

## Topic: Employment

### Activity: Adjusting to the Idea of Work: A Critical Incident for Refugees

---

<b>Objective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Participants will consider the necessity of working to become self-sufficient in the United States</li><li>✓ Participants will consider their own pre-existing expectations regarding work in the United States</li></ul>
<b>Lesson Time</b>	20 minutes
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>☐ Critical incident (included)</li><li>☐ Optional: Flipchart paper, markers, tape</li></ul>
<b>Introduction</b>	Helping refugees find work and become self-sufficient as quickly as possible is a priority for resettlement agencies. However, some participants may be surprised or disappointed when they learn that they must work to support themselves. This may also be true for older refugees who consider themselves to be past the age of retirement in their home country, or feel that their physical condition does not allow them to work.
<b>Practice</b>	<p>(Note: Feel free to change names to reflect your participants.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Put participants into small groups of 2-4 and ask each group to choose a spokesperson.</li><li>2. Read “Adjusting to the Idea of Work: A Critical Incident for Refugees” aloud, pausing after each set of reflection questions.</li><li>3. In small groups, participants discuss the reflection questions. Listen in on the discussions to check for understanding.</li><li>4. After the last set of reflection questions, bring the large group together and ask the spokesperson from each group to summarize the main ideas from their group discussions. Discuss as necessary.</li></ol>
<b>Reflection Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What happened in this critical incident?</li><li>• Why did Iklass change her mind about working?</li><li>• What decisions along the way would you make if you were Iklass?</li></ul>
<b>Variations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Give flipchart paper to each small group and have groups draw and present the highlights of their discussion.</li><li>• If literacy levels allow, prepare flipchart paper with reflection questions for each small group and have groups write and present their answers.</li></ul>

## Adjusting to the Idea of Work: A Critical Incident for Refugees

Iklass\* is a recently resettled 50-year-old refugee in the United States. She has to learn many new things very quickly, and she often feels tired. When her resettlement agency case worker gives her instructions about how to find a job, Iklass is surprised. Iklass is used to working hard in her house and assisted her husband on their farm, but she never worked for an employer before. Iklass tells her case worker that she is tired and does not want a job, but her case worker says both Iklass and her husband may need to work to support their family. The case worker reminds Iklass that the resettlement agency can only support refugees for a short time.

### Stop and reflect:

- What happened so far?
- What would you do if you were Iklass?

Iklass's case worker suggests three different factory jobs to Iklass, but none sound appealing to her. Iklass asks for a different job, but her case worker says jobs are hard to find. Iklass decides not to work.

### Stop and reflect:

- Why did Iklass decide not to work?
- What could happen because of her decision?
- What do you think Iklass should do?

After a month, Iklass wants to call her family back home, but she does not have enough money to buy a phone card. Her husband's salary is just enough to pay for their basic needs. Iklass decides to try a factory job so she can earn more money. At first it is hard for her to work in the factory, but she makes new friends and is proud to earn money. Now Iklass can afford phone cards and call her family.

### Stop and reflect:

- Why did Iklass change her mind about working?
- What decisions along the way would you make if you were Iklass?