

Topic: Employment
(IOM Middle East)

Activity: Employment Dilemmas

Introduction

In this activity, refugees will explore accepting jobs not in their fields and changing jobs based on income and benefits.

Objective

Given limited information about a new job, participants will weigh the “pros” and “cons” of taking a new job and making decisions about that job. Participants will share their reasons for pursuing or not pursuing that job.

Materials

- Writing boards

Practice

1. Divide participants into two groups. Ask each group to select a leader, and explain the activity to participants.
2. Participants will discuss the situation assigned to their group along with the questions.
3. With the assistance of other group members, the leader will present the situation and strategies to deal with the situation with the large group.
4. After the group discussion, address the benefits of working in the U.S. See suggestions listed below.

Variations

1. Participants outside the group presenting can be asked to voice their own opinions to the presented situation.

Situation 1

You are a civil engineer in your home country, with a wife and two children. In the United States, you are working as a driver, making \$11.00 per hour. The job is full-time but offers no health benefits.

You are offered a job as an engineer trainee. You will make \$7.50 per hour. This would be full-time but would offer no health insurance coverage.

Would you change your job? Why or why not?

Situation 2

You are working as an electrician’s assistance in San Diego, making \$10.00 per hour. The job is full-time and offers health benefits. You are offered a similar job in New York City which pays \$14.00 per hour with benefits. You have a wife who is unemployed.

Should you and your family move for the new job? Why or why not?

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Situation 3

You work as a dishwasher in a restaurant. One day you see an ad in the newspaper about a part-time job that pays over \$3,000 per month to work from home, but you have to pay \$100 for application fees by mail to get the job.

Should you apply? Why or why not?

Situation 4

You were a university teacher in your home country. You planned on being a teacher in the United States, but you do not speak English. You are not employed and are receiving public cash assistance. Your resettlement agency worker has found you a housekeeping job in a hotel, but you would like to focus on getting back into your profession.

Should you take the housekeeping job? Why or why not?

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Benefits of Working in the United States

- To prove that you are a responsible individual
- To improve your standard of living
- To avoid being idle and ensure your survival
- To become self-reliant and independent
- To gain respect from others and members of your community
- To continue the process of learning and to gain new skills
- To gain a solid work history
- To show others that refugees can be contributing members of society
- To serve as a role model for the young and future generations
- To pay U.S. taxes
- To help pay back your IOM travel loan
- To develop one's creativity and serve as an inspiration to others
- To enter into a social/community order
- To develop an entirely new network of friends and colleagues
- To improve your chance of finding a partner
- To gain insight into resources in your area, including human and community resources
- To gain on-the-job experience and become familiar with the U.S. work ethic
- To develop a new identity
- To help achieve goals for you and your family
- To improve your English language skills

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