



RED NOSES

In Laughter there is Hope

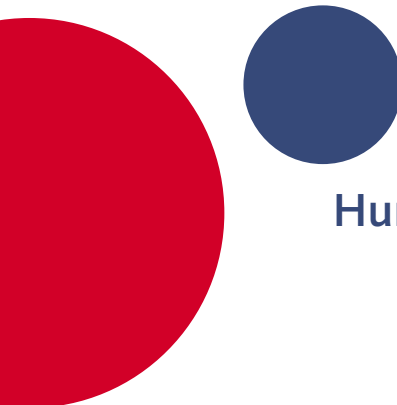
مؤسسة الأنوف الحمراء الدولية - فلسطين



Humour and laughter:

Powerful tools
used by healthcare clowns
to address the crisis of refugees

Article



Humour and laughter: Powerful tools used by healthcare clowns to address the crisis of refugees

The global refugee crisis is a complex and deeply challenging issue, marked by displacement, uncertainty, and often, tragedy. However, amidst the hardships, unexpected yet powerful forces emerge – humour and laughter.

This article explores the transformative role of RED NOSES Palestine healthcare clowns in the lives of refugees, shedding light on their ability to provide solace, foster resilience, and build connections within displaced communities by using the main powerful tools which are humour and laughter.

Refugee camps, often associated with stories of hardship and struggle, are places where displaced individuals and families seek safety and shelter amid crisis. While the challenges faced by refugees are undeniable, a lesser-known aspect of life in these camps is the power of humour in spreading laughter and fostering a sense of community. Humour and laughter, as a universal language, have the remarkable ability to transcend cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic barriers, offering a glimmer of joy amidst adversity.

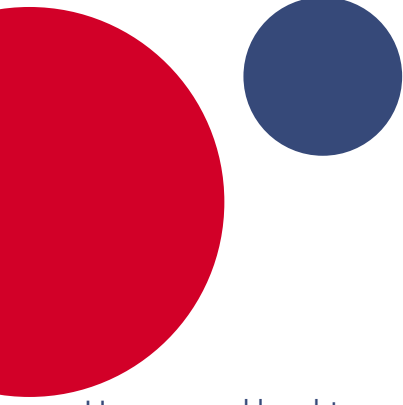
RED NOSES Palestine participates every year in one of the important programmes of RED NOSES International which is called Emergency Smile.

Especially in crisis situations, RED NOSES respond to the immense need for psychosocial support with its innovative programme, Emergency Smile. In multiple missions, clowns support children and their families to develop strategies to cope with their challenging situations. These are people who have lost almost everything, who have witnessed and survived conflicts or natural disasters, who were forced to flee, and who live in dire and stressful situations.

With our artistic and interactive clown interventions, the children are given the possibility to express their feelings in a playful manner. The clowns trigger a shift of focus, concentrating on the positive, the strength and the abilities of the children. The reconnection with positive feelings helps them to regain resilience and hope.

This year, our healthcare clown, Ezzat Natsheh participated in the Emergency Smile mission in Morocco to instil hope among people affected by the earthquake last year where children and their families lost their homes. The Emergency Smile team performed clown parades and shared plenty of joyful moments with people.

“It was a unique experience for me. We worked with two schools in Atlas Mountain where residents have been forced to live in tents since the earthquake destroyed their houses... Being in a professional team helped me a lot to achieve our goals. It is a flexible team that can cope with every difficult circumstance. I was fulfilled with the reactions from people who showed their interest towards the shows. I learned a lot from other clowns, especially the storytelling skills where you need to reflect the deep meaning of things. We could instill hope among those people and draw the smile on their faces.” He said.



Humour and laughter can play a multifaceted role in addressing the crisis of refugees. While it may seem counterintuitive to associate Humour and laughter with such a serious and often tragic situation, it can serve several important functions. For example; humour and laughter can serve as coping mechanisms, allowing individuals to momentarily escape from the harsh reality and find relief from stress and anxiety.

Humour and laughter can contribute to building resilience in the face of adversity. It helps individuals and communities develop a sense of strength and resistance, fostering a mindset that helps them endure difficult situations.

Moreover; Humour and laughter are often deeply rooted in culture. Refugees bring diverse cultural backgrounds with them, and humour can be a way for them to express their unique perspectives and experiences. It can also be a means of preserving cultural identity in the face of displacement.

Most importantly; humour and laughter have the potential to create bridges between different communities, including refugees. Sharing humour and laughter can break down barriers, foster understanding, and promote a sense of common humanity, which is crucial for social cohesion. Also, humour and laughter can be a powerful tool for raising awareness about the refugee crisis. Satirical commentary and comedic performances draw attention to the issues refugees face and prompt discussions among a broader audience.

Humour and laughter can challenge stereotypes and misconceptions surrounding refugees. By presenting refugees in a positive or relatable light, it can humanize their experiences and encourage empathy from the public.

On the physical level, humour and laughter have been associated with various physical health benefits, including improved cardiovascular health and the release of endorphins. These physiological effects can contribute to an overall sense of well-being among refugees and can facilitate communication and interaction among refugees. Humour and laughter can act as an icebreaker, making it easier for individuals to engage with each other, share their stories, and collaborate on addressing common challenges.

Despite the positive attributes of humour and laughter on refugees' lives, we at RED NOSES use humour and laughter in the context of the refugee crisis with sensitivity. Not all situations are appropriate for humour, and humour avoids perpetuating stereotypes or trivializing the severity of the challenges refugees face. We use humour and laughter that are inclusive, respectful, and mindful of the diverse backgrounds and experiences of those affected by displacement. Before every Emergency Smile mission, we carefully evaluate the locations and all of their characteristics.

Amid the refugee crisis, humour and laughter emerge as a beacon of resilience, providing a source of strength, connection, and cultural identity. As we navigate the complexities of displacement and seek solutions for a more inclusive and compassionate world, recognizing and valuing the role of humour and laughter in the lives of refugees becomes essential. It is a testament to the indomitable spirit of individuals who, despite facing immense challenges, find reasons to laugh, connect, and endure together.