

Experience Map

Our Idea

A Wider Welcome provides training, technical assistance, tools and a network to refugee-led, ethnic based community based organizations (ECBOs), operating in transitional or host communities, to widen their current efforts to engage local community members in longer-term, collaborative, community-development efforts.

USER STORY

Name: Amiin

Age: 27

Profession: ECBO project leader & student

Other Key Characteristics: Living in Malaysia as a refugee, originally from Yemen.

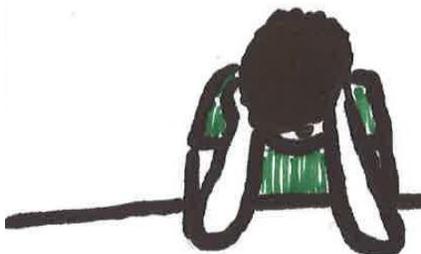
The User



Amiin is stopped by Malaysian police on his way home after his volunteer hours at the ECBO he is a part of. The police want to see his original UNHCR card. He only has a copy with him. He never carries the original. It can take over a year or more to get a new one from UNHCR, so he is always sure to keep it safe at home.

The police take him to the police station. He calls the Community Leader and asks him to go to where he stays to get his original ID. It takes longer than expected as the Community Leader is very busy. His ID does not come in time and Amiin is transferred to a detention center outside of the city.

The problem



Amiin is in the detention center for 14 days. He is only fed water and rice the whole time that he is there. He is told he can pay 150 RM (\$38 USD) for a meal from outside, but that is a fifth of the total amount his family lives on each month. The days go by slowly.

Amiin misses his online classes and assignments; he has a scholarship to study an online program for refugees. He misses his work hours at the ECBO where he is helping to lead a UNHCR funded project to connect women in refugee communities to resources in the community on a mobile app that he and his team have designed. He is lonely. He is hungry. He feels like no one knows that he has these responsibilities. He is treated like he is nothing.

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He feels upset and angry that the only reason he is in the detention lock-up is because he is a refugee.

Action



While Amiin sits in detention, other members from his ECBO team, try to come up with a way to make sure that this does not happen to anymore people in their community. They decide to raise money and purchase strong, quality ID card holders. They get the money, order them, put notes inside that encourage people to carry their original UNHCR cards. They go out into their community to give them away and advocate for their community to use them to avoid detention.

Awareness

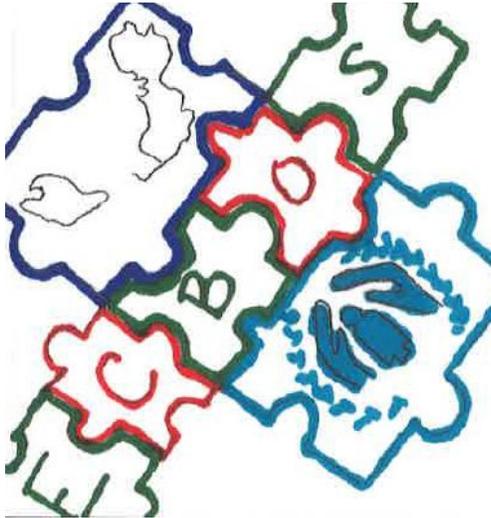


While the team were glad they could do something, and they know their community appreciate their efforts, they know it will not solve the problem. They have heard of cases when people have their original ID and the police make them pay a lot of money to be released. They casually share what has happened with a Malaysian volunteer who teaches English at their ECBO. She was surprised. She did not know that the police would do that to refugees. The team explains to her that it happens all the time!

The ECBO team realizes that not only do their community members need information made available to them but that Malaysians also need to know about refugees and the challenges that they face living in their community. They also want to share with UNHCR their fears of carrying their original card because of how long it takes to get a new one from them.

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A Wider Welcome



The ECBO had been given information on the Wider Welcome by UNHCR and a local organization that they work with. They decide to sign up to join the Wider Welcome network in hopes to gain better skills, tools, and share ideas on how to reach out and engage the Malaysians in their community. They want to tell them about this issue of arrest and detention and also work with them to change it. They know some Malaysians that volunteer with them and know that they can be very nice and helpful.

Building Community, first steps



Amiin's ECBO joins the Wider Welcome network. They share their ideas on how they could engage with Malaysians to make longer-term change. They are then given tools, training, and TA to carry out their ideas. They have decided to hold a community soccer game as the first way to bring people together before jumping into deep and tricky conversations.

Change begins!



After several months as part of the Wider Welcome, Amiin's ECBO and others in Malaysia lead the first Wider Welcome convening in Malaysia with the support of local organizations and UNHCR. On the agenda; how to replace original ID cards more quickly! Even though Amiin and his ECBO colleagues face many challenges and do not have a lot of resources to do all of the things they want in their community, being a part of the Wider Welcome has increased their capacity and they are no longer reacting to bad things that happen but finding ways to prevent them from happening through collaboration with their Malaysian neighbors.