

Analyzing Humanitarian Relief



When a worldwide crisis occurs, the governments of most Western nations attempt to provide aid through finances, volunteers, medical supplies, food, and so on. Each government, however, responds to each crisis differently, often to great debate among politicians and citizens. Explain to students that they are going to complete in-depth research through the internet to understand humanitarian relief efforts in recent times as compared with those of 1979.

Students will complete in-depth research about Canadian government policies regarding humanitarian aid in 1979, when Vietnamese refugees came to Canada. They will then research the current humanitarian aid policies, regulations and practices of the Canadian government. From their research, students will prepare a report comparing the policies of the two eras and explaining whether they think the changes are positive or negative. Students may wish to use the following structure to organize their report:

1. Humanitarian Relief in 1979 – The Plight of the Boat People
2. Humanitarian Relief Today – What are the Government Practices?
3. Major Changes Since 1979
4. Who Benefits? Canadians and /or World?
5. Changes – Negative or Positive?

Students will work individually. They should begin by reviewing Clips 5, 10, and 3 on the topic The Boat People on the CBC Radio and Television Archives website, including the “Did You Know?” sections. Students should then examine the rest of the topic in detail. They should access federal government websites to get current information, and can use any other resources they find useful. Students should keep careful notes to support their position, and should document the sources they consult and cite.

Students will present their finished reports to small groups of three or four students. They should track the similarities and the differences in their reports. Each group should document the top three changes noted from the reports. You may wish to have students write a letter to the Federal Government to outline their opinions of the current regulations, criteria, and procedures for humanitarian relief.

Resources

- Canada International: Newcomers to Canada
 - www.canadainternational.gc.ca/gtc_old/Newcomers_to_Canada-en.aspx
- Boat People: A Refugee Crisis
 - archives.cbc.ca/300c.asp?id=1-69-524