



AFTERSCHOOL EXCHANGE ACTIVITY

RUNNING FOR AWARENESS

PREPARATION

Grade Levels: 4-8

Prerequisites:

This activity will be most effective if delivered in several periods of 45 minutes to an hour, with groups of 12-16 participants. Activities 1-3 are tied specifically to the video, while activities 4-6 are related to the video in a more general, thematic way.

The video and activities can be spread out over a period of 4-8 days.

The group leader should videotape the public television show: Sahara Marathon from the WIDE ANGLE series and be familiar with its content. The show is approximately 50 minutes in length.

Materials Needed

Students will need:

- pencils, pens
- loose leaf paper
- dictionaries
- Internet Access

Group Leader will need:

- chart paper
- copies of Handouts #1 - Handout #6 for each participant
- books on deserts

Academic Goals

Children will use fiction, non-fiction, and Internet sources to learn about:

- deserts and in particular, the Sahara Desert
- the history of the conflict that uprooted the Sahrawi people from their home

Social Goals

Children will:

- work in pairs and teams to answer questions and report to the group
- develop empathy for the plight of the Sahrawi and, by extension, for others who are oppressed.
- think about what it means to them personally to be an ally or have an ally
- enjoy individual and team sports and games.

STEPS

Introduction (15 minutes)

1. Tell the participants they will see a video in public television's WIDE ANGLE series about an athletic event meant to call attention to the situation of a group of people who have been uprooted from their home and have lived for 30 years in a desert. Before the video, write the word DESERT on a piece of chart paper and ask participants to call out any words they can think of to describe the desert environment. Chart these in web form and post the paper for later reference.

NOTE: To create a word web, write the word DESERT in the middle of the page and circle it. Write the associated words that the children call out around the circled word to form a web.

2. Review key vocabulary words listed on HANDOUT #1. You can write the vocabulary words on chart paper, one at a time, asking participants to propose the meaning of each word and then sharing the definitions on HANDOUT #1. Alternatively, simply read through the vocabulary words on HANDOUT #1 with participants.

Activity 1: Viewing the Video and Immediate Follow-Up / Question Search / Word Find

1. The video can be shown in its entirety or in segments. The segments are as follows:
 - Segment One (approximately 8 minutes): Introduction to the race; runners from other countries arrive. Segment ends after statement by Mr. Carney, founder of the race, about its difficulty.
 - Segment Two (approximately 5 minutes): Background on political situation, difficulties of life in the camps.
 - Segment Three (approximately 8 minutes): The race begins.
 - Segment Four (approximately 5 minutes): Information on the culture and structure of life in the camps.
 - Segment Five (approximately 2 minutes): The race continues and the wind picks up, making it difficult for the runners.
 - Segment Six (approximately 3 minutes): More on the history of the conflict that sent the Sahrawi into exile.
 - Segment Seven (approximately 3 minutes): The race continues, as does the wind.
 - Segment Eight (approximately 2 minutes): More on the history of the conflict with Morocco and the current status of Sahrawi-Moroccan relations.
 - Segment Nine (approximately 8 minutes): The end of the race/conclusion of the video.

NOTE: Two manageable plans are to show the video in two parts (Segments 1-4, 5-9) or three parts (Segments 1-2, 3-5, 6-9).

2. Before showing the video or the segments of the video that you plan to screen, distribute HANDOUT #2 and HANDOUT #3. Read the questions on HANDOUT #2 to the group, and alert participants to watch for the information that will allow them to answer the questions. Everyone can answer all questions, or you can split the questions up so that each viewer has one or two particular questions to watch for. The goal is for the group to answer all the questions.

After viewing the video, go over the questions and participants' answers. If you show the video in segments or groups of segments, check in with participants after each "chunk" to see what questions were answered.

3. Participants can then do the Word Find on HANDOUT #3 at a time when it is convenient.

NOTE: The answers to HANDOUT #2 are:

1. How many miles are in a marathon?
Answer: 26.2 miles
2. In what country do the Sahrawi refugees live now?
Answer: They now live in Algeria.
3. In what country did the Sahrawi live before they were driven out?
Answer: They lived in Morocco.
4. What is a name for a desert wind storm?
Answer: a scirocco
5. How long have the Sahrawi refugees lived in the desert?
Answer: about 30 years
6. True or false: The Sahrawi refugees have a high rate of literacy.
Answer: true
7. True or false: The Sahrawi homeland—the place they came from—is near the water.
Answer: true
8. True or false: The desert marathon got a lot of media attention.
Answer: false
9. True or false: Sahwari runner Abdullah Mohammed was sponsored by Nike and wore their running shoes.
Answer: false
10. What European nation controlled Morocco before 1976?
Answer: Spain

Activity 2A: Internet Scavenger Hunt

For older/more advanced participants:

1. Participants can gain experience in using the Internet while engaging in a Web-based information search. They can work in teams of three or four to answer the questions on HANDOUT #4, all of which can be found on the Web sites listed on the handout.

NOTE: The answers to the questions on HANDOUT #4 are:

1. What are the four types of deserts?

Answer:

- *The sand desert, or erg*
- *The stone desert, or reg*
- *The high bare mountain desert*
- *The hamada desert*

2. What are the characteristics of the hamada desert?

Answer: In the hamada the sand is swept away by the wind, leaving large areas of just the bare rock underneath. The hamada is completely exposed to the sun. Little or nothing can grow there.

3. What is the estimated number of Sahrawi refugees living in the camps?

Answer: The most common estimates are 155,000-165,000.

4. What is the name of the only Sahrawi camp that has a hospital?

Answer: The Dahkla camp.

5. What is UNHCR?

Answer: The United Nations agency that provides humanitarian aid to refugees.

6. As of December 2003, what was the outlook for the refugees?

Answer: Talks were going on between officials of Algeria and Morocco. Prospects looked favorable for family visits, as well as phone and mail service, between the refugees and their families in Morocco.

7. A referendum, or vote, was scheduled for 1992 to determine whether the Sahrawi homeland should be independent or incorporated into Morocco. Why was the referendum not held?

Answer: The two sides could not agree on who was eligible to vote. Also, there were charges that the Moroccans were trying to illegally influence the vote.

Activity 2B: Learning More about the Desert

For younger/less advanced participants:

1. Deserts are fascinating environments. Participants can learn more about the desert through projects, trips, books, and videos. They can:
 - Build their own desert environments, using sand, twigs, and other materials.
 - Visit a natural history museum and/or botanical garden if there is one in your area
 - Visit a local library to find books and videos on the desert. A nonfiction booklist is below.
 - Read (or you can read aloud) the young adult novel Shabanu: daughter of the wind, by Suzanne Fisher Staples (Dell Laurel-Leaf, 2003).

Booklist:

Pfeffer, Wendy. (2003). *Hot Deserts*. Benchmark Books/M.Cavendish.

Baldwin, Carol. (2003). *Living in a Desert*. Heinemann Library.

Morris, Neil. (2004). *Earth's Changing Deserts*. Raintree.

Allaby, Michael, Robert Anderson, and Ian Crofton. (2002). *Deserts and Semideserts*. Raintree Steck-Vaughn.

Wilkins, Sally. (2001). *Deserts*. Bridgestone Books.

Ricciuti, Edward R. (1996). *Desert*. Benchmark Books.

Activity 3: Pack Your Suitcase (related to refugee concept)

1. Distribute HANDOUT #5. Ask participants to imagine that they were refugees, forced to leave their homes. It is time to go and they can take only one small suitcase. What would they choose to put in the suitcase? Allow about 15 minutes for participants to draw or write about the contents of their suitcases. Then help them get together with partners to talk about what they chose.

Activity 4: When I Was an Ally (related to ally concept)

1. In the video, runners from all over the world came to support the Sahrawi people in their quest to be reconnected to their homeland. These runners acted as supporters, or **allies**, of the Sahrawi people.

Introduce participants to the idea of being an ally to someone who is in a position of weakness or subjugation. Ask: Were you ever an ally to someone who needed help? Was someone ever an ally to you when you needed help? (You might begin by giving an example or two from your own experiences or observations.)

2. After the group has provided a few examples, distribute HANDOUT #6 and ask participants to draw and/or write about a time they were an ally to someone else or a time when someone was an ally to them. Then help participants get together with partners to talk about their experiences.

Follow-up Activities: Off to the Races

1. In the spirit of the Sahara Marathon, organize a variety of running activities. These can be simple running races, relay races, obstacle courses, or training to achieve personal best times over a specific distance.
2. For some activity ideas, check PBS's [ZOOM Web site](#), which lists physical challenge games, relay races, and sports games.
3. Around the world people run marathons for a variety of causes. Have children conduct research on groups who also run for awareness. For ideas visit [Team in Training](#) and [Fred's Team](#).
4. Explore the Sahara region on the [PBS Africa Web site](#) and use the interactive features to help children learn more about the people and the ecology in this part of the world.

CREDITS

This AFTERSCHOOL EXCHANGE activity was developed by Kathleen M. Cochran, Ed.M. in connection with the Thirteen series [WIDE ANGLE](#).

HANDOUT #1: VOCABULARY

- **Arid:** dry; lacking in rainfall
- **Inhospitable:** unwelcoming; poorly suited to provide what living things need to survive
- **Barren:** unable to support life
- **Sahrawi:** people who live in the Western Sahara desert. During a war for independence, many Sahrawi fled their homeland and crossed into another country, where they still live as refugees in desert camps.
- **Exile:** the condition of being forbidden to visit or live in one's homeland
- **Refugee:** someone who has fled his or her homeland to escape war, famine, or persecution.
- **Marathon:** a long-distance, endurance-testing foot race, originally created by the ancient Greeks
- **Humanitarian aid:** aid to nations, groups, or individuals in providing essential goods and services such as food, water, and health care,
- **The United Nations (UN):** an international organization established immediately after World War II to maintain and promote international peace and security, cooperation among nations, and basic freedoms and equality for all people.

HANDOUT #2: Q&A

Read the questions. As you watch the video, see if you notice the answers. After the video, write the answers. Hint: some of the answers are in the Word Find on Handout 3.

1. How many miles are in a marathon? _____

2. In what country do the Sahrawi refugees live now? _____

3. In what country did the Sahrawi live before they were driven out?

4. What is a name for a desert wind storm? _____

5. How long have the Sahrawi refugees lived in the desert? _____

6. True or false: The Sahrawi refugees have a high rate of literacy.

7. True or false: The Sahrawi homeland—the place they came from—is near the water. _____

8. True or false: The desert marathon got a lot of media attention.

9. True or false: Sahwari runner Abdullah Mohammed was sponsored by Nike and wore their running shoes. _____

10. What European nation controlled Morocco before 1976?

HANDOUT #3: WORD FIND

Find the words that are on the list and circle them. They can be across, up-and-down, diagonal, forward, or backward.

S	E	H	U	J	I	D	A	M	A
C	E	A	W	A	T	E	R	A	U
I	G	M	A	H	L	M	O	R	B
R	U	A	I	K	Y	M	N	A	E
O	F	D	U	L	G	A	N	T	S
C	E	A	Q	U	E	H	S	H	O
C	R	A	W	C	S	O	D	O	P
O	C	C	O	R	O	M	I	N	E
C	H	T	A	B	A	R	R	E	N
O	P	H	R	O	N	I	A	P	S

scirocco
exile
arid

Morocco
refugee
barren

water
marathon
harsh

Mohammed
Spain
ocean

Aubeso (Spanish runner)
hamada
war

HANDOUT #4: INTERNET SCAVENGER HUNT

Answers to the questions can be found at the Web sites listed below. See how many you can find!

1. What are the four types of deserts?
2. What are the characteristics of the hamada desert?
3. What is the estimated number of Sahrawi refugees living in the camps?
4. What is the name of the only Sahrawi camp that has a hospital?
5. What is UNHCR?
6. As of December 2003, what was the outlook for the refugees?
7. A referendum, or vote, was scheduled for 1992 to determine whether the Sahrawi homeland should be independent or incorporated into Morocco. Why was the referendum not held?

WEB SITES:

http://www.yptenc.org.uk/docs/factsheets/env_facts/desert_region.html

Young People's Trust for the Environment and Nature Conservation
Schools Project Page – Desert Regions

<http://www.afrol.com/articles/1071>

afrol News – African News Agency
article: “Sahwari refugees may soon be able to visit, call home”

http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/information/eye_witness/2002_02_en.htm

European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO)
article: “Spotlight on healthcare for the Sahrawi refugees”

http://www.refugees.org/world/countryrpt/africa/2000/western_sahara.htm

U.S. Committee for Refugees
Worldwide Refugee Information—Country Report: Western Sahara

HANDOUT#5: PACK YOUR SUITCASE

The Sahrawis were forced to leave their home. Imagine that the same thing happened to you and your family.

Now suppose you were allowed to take only one small suitcase to your new home, the size of an airline carry-on bag (approximately 22" x 9" x 14"). What would you pack? Draw or write about it below. When you are finished, talk with a partner about what you both chose to pack.

My suitcase:

HANDOUT 6: BEING AN ALLY, HAVING AN ALLY

Runners from many countries came to run with the Sahrawi people and help them gain attention for their problem.

When you help someone who needs support, you are being an ally. When you stand up for someone who is being bullied, you are being an ally. When you protest when someone makes a mean comment about someone, you are being an ally.

Draw and/or write about a time when you were an ally to someone or someone was an ally to you. When you are finished, talk with a partner about what happened.