

Topic: Cultural Adjustment
(International Organization for Migration, Overseas Processing Entity, Nairobi)

Activity: Lose or Gain: What Do You Lose? What Do You Gain? (Managing Expectations)

Introduction

Anyone going to a new country will experience a certain degree of cultural adjustment. For many African refugees resettling in the U.S., however, the acculturation process is particularly acute since the differences between their old lives and their new ones are so great.

In this activity, participants prepare for cultural adjustment—they elicit and address the difficulties, fears and anxiety participants anticipate in their new lives.

Objectives

At the end of the training, each participant should be able to identify (at least) two things they will lose and two things they will gain by resettling in the U.S.

Materials

- Writing surface
- Chalk or markers

Practice

1. Put the following statement on the board/wall so that everyone can see it (or read aloud for less literate participants): "Immigrating to another country is like making a trade – to get something you want you may have to give up something you have".
2. Let the participants reflect on that statement.
3. The instructor divides the whiteboard into 2 parts. What do you gain? What do you lose? And then elicit from the participants what they will gain and what they will lose. All responses are written on the board under "Lose" or "Gain".
4. Samples gathered in Africa: some may say they will lose their culture, their religion, friends, traditional food, etc. Some will say they will miss the weather at home. Others will say they will gain freedom, independence, attain self-sufficiency, better health care, and security.

Debrief

1. Trainer can use responses to review and clarify issues related to resettlement and adjustment.

This document was developed with funding from the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, United States Department of State, but does not necessarily represent the policy of that agency and the reader should not assume endorsement by the federal government.