Speaker 1 ([00:00](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=0.97)):

People don't just need blankets and food. They need to have their rights protected their rights to education, their rights to political citizenship and balancing the provision of assistance with providing this critical rights-based assistance is one of the things that humanitarianism has utterly failed in and continues to fail in today.

Speaker 2 ([00:28](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=28.89)):

According to one estimate, the global refugee population has more than doubled over the past decade to 26 million. The United nations says every minute 20 people are forced to flee their homes, leaving behind everything, to escape, war persecution, or terror, a project that UC Davis aims to help refugee students start or continue their university education, even as they're displaced and on the move. This is the backdrop, a UC Davis podcast exploring the world of ideas. I'm Satirious Johnson. The innovative project is the article 26 backpack. And joining us today to discuss it is Keith Wotton paw professor and director of the human rights studies program at UC Davis. He leads the article 26 backpack project, and he's most recently the author of the book bread from stones, the middle east, and the making of modern humanitarianism. Thanks so much for coming on today. Keith,

Speaker 1 ([01:19](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=79.26)):

Thank you Soteria. So it's good to be here.

Speaker 2 ([01:21](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=81.39)):

So to start off, can you explain what the article twenty-six backpack is?

Speaker 1 ([01:25](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=85.5)):

Of course. So just to, to follow up on your, your introduction, the, the, the numbers of, of displaced around the world are so enormous. It's hard to grapple with it, but it really translates into about 1% of the world's entire population is either refugee or has been displaced or is on the move is a, is a migrant, a forced migrant. So the article 26 backpack is a way for refugees and other displaced people to effectively curate store and share across international boundaries or locally their critical academic documentation. And this is really important because most refugees, most people on the move most forced migrants around the world really don't have good access to higher education. And we know that higher education is one of the most effective means for people to make the transition to new societies, but also to ready themselves, to go home to societies and help rebuild them. And for years we've been, we've been looking at the problems of refugees at UC Davis and other, the most critical we've discovered is that they're often missing important educational documents.

Speaker 2 ([02:45](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=165.6)):

So things like a high school diploma or a transcript, the grade transcript, things like that, that would allow them to apply to say another school or to continue their education in some other way.

Speaker 1 ([02:57](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=177.18)):

That is right. And so what we've also is that when people don't have proper documentation that this gives, this provides a way for government agencies or universities or colleges to discriminate against refugee people too. And so we, we developed the article 26 backpack project, which is named for the 26th article of the universal declaration of human rights that establishes that all of us, you, me, everyone listening to this podcast has the, has the basic human right to education. And so what we wanted to do as a research group and, and as a form of civic and public engagement by the university is take off the table an entire category of problems facing refugee young people, which is the fear that their transcripts might be lost, that they're not going to have access to, to their diplomas, but rather we could provide a way for them to safely and securely store those documents and then maintain them safely here on servers that we maintain at UC Davis, and then be able to, with a few clicks of a mouse and taps on a keyboard, be able to share those documents with anyone around the world that might be able to help them at admissions office, a scholarship organization maybe even an employer and for, for many people listening to think why, why, why is it so important to, to store documents and amongst refugees?

Speaker 1 ([04:26](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=266.8)):

This is one of their great anxieties, you know, and I, I was just thinking back this morning to conversations I had with refugee young people in the, in Lebanon, Becca valley in 2017. And they would talk about how they would have to carry in folders or notebooks or backpacks, physical backpacks, their, their diplomas and their academic documentation. And they were always worried that if they were on a bus, moving from one place to another, they might be stopped by the secret police or by immigration officials taken off that bus and being forced to abandon the only copies they had access to their materials. Right. And so, you know, we, we don't think a lot about that. We think that our documents are always going to be there, that we can always get them get copies of them because they're all stored. But for refugee young people, especially those fleeing countries that have are on the, in civil war or on the precipice of some kind of collapse like Afghanistan, they can't, they can't count on that. That's not a given. And so we, we developed this project as a way to, to let them focus on other problems that they're going to face as refugee young, right. And

Speaker 2 ([05:42](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=342.9)):

It's called the article 26 backpack, but it's not a physical backpack. It's a virtual backpack. So why don't you explain a little bit about how, how it works?

Speaker 1 ([05:50](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=350.58)):

So it's a, it's a, it's a digital ecosystem in which human beings compliment the capacity of a digital platform that was developed here by our instructional educational technology program. And in fact that the backpack as a piece of software won a prize from the university of California this last year. And so what we've been able to do is we create the backpack as a multi pouched platform with an educational pouch a pouch for other kinds of, of documents. And students are able to enter information about their educational background in a way that is universally recognizable and designed by a group of admissions officers and college registrars. They're able to describe their educational experience. And then just using a simple cell phone, they can photograph their documents and upload them into the cloud where we will protect them for them to use it at any time they want.

Speaker 1 ([07:01](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=421.19)):

And in addition to their educational documents, we provided opportunities where they can upload, for example, letters of recommendation or CVS, or one thing that often happens amongst refugee populations is that they take advantage of short courses. Like we might do like a, a night course in something and receive a certificate in say coding or EMT or, or teaching English that they then can also upload. And the backpack also provides an opportunity for them to record and upload multiple statements of purpose, where they talk about their experiences and their goals, because we find that it's really important, both for them and for potential employers or admissions offices to see, to see not just their documents, but also to see them as people. And that often gets lost in the equation.

Speaker 2 ([08:04](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=484.03)):

So this is, this is actually more than just, you know, advising people who feel that they might become refugees to upload their documents to the cloud. This is more than that.

Speaker 1 ([08:13](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=493.18)):

Oh yeah. I mean, the, the best thing is if people, people can upload when they have safe access to their materials before they're displaced, and that's a hope we can talk about this. This is one of our hopes for working in Afghanistan, which is still relatively stable. But we think could have problems in the near future, right? But once all these materials are, are safe and secure within backpack, then the individual can select and choose elements of it to share via a safe form of email communication which sends a a code and a key to someone like on the other side of the world who can then use it to open up and a look at their materials as part of an application process or an employment process, or even in some cases that immigration process. And, you know, we, we know it works because many young people have taken an opportunity in places like Lebanon and in California.

Speaker 1 ([09:12](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=552.15)):

And we're hoping very soon in Rwanda that, you know, they look to this as a way to make sure that what they've accomplished what they've they've worked to do as, as students is preserved and that they'll always be able to share it with people who might be able to help them. How did you come up with the idea for it in 2013? This was about the, really the second full year of the war in Syria. I led a research group to Jordan where there was beginning to be larger and larger numbers of refugees, still relatively a relatively small number to the almost 6 million refugees that there are now from the war in Syria had begun to move into, into Jordan. And we knew that there would be in that group displaced refugee university students, because Syria had a very large higher education sector before the war.

Speaker 1 ([10:14](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=614.19)):

And we also knew that many of the young people who had been demonstrating have been part of the Arab spring era uprisings against the Syrian government where university students as you might imagine. And so when we went to Jordan, we went to what still is the largest Syrian refugee camp called [inaudible] which is right along the, in the Northern part of Jordan, right with the border with Syria, we met with dozens and dozens of refugee university students. And amongst the first problems they identified was that they had to flee so quickly that they didn't have all, all their proper documents. And they only had bits and pieces of them, and they were worried, and they had experienced discrimination at Jordanian universities when they began to try to enroll because they didn't have everything that they needed. And so that set us to work not only trying to understand that problem and how to address it, but a whole host of other problems.

Speaker 1 ([11:16](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=676.02)):

For example, during that research visit to [inaudible], we began to see how families in exile were placing a very high priority on seeking education for their, their male children, but often pushing their women, their young women who had been going to universities pushing them into early marriage. So we saw this as a real problem too, and a kind of it spoke to us that there was an imperative to figure out ways to facilitate access to higher education for young women, because we were worried about losing an entire generation of not just college aged young people who weren't getting back into higher ed, but also reversing all the gains and female education that had been so hard won in Syria over the previous decades. And I have to say it's the, the re the, the outcome. I mean, we, we called attention to the problem, but there has not been the kind of concerted action in the intervening years to really reverse that trend. Right.

Speaker 2 ([12:21](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=741.51)):

So you mentioned Syria, you mentioned Lebanon, where, where is this article twenty-six backpack available? And how many people have you know, participated in it so far,

Speaker 1 ([12:32](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=752.13)):

Backpack is available in five different languages. So the backpack was first deployed in Lebanon, beginning in the, in late 2018, through 2019, and over a thousand young Syrian refugees, Palestinian refugees, and at-risk Lebanese youth are using it. We then also had a small deployment here in Sacramento as as an experiment primarily with newly arrived refugees, primarily from Afghanistan. And over the next couple months, we're going to be beginning a project in Rwanda where we're going to be using backpack to assist primarily refugees from the civil war in Burundi, as well as the ongoing conflict generations, long conflict in Congo who have taken refuge in Rwanda, in addition to helping local Rwanda young people and our goal over the last few months as backpack has expanded its languages to include, for example, Persian, Afghan papers and, and Spanish is to identify opportunities to use the backpack in growing areas of, of concern.

Speaker 1 ([13:48](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=828.331)):

Of course in south America, that's our, our focus has been the has been Venezuelans who have left that country and fled to places like Columbia and to Peru and Ecuador and elsewhere in south America. Although we, we began that work just as many of these countries entered into periods of, of not, you know, nothing, your civil war, but pretty significant political unrest, which has made it very difficult for us to work. But also we have a great deal of concern about what will happen to Afghan women students in particular, as a concern grows that with the United States withdraw from Afghanistan and the rising power of the Taliban that we could be witnessing in very short order, the Taliban taking over even more of Afghanistan. And in particular, those areas where over the 20 years, there's been a tremendous increase in women attending university, and, you know, the hostility of the Taliban to women's education, not just at higher education levels, but any form of education has really said to us that it's important to figure out ways to help Afghan women in the, what we hope will not be, but certainly is the quite possible circumstance of them being forced to leave their country, to continue their education.

Speaker 1 ([15:25](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=925.16)):

And certainly not being able to have access to their academic records.

Speaker 2 ([15:29](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=929.38)):

I mean, there's so many areas of the world that, you know, there's just so much unrest. How do you decide where to offer it?

Speaker 1 ([15:37](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=937.54)):

Well, it's also where we can build partnerships with local NGOs that will help us implement it. So, you know, just to, to give you a sense of it, we've been also reaching out for example, on the Thai Burmese border. So as unrest flares in Burma Myenmar in opposition to the regime there my students were able to reach out to a teacher training non-governmental organizations in Thailand that for generation of work, primarily with Korean refugees, but now we're seeing more and more university students who had opposed the regime who were facing, you know, arrest or extra judicial killing fleeing across the border who could really use access to backpack as they make decisions about forward movement, either into places of resettlement or in the best case scenario, we're able to return to Burma to resume their education. So to some extent where we bring backpack is an outcome of the curiosity and interest of many of our own students, and one area that I'm, that we're, we're really excited about.

Speaker 1 ([16:53](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=1013.35)):

That's completely student driven is bringing backpack to our DACA and AB five 40 students here at UC Davis, but throughout California, of course, who, while not refugees do face some of the same uncertainties and conditions of procarity that refugees around the world face a fear that they might face some kind of of arrest or deportation, or that they might not be able to access their, their academic documentation because of changes in federal law or, or government. And so they see they've identified backpack is something very important that they want to work with in getting into the hands and on the backs, if you will, of, of our dreamers and our AB five 40 student. Right. So

Speaker 2 ([17:47](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=1067.29)):

How are you measuring success in the, in the project? I mean, how many participants have gotten into college or university? I mean, what kind of metrics are you using to measure how

Speaker 1 ([17:59](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=1079.72)):

So our primary metric, our most, our most important metric is how many people use it to safeguard their documentation because to us, that's what, that's one of the most important outcomes here is it just as I talked about at the very beginning of the interview losing access to one's documents may not be such a concern for us, but it's a day-to-day fear in reality, amongst refugee young people. So we, we look at how many people have signed up for backpack. We also spend a great deal of time training people on how to enroll people into refugee, young people into the backpack itself. And those dumpers are our most important metric. And we look at that as the, also the foundation of building an international community of refugee university young people to, because I, we, one of the things that we that's, that's very important to us is trying to figure out ways to, to, to explain to possible host societies, the humanity and the potential of refugee young people that they're not to be feared.

Speaker 1 ([19:15](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=1155.77)):

There are people with basic rights and they have the capacity to add to the, to the peace and prosperity of the places where they're going as well as be successful residents and perhaps even citizens. What we do see is young people using backpack it's us. You you'd use every day, right? I mean, we don't share our documentation every day. We do see them using it in seeking scholarships. Often what they'll do is they'll apply for a scholarship. They'll have their documents on backpack, they'll download them and attach them to their, to their applications. We really don't know yet if there are, because it's only, we've only been using it for a couple of years in any large amount, if this is, this is absolutely crucial that the, in terms of their success, but we do know that, that they themselves, the refugee young people place a tremendous value on having access to this tool and ecosystem. The other measures of success are how many organizations are reaching out to us to invite us, to use it for the people they're working with. So we try to respond to those organizations as I've explained before looking to use backpack. And we see that again, as a, as a measure of, of what we're doing where we can get it to places of need

Speaker 2 ([20:36](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=1236.23)):

And how integral are your undergraduate students in this project?

Speaker 1 ([20:41](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=1241.97)):

So our backpack interns, or a backpack guides that we have here at UC Davis are really a fundamental feature of the backpack success. And it's also one of the other metrics of success from my perspective, as a director of human rights studies, which is that as a, as a disciplinary field, human rights studies is not just about studying human rights, but understanding what works in the protection and promotion of the rights of others. And so we learned that by doing it. And so right now I have I have with the cooperation of global affairs at UC Davis, we have about 15 interns working primarily assigned on the basis of the languages of backpack, working in all in different parts of the world. For example, the, the, the backpack guides just recently helped create a series of multi-lingual videos about how to use the backpack.

Speaker 1 ([21:39](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=1299.28)):

And it was wonderful because, you know, one day it was English and the next day was Arabic. And then we're about ready to start producing the ones. Oh, and then the next day it was French. And then we're about to do the ones in Spanish and, and Persian, since the people who need to use backpack, our students themselves are students working to help them have access to it is a critical act of solidarity, but also something that, that, I mean, this is, this is really important to Soteria is when we would go to work with refugees in the field, one of the things that they would tell us is that what, or they would ask, which is that, why is the world forgotten us? Why, why, why, why is the world forgotten us? And I didn't have a very good answer except to say, well, I'm here.

Speaker 1 ([22:32](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=1352.98)):

And I'm here to listen, but I knew that by and large, the world would rather not remember or think about refugees. They're seen as an amorphous sort of a morphous mass they're seen as a nuisance as a potential health and safety and political hazard you know, refugees to quote the great theorist, a few and writes Hannah Arent are considered the scum of the earth and most governments and, and most most countries, which is rather they would go away. And so I think that they were right to feel this, this emotion of abandonment or neglect. And by involving our young people at UC Davis in reaching out to them and taking their needs seriously and working hard to try to meet them not only is it the critical implementation of core human rights studies principles, but it's a fundamental act of human solidarity.

Speaker 1 ([23:38](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=1418.44)):

And it's our way of saying to them, no, you're not forgotten. We value you. We understand the potential your potential and your capacity for doing well. But also that we recognize your right, your basic human rights education, and our responsibility to do what we can to make sure that you have access to that. Right. So that's it, it's, you know, our, our, our backpack guides at UC Davis, I think they get that. And that's why, you know, we, every year we have, yeah, we've, we've been able to put together this very large team of young support personnel, if you will to make the backpack happen. But I just can't imagine backpack working anymore without, without the undergraduates, from the human rights studies program, helping us make it work, they have kind of an Instagram meetup of some kind, and they, they do kind of office hours and they, they talk to guides and refugees and other parts of the world, and they work with them on it. And what's wonderful about our students is they, they come from many of the places that are facing these terrible problems. They come from central and south America. They come from the middle east, they come from Eastern, Southeast Asia. So, you know, this is, this is them reaching back into the societies that their ancestors, you know, in some cases fled as, as refugees as well, and seeing ways that they can help.

Speaker 2 ([25:01](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=1501)):

Right. I'm sure that it's an amazing, they must feel. It's an amazing opportunity to not only learn about these things, but to actually be able to do something to help. I mean, that's not something you normally get in a, in a college class,

Speaker 1 ([25:13](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=1513.89)):

The helping like that, that sort of responsibility element is something that we really emphasize in human rights studies at UC Davis, which is that, you know, it's not just about your own rights, it's about what you can do to protect and promote the rights of others.

Speaker 2 ([25:30](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=1530.13)):

That's really great, you know, before we go I wanted to briefly ask you about your most recent book bread from stones, the middle east, and the making of modern humanitarianism in it. You rethink the history of humanitarianism. What, what exactly did you find? How did you approach it differently?

Speaker 1 ([25:46](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=1546.49)):

I, one of the things of course is that I wanted to understand how humanitarianism moved from charity, which is primarily sort of imagining that the poor will always be with us and, and to a form of development, which was seeing humanitarian assistance as a way to expand people's right. To proper food and healthcare and forms of development. And it's, it's an interesting transition. It wasn't smooth it's a transition in which some, I think some terrible choices were made, but I focus primarily on that question in the wake of the genocide of the Ottoman Armenians in 1915, when the enormity of the destruction of the Armenian community of Anatolia by the Ottoman government, during the first world war you know, somewhere like one and a half million were killed over a five-year period by the Ottoman state. And it was a company by the transfer of children, the the enslavement of women and young men it was, it was a terribly brutal experience, but the enormity of it was such that the world community couldn't just use old fashioned forms of charity, but actually had to build a structure for humanitarian assistance.

Speaker 1 ([27:10](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=1630.68)):

And what I noticed in that was that the form of humanitarian assistance was one that sought to create community amongst the refugees, especially the Armenian refugees and help them rebuild as a kind of, of, of ethnic or national entity which was, which was unique at the time. And so I chart the evolution of, to that point, the largest American non-governmental organization, which was called near east relief, which exists today as the near east foundation and its work. And so the book is also an attempt and something I'm hoping to do in a book that I'm writing right now called the white savior and the waif listening to humanitarian histories unheard, which is try to understand humanitarianism from the perspective, not just of, of the Westerners who were doing it, but from the perspective of those who needed it and were participating in it as refugees and people who had survived genocide,

Speaker 2 ([28:16](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=1696.91)):

What would you say is one of the major takeaways of it?

Speaker 1 ([28:20](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=1700.54)):

One of the major takeaways of that is humanitarianism, that isn't also committed to the human rights of people needing help ultimately will not be able to accomplish its purpose. It won't work because people are, are more complex. They don't just need blankets and food. They need to have their rights protected their rights to education, their rights to political citizenship, and balancing the provision of assistance and, and sort of relief. If you will, with providing this critical rights-based assistance is one of the things that humanitarianism has utterly failed in and continues to fail in today. And so humanitarianism, it can only work when those elements are combined

Speaker 2 ([29:12](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=1752.2)):

Well, Keith, this has been really great. Thank you so much for coming on to the backdrop.

Speaker 1 ([29:15](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=1755.92)):

Thank you. Soteria is my pleasure. Keith Walton

Speaker 2 ([29:18](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/zDJTUWkUbVAsr8eAwBPmFOrRz92eEyiDQalGvrdU7G5D91HmIg4bRh1_1VTmL8XzYOxJ5i5cy24W4NqSzz8iDAGFoh0?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=1758.5)):

Paw is a professor and founding director of the human rights studies program at UC Davis. He's also director of the article 26 backpack project. Find out more about the article 26 backpack on our website, UC davis.edu/the-backdrop-podcast. You can listen to and subscribe to the backdrop on apple podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts. And if you like this podcast, check out our other UC Davis podcast unfold. It breaks down complicated problems and unfolds curiosity driven research, joined public radio veteran and host Amy Quintin. And co-host Kat Kerlin for unfold. Subscribe, wherever you get your podcasts. I'm Satirious Johnson. And this is the backdrop, a UC Davis podcast exploring the world of ideas. Yes.