

TAKE ACTION GUIDE:

MY COUNTRY IS TIBET



ABOUT THE FILM

The King of Tibet, living in exile in Dharamsala in Northern India, is 16-year-old Namgyal Wangchuk Trichen Lhagyari. As the only recognized descendant of the first Dharma King of Tibet (617–698 ACE), Namgyal carries the unique responsibility of representing Tibet's unbroken history and heritage. Yet, as a teenager, he also represents a new generation of young Tibetans, who are caught between the peaceful traditions of Tibetan Buddhism and a desperate desire to fight for the freedom of their people against control by China

These young Tibetans speak of the slow obliteration of their very identity—their livelihoods, their right to choose where they live, their ability to be educated in their languages—and the stark choice they face to either remain in Tibet under these constraints or seek to flee to other countries.

LEARN MORE

In MY COUNTRY IS TIBET, BYkids filmmaker Namgyal Wangchuk Trichen Lhagyari takes us to the heart of issues such as the right to national sovereignty, cultural heritage and identity, and the freedom to travel across borders.

When thinking about the issues presented in the film, consider Articles 9, 13 and 15 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Article 9:

(1) No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 13:

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. (2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 15:

(1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

REFLECT AND SHARE

1. Research refugee communities in the United States, Israel and Pakistan. What does it mean to be a refugee in these countries? What basic civil rights are denied to these refugee groups? What might be some of the emotional challenges of being a refugee? What are the physical, economic and political implications? What struggles are unique to the Tibetan refugee community?
2. When a person becomes a refugee, they lose their home. What does it mean to lose your home? Imagine that you were forced to leave your country and you had no prospects of ever returning. What would this mean to you? What would you miss most?

TAKE ACTION

1. Host a benefit screening of MY COUNTRY IS TIBET. Suggest that the attendees make a voluntary contribution to RefugePoint, an international nonprofit that supports international refugees. Email info@bykids.org for more information.
2. Host a debate party and ask guests to share their thoughts about the topic of political refugees. What refugees are you aware of and how did you learn about them? What are the various political or social dynamics that have created large refugee populations around the globe? What rights do refugees have, and what rights are they denied? Who are the refugees in your local community? What can individuals/communities do to help them?

As guests leave, hand out half-page flyers with information about the UN Refugee Agency (unhcr.org) so they can get involved in the issues you've discussed together.

3. The UN Refugee Agency (unrefugees.org/how-to-help/take-action) has a number of ways you can take action. Research their suggestions as well as create your own.
4. Sign a petition or start your own to raise awareness about the plight of refugees around the world. Visit: change.org/petitions (search for "refugee").

ABOUT BYKIDS

BYkids produces real-world films for kids, by kids. Talented young storytellers from around the world are paired with seasoned filmmakers to create powerful documentaries about their lives. In partnership with public television and education innovators, we share the films and their educational resources to help make global issues feel personal, relevant and actionable for millions of students. Our work serves as a catalyst for change, igniting important conversations and inspiring a new generation of social activists. To support our work, visit bykids.org/donate.

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