

Information Sheet: Ration Challenge Schools 2018

The Ration Challenge

The Ration Challenge is an Australian fundraising and education initiative run by international aid agency, Act for Peace. Founded in 2014 by Ben Littlejohn and Karen McGrath, the Ration Challenge is launching in schools for the first time in 2018.

The event challenges students (and teachers and parents) to eat the same rations as a Syrian refugee during Refugee Week – just a small amount of rice, flour, lentils, chick peas, beans, fish and oil – and get sponsored to do it.



By putting themselves in the shoes of a refugee, students will learn about global issues, develop empathy for others and feel empowered to make a difference in the world.

Overwhelmingly all involved found the experience to be eye-opening on many levels. For many it was an opportunity to publicly take a stand against the treatment of refugees, raise awareness, start the conversations and show that generosity can combat the hate that is in the world.

- Oakhill College News, July 2017.

“What a humbling experience! Taking part in the Ration Challenge was a chance to be part of something bigger than myself. I felt that I could finally be part of a community taking action against an injustice that I often feel helpless about and show refugees we’re with them, not against them”

- Jessica Xavier, Ration Challenge participant

Ration Challenge: A quick history

The idea for the Ration Challenge emerged in December 2013, when two Act for Peace staff members, Karen McGrath and Ben Littlejohn, visited the Mae La refugee camp on the Thai-Myanmar (Burma) border to meet Burmese refugees that had fled conflict.

While in the camps, Ben and Karen saw first-hand the limited food rations that families have to survive on. And even those rations were under threat because of funding shortages. It made a deep impression on them, and made them wonder what it would be like to live on those rations. So they decided try it, and get as many people as possible to join them - the Ration Challenge was born.



One month's food rations for a family of four

The fundraising event was piloted in June 2014 with 100 passionate participants living on rations for one week and raising more than \$60,000 to support refugees. The event was then launched to the public in 2015. In the three years since its public launch, the event has grown rapidly, more than 25,000 people to take part and hundreds of thousands those participating. The Ration Challenge has raised more than \$5.9 million, providing food, medicine and education to refugees and supporting other vulnerable communities around the world.

Launching the challenge in Schools

In the first two years of the Ration Challenge, 2014 and 2015, U18s were not allowed to participate in the challenge. In 2016 and 2017 Act for Peace made the decision to allow parents to sign up for the challenge for their child and take part together with them. This decision was made after receiving multiple requests from schools and parents to allow children a way to be involved. More than 47 schools decided to take part in the Ration Challenge over these two years, as small teams of teachers, students and parents. Under the supervision of adults, we saw first hand the invaluable experience the Ration Challenge gave to young Australians and their school communities.

Schools taking part in the 2017 Ration Challenge raised more than \$70,000 and engaged in the Ration Challenge on their own accord by running events, teaching students about refugees and promoting the School's involvement in the challenge to the wider community through the media.

Act for Peace made a decision in early 2018 that the Ration Challenge should be launched publicly to schools. The key reasons for launching in schools were to:

- Develop a program that would allow students to safely take part (as opposed to taking the longer 7 day adult version of the event), will full parental permission and supervision
- Provide teachers and schools with high quality educational resources on the topic of refugees and displacement
- Offer young people a way to learn about global issues, further develop empathy for others, apply critical thinking and problem solving skills (through planning and delivering their own fundraising activities) and most importantly, inspire them to be part of the next generation of empowered global citizens who will create a more compassionate society in the future. Increase the level of support given to schools
- Increase the impact on the lives of Refugees and encourage the Australian school community to take action on this important issue through education and fundraising.

What is involved for a School to take part?

We encourage schools to take part in the Ration Challenge by registering a team to take part in a 5 day (Senior students and teachers) or 3 day (Junior students) version of the Ration Challenge. Teams may consist of students from the whole school or a school can sign up multiple smaller teams such as leadership groups, representative councils or classes. Teachers and parents are also able to join the team and take part in the challenge if they wish.

For a school team/s to take part they will need to follow these steps:

1. **Register the team:** by signing up on the Ration Challenge Schools website > We will send you a School's Ration Challenge pack that includes resources and a food ration pack to engage students.
2. **Register students:** submit a team list of students wishing to take part after you've spread the word and received parental permission (we'll provide forms). After submitting your team list, students will be given their own Ration Challenge fundraising page.
3. **Eat Rations:** During Refugee Week (17-24 June) students will eat the same rations as a Syrian refugee – just a small amount of rice, flour, lentils, chickpeas, fish, beans and oil.
4. **Learn and take action:** Teachers can choose to use the educational materials provided to teach students about refugees and global justice. Students will be encouraged to learn about refugees whilst fundraising for the Ration Challenge using the resources provided.

What are the key dates of the Ration Challenge?

1. **Expression of Interest:** From 9th April 2018
2. **Registrations Open:** Late April 2018

3. **Student activation cut-off date:** Students must have their first donation on their fundraising page to qualify to receive a food pack by May 28th. If they have not started fundraising by this date, they can still take part but must provide their own ingredients.
4. **Ration Challenge week:** The 'adults' Ration Challenge is for 7 days from June 17-24th. The Students Ration Challenge is a more limited time period and runs for 3 or 5 days within this time period

What support and resources are provided for teachers?

Designed by teachers, for teachers – we'll provide you access to curriculum-based resources and give you with the tools you need to engage your students and school community. You'll have access to the Ration Challenge schools website with downloadable resources and specific sections to direct students and parents towards.

We'll put you in touch with our Ration Challenge Schools Coordinator to answer your questions and support you and your students before and during the Challenge. Also if you're interested, we will link you with other teachers in a private Schools group on Facebook.

Educational Resources

The Ration Challenge for schools is in its first year, so unfortunately we are unable to provide educational resources for every stage and subject. With the help of some incredibly generous and passionate teachers we have developed educational that we believe will be most useful in teaching students about refugees, displacement and human rights. The below learning resources can be used in conjunction with highly engaging multimedia resources provided online and can also be edited for use across other year levels.

- General Refugee Teaching resource
- Stories & Videos about refugees
- Leadership Training for students
- English, Stage 4 NESA Lesson plan
- English, Stage 5 NESA Lesson plan
- English, Year 8, Australian Curriculum Lesson plan
- English, Year 10, Australian Curriculum Lesson plan

Our sincere thanks to Gaby Smith (Covenant Christian School, Belrose), Rebekah Cochrane and other hard-working teachers for the development of these brand new Ration Challenge resources.

What will students receive?

Students will be able to access fundraising and learning resources on a 'For students' section of the Ration Challenge website. Prior to the Ration Challenge week the school will also be posted student participant packs which will include:

- Food ration pack for each student that includes the same rations as a Syrian refugee
- Ration Challenge guide to help them fundraise, cook and learn

Note: Students will only receive a food ration pack if they have received a donation on their individual fundraising page by Monday May 28th.

Students who have not received a donation by this date can still take part but will have to provide their own ingredients.

Where does the money go?

The money raised will provide food, medicine and education for refugees; and support other communities around the world threatened by conflict and disaster through the work of Act for Peace. Act for Peace

works with local organisations around the world, saving lives when disaster strikes, supporting vulnerable communities and helping to build long-term change.

As well as supporting refugees in Jordan, we support refugees in Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, India and Thailand. We also work across the Pacific, planning for and responding to natural disasters, as well as running long-term development programs in places such as Gaza, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Zimbabwe. You can read more at the end of this information sheet or visit www.actforpeace.rationchallenge.org.au

Is it safe for children to participate in the Ration Challenge?

The safety of children is of the utmost importance. U18s are unable to take part in the challenge without signed permission from a parent or guardian. Permission slips are supplied and must be completed before a child is allowed to join a team and take part. We encourage teachers and parents to support students in consuming food safely, engaging in online activities and discussing potentially upsetting content through close supervision.

Food in the Ration ingredient list provided for the Act for Peace Ration Challenge reflects the same quantities and ingredients as those provided to Syrian refugees in refugee camps in Jordan. The caloric intake and nutritional requirements of adolescents and youth are not met if only consuming the ingredients in this diet according to the National Health and Medical Research Council Nutrient Reference Values as analysed by Nutrition Australia. The food rations provided do not meet the Nutrient Reference Values for total energy, fat and protein and they are inadequate in essential minerals iron and calcium.

It is recommended that parents seek advice from their healthcare professional who can assess their individual needs (age, gender, lifestyle and degree of activity) before allowing their child to take part in the Ration Challenge.

It is recommended that Schools follow their own online social media and bullying policies if engaging in the Ration Challenge. Act for Peace will support any actions needed to keep children safe online, deactivate pages or moderate conversations occurring on Ration Challenge or Act for Peace platforms.

About Act for Peace

Act for Peace is an Australian based international aid agency. We believe that when people all over the world work together, big changes really are possible. We're passionate about building a better world. And that's why we've made it our mission to act in partnership with passionate people across the globe to achieve safety, justice and dignity in communities threatened by conflict and natural disaster. We don't think there is any task more important.

For over 68 years, your support has provided food, shelter, education, healthcare and training to help the world's most vulnerable prepare for, cope with and recover from conflict and disaster. Together we're tackling the root causes of injustice and are building a brighter future for everyone.



Contact Information

Catherine Hill, Ration Challenge Schools Coordinator
chill@actforpeace.org.au Ph: 1800 025 101
Ration Challenge website: www.actforpeace.rationchallenge.org.au/schools
Act for Peace Website: www.actforpeace.org.au