



**Breaking
Barriers**

Meaningful employment
for refugees

My (Refugee) Life

Documentary screening
pack



About Breaking Barriers

Breaking Barriers exists so that every refugee can access meaningful employment and build a new life.

We welcome refugees into meaningful employment with one-to-one advice and guidance, education, and training. Helping people find financial independence, purpose and identity through work.

We believe in the power of responsible business to change society for the better through our innovative partnerships.

www.breaking-barriers.co.uk

About 'My (Refugee) Life'

- My (Refugee) Life was made by Breaking Barriers, the the UK's leading charity helping refugees access meaningful employment.
- Breaking Barriers partnered with award-winning studio, Postcard Productions, and a trainee crew from the refugee community to make the film. The trainees have brought their lived experience to each stage of production - coordinating the project, researching, directing, filming and editing.
- The film follows five refugees, Bahaa, Bahadury, Gulsom, Joel and Zarith as they build a new life in the UK.
- Data, headlines and policies tell little of the people behind the numbers: people navigating a new country, culture and community. My (Refugee) Life looks beyond the numbers and behind closed doors to provide an insight into the trials, tribulations and triumphs of their lives, following the five as they navigate temporary accommodation, employment, love, family and education.
- We hope that the film builds empathy and understanding and provokes questions about how we can all help to remove some of barriers that refugees face in their daily lives.

Key links

The trailer for the film is here: <https://youtu.be/QNpsnHhFoEY>

You can share this ahead of the event to get people interested and excited to watch the film.

The link to the film is here: <https://youtu.be/vVpsglgz0TU>

The full film and information about how it was made can be found here: <https://breaking-barriers.co.uk/get-involved/my-refugee-life/>

How to use this pack

This pack contains suggested activities and questions to help guide conversations about the topics raised in the film.

The first section is for businesses, and the second section is for more general use.

Each section is broken down by key themes that emerge through the film. Each theme has questions and/or activities that you could use to inspire discussion.

There is no right or wrong way to run a screening. This pack is designed as a starting point, and you are welcome to tailor it to best fit your audience or group.

We hope you enjoy your event.

For businesses

Ideas to engage the audience with the film and topics raised



The label 'refugee'

- Before pressing play, ask the audience to think of five words that come to mind when they think of the word 'refugee'. They can write them down, share them with the person next to them, or add them to an interactive word cloud, such as [menti](#).
- After watching the film, split into small groups to discuss if people's words have changed, or if there are new words that they would add, and why.
- Have each group feedback their thoughts. The next slide has some notes that might help spark new ideas, and suggested notes for closing the discussion.

The label 'refugee'

Some prompts could be to ask people whether they had thought about certain characteristics such as:

- Age, gender, country of origin etc.
- The level of choice and agency that people of a refugee background have over their lives
- Levels of education and qualifications
- Willingness to integrate into their communities
- The different aspects of people's personalities
- The moments of success and happiness in their lives, as well as the challenges they face

The word 'refugee' can be laden with stigma and stereotypes and is becoming increasingly misunderstood and politicised.

A way to close the discussion could be to highlight that the film is, ultimately, about five people who share the same label 'refugee', and whose lives are significantly harder than they need to be because of systemic barriers that come with being a person of refugee background.

We hope that after watching it you realise how many other labels could be used – football fan, lawyer, father, comedian, activist, student, tennis player, engineer – to describe the five, and how much more we all have in common with them that we might have previously thought.

As a closing note, *Breaking Barriers* uses 'people of a refugee background' where possible, to put the person at the centre of the phrase.

General questions

1. Which moments stood out for you, and why?
2. Was there anything that surprised you in the film?
3. Did you relate to any of the people, or their experiences?
(For reference, their names are Bahaa, Bahadury, Gulsom, Joel and Zarith)

Barriers to employment

The film was made by Breaking Barriers and Postcard Productions, along with a trainee crew of refugees. For these trainees, it was an opportunity to break down some of the barriers to employment that they face, and take steps towards meaningful employment in the UK.

Question: What do you think some of the barriers are that refugees face when trying to find meaningful employment in the UK? (see a list of possible answers on the next slide if you need them)

Question: Are there ways in which we can help refugees overcome some of these barriers?

Barriers to employment

- Large gaps on CVs due to the UK's lengthy asylum process, during which most people seeking asylum are not allowed to work. On average, Breaking Barriers clients wait nearly three years to hear the outcome of their cases.
- Lack of UK work experience
- Limited understanding of the UK job market
- No professional networks or connections
- Non-recognition of qualifications
- Language barriers
- Cultural differences
- Public misconceptions and discrimination.

Re-starting a career

Gulsom, Bahaa, Bahadury, Joel and Zarith are all working towards a new career.

Gulsom, Bahaa and Bahadury in particular are having to start from scratch when they had well-established careers in law and engineering.

Question: If anyone has recruited someone, do you think the process would have supported refugees to re-start their career?

Question: Are there any ways in which your team or company could remove some of the barriers for refugees?

Activity: Draw a flow-chart to show the steps someone goes through to apply for a job, and see if there are any barriers that could be removed

The importance of home

Home was a prominent theme for all five people in the film. Some, like Bahaa, Zarith and Joel, are living in hotels or unsafe situations, while others like Bahadury and Gulsom have just moved into their new, permanent homes.

Question: Did watching the film change any of your perceptions about what it would be like to live in a hotel for a long time?

Question: How do you think living in a hotel impacts on finding or performing well in a job?

Digital poverty

In the film, Bahaa speaks about needing to go to the local mosque to access the free wifi because it's so slow in the hotel. Many refugees face digital poverty like Bahaa.

Question: How do you think a lack of access to technology and the internet would impact on someone's chances of successfully applying for job, and performing well in their career?

Activity: Individually, in pairs or in a group, draw a mind map that shows how technology helps you to find a job, and perform well once you have one. Ask participants to add any ideas they have for removing the barrier of digital poverty for people applying to, or working at, your business.

What next?

It's important to leave people who have felt inspired by the film and discussion with some clear next steps.

If you are a Breaking Barriers partner, then speak to us about arranging some corporate volunteering as a follow-up to this session.

You can also encourage participants to visit our website where they can find out more about volunteering, donating, or signing up for our news and updates.

www.breaking-barriers.co.uk/get-involved



For general use

Ideas to engage the audience with the film and topics raised



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Question: Are there ways in which your workplace or community could refugees overcome some of these barriers?

Barriers to employment

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Question: How do you think living in a hotel impacts on building a new life and being part of a community?

Digital poverty

In the film, Bahaa speaks about needing to go to the local mosque to access the free wifi because it's so slow in the hotel. Many refugees face digital poverty like Bahaa.

Activity: Collect ideas from the group for daily things that they would find hard to do without the internet. There are some ideas on the next slide to help kick-start discussion.

Question: How do you think a lack of access to technology and the internet would impact on someone's chances of building a new life in the UK?

Question: Are there ways that we could help people living in our community to feel more connected?

Digital poverty ideas

- Online food shopping
- Searching for jobs
- Emails
- Staying in touch with friends and family
- Online banking
- Reading the news
- Google translate
- Google maps
- Online studying
- Finding out when strikes are happening
- Booking appointments
- Listening to music or podcasts
- Finding out what the weather is going to be like
- Paying for parking
- Finding out what's on in the community

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You can also encourage participants to visit our website where they can find out more about volunteering to support refugees into employment, donating, or signing up for our news and updates.

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**Breaking
Barriers**

Meaningful employment
for refugees

Thank you



breaking-barriers.co.uk



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