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Lesson Plan

World History in the Time of COVID-19: Using Stay-at-Home Orders to Process IDP Experiences

Phillip A. Cantrell, II. PhD

Longwood University

cantrellpa@longwood.edu

Author's Note:

This exercise was designed in late March/early April 2020 following the permanent cancellation of person-to-person classes at Longwood University owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, an event experienced by virtually all secondary and higher education institutions across the country. The two-fold purpose of this assignment was to, one, replace a previous assignment with a more manageable exercise that could be conducted online from home by the students working collaboratively. Second, to have an assignment that would leverage the lived experiences of the students during the widespread COVID-19 quarantines to better understand the lives and experiences of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) throughout recent global history.

Overview: A collaborative assignment to better understand the experience of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

Learning Objectives:

After successfully completing this assignment, students will be able to:

- Communicate an informed perspective on the experiences of IDPs in developing economies
- Explain differences between being displaced in a developing economy compared a developed economy
- Work collaboratively online

General Instructions:

The regular semester was cut short by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has necessitated a continuation of classes online, along with the general “stay-at-home” order which came from the governor’s office shortly thereafter. As such, this assignment represents a replacement of the oral, in-class presentations which were originally to be done on a contemporary global crisis.

This replacement assignment will re-focus attention to a global IDP crisis, as this is a unique time in the United States to gain a renewed perspective on how the IDP experience is lived in the underdeveloped world. In short, the assignment will make use of the various “stay-at-home,” “shelter-in-place,” or “lock-down” orders which have come down in numerous American states to take the view that many Americans now find themselves as *de facto* IDP’s; that is, displaced to their homes for an as yet undetermined length of time. The connection between these two seemingly unsimilar situations will be explained in Step Three.

Step One:

One of the objectives of this assignment is for you to gain practice and experience working collaboratively in an online setting as this form of work will likely become more commonplace in the future. So, to start the assignment, students should use any available means of communication to organize themselves in groups of three and four who will then utilize a technological platform to communicate regularly. Among the currently popular platforms available are Zoom, Google Duo, Facetime, Facebook Messenger, Slack and Skype. The professor can help with this if students are having difficulty connecting with others in the class.

Step Two:

Your group should determine an IDP crisis to research using online means. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency, an Internally Displaced Person is “someone who has been forced to flee their home but never cross an international border” and who seek safety “anywhere they can find it—in nearby towns, schools, settlements, internal camps, even forests and fields.”¹ Quite often, IDP situations developed as a result of either “internal strife” or “natural disasters.”¹ The following organizations and websites can help your group determine which IDP situation to investigate as well as other useful information on this issue:

The UN Refugee Agency

<https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/what-is-a-refugee/>

International Rescue Committee

<https://www.rescue.org/>

Internal Displacement Monitoring Center

<https://www.internal-displacement.org/internal-displacement>

Refugees International

www.refugeesinternational.org

Once your group has determined an IDP situation to investigate, you will begin research to support a video presentation viewable by the class. The video must include both images and the voices of your group members. The research and presentation should explain:

1. the historical background of the situation in question
2. the conditions which led to the IDP crisis
3. who was affected
4. the internal strife or natural disaster that generated the crisis
5. the current state of the IDP situation

All group members are expected to participate and take part in the video presentation.

¹ <https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/what-is-a-refugee/>

Step Three:

Lastly, a key component of the assignment is an Individual Reflection Paper, and herein is where the connection will be drawn between the IDP situation in question and the current “stay-at-home” orders in the United States. As American’s have been directed to remain in their homes and residences, they have been effectively displaced from their normal lives and routines in society at large, apart from essential travel. Most American college and university students have been displaced from their campuses for example. Many Americans have been displaced from their workplaces and entertainment centers. Yet, even quarantined at home, many luxuries and conveniences remain available to most.

In the individual paper component of this assignment, you are to reflect upon how different the experience is to be a person displaced *from one’s home* and society in an underdeveloped country as opposed to being displaced *at home* in the developed world. Drawing upon your observations at home and the research you did on your IDP situation for this assignment, speculate and reflect upon the following questions:

What conveniences and luxuries do you enjoy at home which are unavailable to IDP’s in underdeveloped countries?

What kinds of obstacles do you think IDP’s must overcome and survive which are not an issue in the developed world?

How do you think you would respond to and address those obstacles if you were a genuine IDP in the underdeveloped world?

As many IDP’s are forced into displacement with only what they carry on their person, what items from your home would you carry with you if faced with genuine displacement?

What would have to be left behind and how would that change your life?

The paper should be 5 to 6 pages, double-spaced, and submitted online through Canvas by the due date indicated below.

Grade Determination:

For this 100-point assignment, the final score will be composed of the following...

Quality of the Groups’ Presentation and Collaborative Work:	25 points
Depth and Thoroughness of the Groups’ IDP Research:	50 points
Each Student’s Self-reflection Paper:	25 points

Due Date for the Uploading of the Presentation: ***TBD***

Due Date for Submission of the Individual Reflection Paper: ***TBD***