual itself becomes speaking instead of eating. (...) As the ceremonial items become ritual symbols and not just concrete objects, they are understood less and less literally, more and more through cognition and interpretation, and thus in terms of an inner reality or deeper meaning.

(Baruch M. Bokser, *Ritualizing the Seder*, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 56, no. 3, 1988)

# Making Your Own Passover Plate (20min)

Throughout the activity, use the discussion questions as a springboard for conversation among participants. Like with the texts, the questions can be handed out to participants or displayed on a screen.

## Discussion Questions

Questions particularly relevant in a Jewish community event are marked with   
For an interfaith event, they are marked with 

-  • What symbolic foods are eaten in your culture or religion?
-  • What other symbolic foods do we find in Jewish rituals?
- To what extent do the current traditional foods on the Passover Plate succeed in connecting us to the ideas they allude to? (For example, do the 'bitter herbs' work well as symbols of oppression?)
- Why do you think we use food as a tool for creating a cultural memory (or identity)?
- What can symbolic food 'do' that other practices cannot?

## Design Options and Materials

There is a wide range of make-your-own Passover Plate designs. Here are a few ideas that accommodate a range of preparation time and budgets. Choose the one that fits your time and budget best. However, all designs have in common the ability to add different items to the plate based on the discussion raised in this activity.

Option 1: Paper plate and paper muffin holders

Option 2: Ceramic plates with little glass bowls

Option 3: Ceramic plate with permanent markers (note: drawing on ceramic might require baking the decorated plate in order to set the colors)

For the purpose of this activity, it is best to either only label the place of the symbolic food or make it in representative form (for example, with paper, clay, felt, etc.).

## Preparation

Depending on what design you chose, give participants brief instructions and let them prepare their Passover Plate. Participants should make individual plates, but it is recommended that they work in a group setting of 2-4 participants.

Note: Since the activity will involve adding symbolic foods to the Passover Plate, be sure that participants make space for 1-3 new items on their Passover Plates.

### **FACILITATOR TIP:**

If the activity is part of an interfaith event, form groups so that each group has participants from a diversity of backgrounds.

# Re-envisioning the Passover Plate (20min)

Remind participants of the purpose of the activity, namely, thinking of additions to the Passover Plate that symbolize contemporary experiences of displacement or liberation. You may use the text below in your comments. It might also be helpful to describe some of the recent additions to the Passover Plate. These examples can help provide inspiration for the items that participants will propose adding to their own plates.

- **Orange:** 'a gesture of solidarity with Jewish lesbians and gay men, and others who are marginalized within the Jewish community.' (Susannah Heschel)
- **Beet:** a vegetarian alternative to the bone (*zeroa*).
- **Chocolate:** symbolic of the fair-trade movement that promotes economic partnerships based on equality, justice and sustainable environmental practices<sup>3</sup>.

## Text 3

And so on Passover, as we recount the story of the Israelites' exodus from Egypt, we must also recount the similar experiences of immigrants and refugees today. Closing our eyes to the suffering of refugees and immigrants is akin to closing our eyes to our own history and our collective memory.

(Jewish Council on Urban Affairs, 'Not Only Them But Us', Haggadah insert, 2018)

## Small-Group Discussion

In the same groups where participants were making their Passover Plates, ask participants to think about different food items that might serve as symbols for liberation, displacement or refugee experience. It is important to emphasize to participants that the goal of the activity is to include *contemporary* experiences of liberation, displacement or being a refugee both in a Jewish and non-Jewish context.

### **FACILITATOR TIP:**

If participants are struggling with finding a food item, suggest that any item (for example, keys, rocks, clothing, photos, newspaper clippings) can also be used in this activity.

## Larger-Group Sharing

Before adding the new item to their Passover Plates, ask each group to share elements from their group discussion as well as their ideas for new symbolic foods that can be added to the Passover Plate. Tell participants that they are encouraged to draw inspirations from others' ideas when choosing their own new item.

### Adding New Item to the Passover Plate

Each participant decides on 1-3 new items to add to their plate, by adding a label or making the item in representative form (in paper, clay, felt, etc.).

## Conclusion (5-10min)

Return to the key idea of the activity: expanding the food symbolism for liberation and oppression. You may ask participants for their reflections on the activity as a whole. For example, 'What did you learn about the power of symbolic food?' or 'What have you learned from the discussion you had with other participants?' Concluding remarks should point out how food has the capacity not only to nourish us and bring us together, but also can be a springboard for reflection. Highlight the ways in which the symbolism of the Passover Plate is an opportunity to show our commitment to values of inclusion and empathy towards refugees, values that are present in Jewish traditions. By adding symbolic food that speaks to the experience of refugees on our Passover Plates, we are able to bridge between the already-existing traditions and ideas of Passover to contemporary experiences of refugees.



# APPENDICES

# PEDAGOGICAL TOOLS

Migration and asylum can be controversial issues and you may face prejudices among your participants that may lead to comments or attitudes expressing xenophobia, racism and disinformation. In facilitating discussions about these topics, it is therefore important to generate respect between participants of your event, for example by listening fully to those who speak up. This way we come to understand why they feel the way they do and can follow up accordingly. We should always challenge ourselves to see things from the perspective of the person with whom we are speaking. As a facilitator, you have the opportunity to provide an environment where one can listen to another person's perspective, have basic facts about refugees in Europe at hand, address hate speech, and talk about migration and asylum issues in a Jewish context.

## ASSUMPTIONS<sup>2</sup>

You will be helped along the way if you keep the following assumptions in mind:

- We all have stereotypes.
- With stereotypes often comes prejudice. Prejudice is learned and it can be unlearned. The learning of prejudice is often unconscious, but the process of unlearning can be conscious.
- Conflict might arise, but always assume good will.
- We all have baggage, and our opinions have a cultural and experiential context.
- We always have something to learn from each other.
- Leading or attending one event cannot change attitudes in a drastic or total manner. But small steps such as these contribute to the much larger goal of creating inclusive communities.
- While we may come from different backgrounds and contexts, we all share our humanity.

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<sup>2</sup>CEJI: Facilitation Skills: Religious diversity & anti-discrimination

## LEADING A DISCUSSION

Facilitating discussions, particularly about sensitive issues, requires skill. Here are some tools you can use when leading a discussion with your participants:

### COMMUNICATION

- Be focused and listen attentively.
- Choose a pace and speed of words that allow participants to keep up with you. This is particularly true if your participants have different levels of proficiency in the language used at the event.
- Try to avoid talking while participants are reading or writing. Be sure to give instructions for the activity when you have your participants' full attention.

### ENHANCING THE LEARNING PROCESS

- Repeat questions from the group to ensure that everyone has heard the question.
- Return to the key question and theme throughout the activity to remind participants of the focus of the activity.
- Give a warning signal when time is almost up for completing a task of the activity.
- At the end of the activity, review the main question or idea to highlight the learning process.

### AFFIRMING PARTICIPANTS

- Try to 'connect' with participants before the event begins by, for example, having casual chats as participants enter the room. This will allow participants to feel 'seen' from the outset.
- Call people by name - use name tags, if necessary.
- Listening attentively will encourage people to talk.
- Be open to all participants and ideas, even those difficult for you to hear.

# PROBLEM-SOLVING

In any given activity or discussion, you may encounter some tricky moments. Here are strategies for some of those 'what if...' moments:

## WHAT IF ONE PERSON WANTS TO DO ALL THE TALKING?

- Establish goals at the beginning of the event. State that one of the goals of the event is to provide an opportunity for everyone to talk and listen.
- You may have to interrupt. You can say, 'Thank you, I am going to stop here so we can listen to other responses.'

## WHAT IF PEOPLE AREN'T PARTICIPATING IN A DISCUSSION?

- Share in pairs or small groups of 3 or 4. Small groups can be less intimidating than the whole group and give participants the opportunity to interact more closely with one another. In addition, sharing in a small group warms participants up for large-group discussion.
- Model responses. Sometimes it helps people to share if they hear an example from you.
- Give people time to think. As a facilitator, you will feel a silence to be much longer than it actually is.
- Create a 'safe' environment. Participants may not want to share if they feel their ideas or opinions will be judged or even attacked. Be respectful of everyone and establish the ground rule that only one person talks at a time.
- Remember that not everyone is comfortable participating in discussions nor is everyone willing and ready to share and open up to a new group. Allow space for not sharing, as much as for sharing.

## WHAT IF ONLY ONE POINT OF VIEW IS BROUGHT OUT?

- Ask, 'Does everyone agree with that statement?' Then ask others who seem to be disagreeing with the point of view what they think.
- You can provide other information by saying 'Let me introduce a different point of view; what would you think if...?'

## WHAT IF MISINFORMATION IS PRESENTED?

- Ask, 'Does anyone think differently?' or 'Does everyone agree with that statement?' If no one from the group contributes another opinion, it is up to you to present another view. Don't let misinformation stand; it implies you agree with it. If you don't know the facts, say so, and try to find out the correct information.
- Ask the participant 'Where did you get your information?' Do so non-judgmentally and non-critically. Preserve the dignity of the person who provided that misinformation.
- You may choose to use the Information Sheet on Refugees. You can have it on hand for possible distribution at the end of an event.

## WHAT IF CONFLICT OCCURS?

- Conflict may arise and if so, be prepared for it. Though the activities are designed to build understanding and empathy, at times participants will have gut-level responses.
- Prepare by using the 'be ready to answer tough questions' section below.
- It is the facilitator's job to 'manage the traffic'. Sometimes 'freezing' the moment, literally stopping all conversation, helps people to step back and look at what's happening. If the conflict is between two people, it offers an opportunity to return the focus to the whole group.

## WHAT IF IT'S TIME TO MOVE ON TO ANOTHER PART OF THE ACTIVITY AND PEOPLE SEEM ENGAGED IN A LIVELY DISCUSSION?

- Try to be flexible about time. If something good is happening, assess the value of leaving that discussion or activity in favour of completing your established plan.
- Give a 'two-minute warning' or say 'just two more comments' in preparation for wrapping up.
- Acknowledge at the beginning of the session that time will be a factor, and that some people might not want to leave unfinished business. Then you can use this as a point of reference for closing a discussion. (You can say, 'Remember when I said it might be hard to stop a discussion, this is what I meant; however, in order to...')
- Acknowledge the difficulty of leaving a good discussion or experience and suggest it as a reason for participating in similar events in the future.

## BE READY TO ANSWER TOUGH QUESTIONS

Be prepared to be asked difficult questions or confronted with certain comments. The type of questions or comments will vary depending on the participants' personal and communal backgrounds and journeys. Among non-Jewish participants, you may be confronted with antisemitic, anti-Israeli, or anti-Judaic attitudes, while in an event within the Jewish community you might find xenophobic or anti-Muslim prejudice. In an event within the Jewish community, you can help correct misunderstandings about refugees with the below answers to some of those 'sticky' points that may arise during discussions about asylum and migration. While you do not need to share this list with participants, do think about how to approach these issues and questions if/when they come up. Please note that these answers provide guidance only, and responses need to be adjusted to the particular local context and target audience. Keep in mind too that sometimes these discussions can lead to introspection regarding issues of diversity within the Jewish community itself.

Note: A similar list of answers for questions that may arise among non-Jewish participants is not provided since the diversity of backgrounds among non-Jewish refugees, migrants, and displaced people is too wide for such a task.

### WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT THIS AS A JEW?

The Jewish people have been a refugee people since biblical times. In Europe, Jewish people have been forced to flee repeatedly, and the experience of being a refugee is one most European Jews know well. Furthermore, the value of welcoming, protecting, and loving the stranger appears in the Torah 36 times according to the Talmud - more than any other value. See the following HIAS resources for specific examples: [What is Our Obligation to the Stranger?](#) and the section entitled 'Jewish Values' in [Content Resources for National Day of Jewish Action for Refugees](#).

### WHY DO EUROPEAN COUNTRIES NEED TO WELCOME REFUGEES? CAN'T OTHER COUNTRIES DO IT?

Millions of refugees first flee to and make a life in the countries closest to them, and we can see that in the numbers: 86% of the world's refugees currently live in developing countries, and 73% are hosted in a country that neighbours their country of origin. For example, Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey have all taken in millions of Syrian refugees. Countries with higher income and resources can and should do more to welcome refugees since we have the capacity to successfully integrate refugees and support them in rebuilding their lives in dignity and safety.

## AREN'T REFUGEES A DRAIN ON OUR ECONOMY? WHO IS GOING TO PAY FOR HELPING THEM?

Refugees pay taxes, get jobs, and start businesses; they contribute much more to our economy than they take from it. A report by the European Commission in 2016 found that the majority of refugees entering Europe are of working age (70%), and if integrated well, they can contribute to greater flexibility in the labour market, help address demographic challenges, and improve fiscal sustainability. During the pandemic, many of the frontline workers across Europe were refugees and asylum seekers. We could not have made it through this period of time without their vital contributions.

## AREN'T MANY OF THE REFUGEES ANTISEMITIC?

Many refugees arriving in Europe have never met Jews before. The welcome and support they receive from Jewish organizations, individuals, and congregations combats antisemitism that may exist, breaks down their assumptions, and helps them integrate more quickly into European society.

## MY GRANDPARENTS CAME TO THIS COUNTRY LEGALLY. SHOULDN'T ASYLUM SEEKERS WAIT THEIR TURN IN LINE?

Asylum seekers are following the law, as many of our parents and grandparents did - it is legal to seek asylum. This right is guaranteed in international law under the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocols, and the International Declaration of Human Rights; it is also guaranteed in Article 18 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. It is also important to acknowledge that the history of Jewish migration is incredibly complex, and sometimes desperate measures were taken even if they were not always legal.

## WHY DO YOU ADVOCATE FOR OPEN BORDERS? AREN'T THERE DANGEROUS PEOPLE COMING IN?

We do not advocate for open borders. We believe in the importance of maintaining secure borders, as is the responsibility of all nation states. We firmly believe that the EU can maintain secure borders while simultaneously respecting our own domestic laws that mandate that people who approach our borders, whether at ports of entry or between ports of entry, have the right to seek protection in Europe. A secure border and humane asylum policies are not mutually exclusive.

## HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO STORIES OF CRIMES COMMITTED BY INDIVIDUAL PEOPLE WHO MAY HAPPEN TO BE REFUGEES?

Surveys indicate that host societies favour restrictive measures because they are concerned about what they perceive as an impingement on their security with each new wave of arrivals. Whether there is any truth to such perceptions, however, remains a mystery for the case of most countries since causal evidence is fairly limited. There is virtually no evidence to suggest links between migration and violent crime. In some countries, during certain periods of time, asylum seekers and refugees have been overrepresented in property crime rates, especially in contexts when access to legal labour market opportunities, as alternatives to illegal activities, are restricted or absent. What is clear is that the vast majority of asylum seekers and refugees do not commit any crimes, and that direct contact and communication between host communities and asylum seekers and refugees often helps overcome fear and negative perceptions of 'strangers'.

# INFORMATION SHEET

## PASSOVER

### EXODUS FROM EGYPT

Passover is a Jewish holiday that commemorates the exodus of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. It is a biblical holiday appearing in the book of Exodus and mentioned numerous times throughout the Bible.

Passover is celebrated during a week-long holiday in the spring, with the first and last day having special rituals and traditions.

### THE SEDER

Distinctive among the traditions of Passover is a ritual meal, called Seder, on the first night of the holiday. The Seder begins with a retelling of the story of Exodus as well as the recitation of other traditional texts and singing of songs.

Among the rich themes of Passover, the Seder includes texts on the meaning of freedom and oppression. An iconic text reads:

This is the bread of affliction that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt.

*Ha lachma anya di achalu avhatana b'ara d'mitzrayim.*

### RE-TELLING THE STORY OF EXODUS

Another notable element of Passover is the centrality of storytelling from one generation to another. Children are at the centre of the Seder and are actively included in the transmission of memories and communal reflection. Passover brings with it a strong sense of journeys: physical, temporal and spiritual.



## SYMBOLIC FOODS

Passover is laden with symbolic food. Primary among these are: *zeroa*, *matzah* and *maror*.

### **Zeroa**

Zeroa is a roasted lamb shank bone which alludes to the lamb sacrifice that was done at Passover at the Temple in Jerusalem. It also links to the biblical phrase 'with an outstretched arm and awesome power ... God did for you in Egypt.'

### **Matzah**

During the week of Passover, it is traditional to refrain from eating leavened food. Instead of bread, one eats a traditional flat bread, matzah, that commemorates the haste with which the Israelites left Egypt—a haste that did not allow them to wait for bread to rise. Eating matzah thus reminds one of the sense of urgency and fragility of an unsafe life when in flight, and increases appreciation for the refuge one currently has.

### **Maror**

An iconic symbolic food of Passover is maror (meaning 'bitter') which is bitter food, such as lettuce or horseradish, that conjures up the bitterness of slavery. The eating of maror highlights the experience of slavery as a physical, emotional and spiritual oppression.



# REFUGEE INFORMATION SHEET

## WHY DO PEOPLE LEAVE THEIR COUNTRIES?

There are many reasons why it might be too difficult or dangerous for people to stay in their own countries. People may be escaping violence, war, hunger, extreme poverty, the consequences of climate change or other natural disasters, or may leave because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. People who leave their countries are not always fleeing danger. They might believe they have a better chance of finding work or educational opportunities in another country, or they may be joining relatives or friends who are already living abroad.

The terms 'refugee', 'asylum-seeker' and 'migrant' are often used interchangeably to describe people who have left their countries and crossed borders, but it is important to understand the difference.

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A REFUGEE, AN ASYLUM SEEKER, AND A MIGRANT?

**Refugee** – The 1951 Refugee Convention defines a refugee as 'someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion'<sup>4</sup>. Refugees have a right to international protection.

**Asylum Seeker** – A person who has sought international protection and whose claim for refugee status has not yet been determined. Seeking asylum is legal. This means everyone should be allowed to enter another country to seek asylum<sup>5</sup>.

**Migrant** – A person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> UNHCR (2020). Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/what-is-a-refugee.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Amnesty International (2016). Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/refugees-asylum-seekers-and-migrants/>.

<sup>6</sup> IOM (2019). Available at: <https://www.iom.int/who-is-a-migrant>.

## FACTS ABOUT REFUGEES IN THE WORLD TODAY<sup>7</sup>

- At least **82.4 million people** around the world have been forced to flee their homes. Among them more than 26 million are refugees.
- Of those **26 million refugees, 67% come from 5 countries:** Syria (6.7 million), Venezuela (4 million), Afghanistan (2.6 million), South Sudan (2.2 million), Myanmar (1.1 million).
- 39% of all refugees are hosted in five countries: Turkey (3.7 million), Colombia (1.7 million), Pakistan (1.4 million), Uganda (1.4 million), Germany (1.2 million). Overall, 86% of all refugees are hosted in developing countries.
- **40% of the world's forcibly displaced are children.** In some crises, e.g., Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burkina Faso, children account for 60% of the displaced population<sup>8</sup>.

## FACTS ABOUT REFUGEES IN THE EU<sup>9</sup>

- Around **280,000** people were granted some sort of protection in the EU in 2020.
- The majority of asylum applications came from Syria (15.2%), Afghanistan (10.6%), Venezuela (7.3%) and Colombia (7%).
- The EU countries that received the most first-time applications were Germany (102,500), Spain (86,400), France (81,800), Greece (37,900), and Italy (21,200).
- **141,000 applicants for asylum were under 18 years old** and 13,500 were unaccompanied minors.
- By the end of 2019, **10% of the world's refugees lived in the EU.** This makes up roughly 0.6% of the total EU population.

## REFUGEES IN YOUR COUNTRY AND LOCAL COMMUNITY

The number of refugees living in each EU country varies. And, even within each country, different regions will have substantial differences in refugee communities. It is helpful to know the facts about your own country. We encourage you to find current, reliable information that pertains to the refugee communities in your area. A good source for country-specific data is UNHCR - Refugee Data Finder.

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<sup>7</sup> UNHCR (2020). Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/>.

<sup>8</sup> UNHCR (2020). Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/flagship-reports/globaltrends>. Data periodically updated.

<sup>9</sup> European Commission (2000). Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Asylum\\_statistics#Number\\_of\\_asylum\\_applicants:\\_decrease\\_in\\_2020](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Asylum_statistics#Number_of_asylum_applicants:_decrease_in_2020).

