

## The People Behind the Stories

### **Warm-up:**

1. Think of one person who you believe changed the world. This will work best if you know a few different facts about the person. Write down their name and their most famous achievement.

2. Turn someone around you and try to explain who that person is without saying their name or their most famous achievement. Was your partner able to guess without knowing what they are most famous for?

3. How do you know what you know about the person you chose? Where did you learn about them?

4. Do some brief research online or ask someone around you about your person. Did any of the facts you found out about the person surprise you?

### **Background:**

Every person you hear about on the news, even in passing, has a story. Every big news story affects real human beings. Today, we will be looking at stories of wars and humanitarian crises that many of us will have heard about before. However, instead of the big picture, we will focus on the stories of individuals. Hopefully, this exercise will challenge some of what we thought we knew.

What do we really know about the stories popping up in our headlines? Can focusing on one individual in a story help us develop a deeper understanding of what people face around the world every day? In this project you will look closer at a key figure in a news story you select.

You will read and research about one person in order to create a project (PowerPoint presentation, poster, or news article) explaining who this person was, why we should know about them, and how their story relates to the bigger picture of a global issue.

Digging deeper into a global story can help connect us with international news on an individual level while creating connection and empathy.

### **Introducing the Reporting:**

On your own, decide which individual you will select for your project. Here are some suggestions:

- Jamal Khashoggi: A journalist and critic of the Saudi Arabian government
- Nabil al-Hakimi: A humanitarian official in Yemen
- Rahaf Mohammed Alqunun: A young woman who fled Saudi Arabia
- Suham Noh: A Yazidi woman whose family fled violence in Iraq
- Mohammed or Riyadh: Two former child soldiers in Yemen
- Ibraheem Sarhan: A Syrian teenager starting over in Canada

## **Research:**

After reviewing the materials and stories, respond to the questions and prompts below using the worksheet.

Think about these questions as you go:

- What do you know about this person's country?
- Can you find their home country on a map?
- How have significant regional events of the last 20 years impacted this person's story? (For the Middle East, consider the Arab Spring and/or the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq.)
- Does what you're learning challenge what you thought you knew?
- What do you think other people should know?

## **Share what you learned:**

Once you have finished your research, organize it into a PowerPoint presentation, poster, or news article.

Try to include:

- Details about why people should care about this person and their life
- How this person made you question common stereotypes or your own preconceived notions
- What this person did on an individual level and in relation to the global story
- Any pictures of the individual and/or events important to their story

Your project should also answer the following questions:

- Why does this story matter to your community? How can you connect?
- What can you and your community members do to support the individual you researched and their community?
- Does it change your view of how you might relate to larger global stories?