

## Topic: Employment

### Activity: Disadvantages and Advantages in the Job Search: A Critical Incident for Refugees

---

<b>Objective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Participants will consider both the disadvantages and advantages refugees possess when looking for their first job in the U.S.</li><li>✓ Participants will consider the benefits of keeping a positive outlook towards initial employment options</li><li>✓ Participants will identify ways to promote their capabilities to employers</li></ul>
<b>Lesson Time</b>	30 minutes
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Critical incident (included)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Optional: Flipchart paper, markers, tape</li></ul>
<b>Introduction</b>	Recently resettled refugees often lack one or more qualities desired by employers, such as previous U.S. work experience, English skills, and a high school diploma. In addition, most refugees do not have access to a car upon arrival, limiting their transportation options. When competing for employment, it is helpful for participants to be aware of these initial disadvantages and to emphasize their strengths and abilities.
<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 “Job Disadvantages and Advantages: 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>● What makes it difficult for refugees to find jobs in the U.S.?</li><li>● Why did Lian decide to accept the job at the factory?</li><li>● Why did the factory owner give the job to Lian?</li><li>● What would you do if you were Lian?</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><li>● See page 2 of <a href="http://www.refugeeworks.org/downloads/rwnews_16.pdf">http://www.refugeeworks.org/downloads/rwnews_16.pdf</a> for additional positive adjectives refugees can use to emphasize their strengths</li></ul>

## Job Disadvantages and Advantages: A Critical Incident for Refugees

Lian\* is a man who recently resettled in the United States. Before arriving, Lian had high hopes about working in the United States. However, he is disappointed to see many refugees working in low-skilled jobs. When Lian's case worker lines up a job interview for him at a factory, Lian initially refuses.

### Stop and reflect:

- Why does Lian refuse the job interview?
- What will happen if Lian cannot find a job?
- What would you do if you were Lian?

Lian's case worker advises Lian to go to the job interview at the factory because finding another job will be difficult. The case worker explains that Lian is competing for jobs against locals who have some qualifications Lian lacks, such as previous U.S. work experience, strong English skills, and a U.S. high school diploma. Lian also does not have a car, so he is limited to jobs that are on a bus route. The case worker tells Lian to think about his strengths and emphasize them during the interview.

Lian understands how competitive the job market is and decides to accept the job interview. There are many people interviewing for the position, but Lian says he is hard-working, motivated, dependable, and willing to learn. The factory owner likes Lian's positive attitude and hires Lian. In the future Lian may look for a higher-paying job, but right now he can start supporting himself and repaying his travel loan.

### Stop and reflect:

- What makes it difficult for refugees to find jobs in the U.S.?
- Why did Lian decide to accept the job at the factory?
- Why did the factory owner give the job to Lian?
- What would you do if you were Lian?

\* This critical incident is based on the real-life experience of resettled refugees. All identifying information has been changed to protect privacy.

© 2011 Center for Applied Linguistics

This document is a product of the Orientation Technical Assistance Project, funded by the Office of Refugee Resettlement, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, Grant No. 90RB0037. The views herein do not necessarily represent views held by the Office of Refugee Resettlement.