

Topic: Employment
(International Catholic Migration Commission, Overseas Processing Entity,
Istanbul)

Activity: Hassan's Story

Objectives	Following an introduction of American workplace values, this activity will help participants identify the employment-related issues that a refugee can encounter when s/he first arrives in the United States. The aim of the exercise is to introduce the solutions and tactics that clients will need when they first start working.
Lesson Time	15 minutes
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Copies of Hassan's Story (included)
Practice	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Trainer divides the participants into small groups.2. S/he asks the groups to choose a reporter.3. Trainer distributes the copies of the story to each group and asks the reporters to read the story to their group and asks the groups to develop solutions/tactics to cope with the new work environment for 5 minutes.4. After each group decides on possible solutions, the trainer goes through the responses as a class and helps select those that are appropriate.

Hassan's Story

Hassan has been working at a bakery for the last 3 weeks. At this stage in his adjustment, he is discouraged and not very motivated about his new life in the U.S., and because of that, he is not trying to adjust to his new work place. So, his colleagues and counterparts see him as someone who:

- Doesn't understand and speak English very well.
- Doesn't try to learn the language.
- Is unwilling to understand the culture and customs of his new country.
- Takes everything for granted.
- Gets angry very easily.
- Is lazy.

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Trainer's notes

Information for the use of trainer (some coping strategies):

- Keep trying to learn English. Your efforts alone will impress people, and the advances you make will impress them even more.
- Do not accept an ambitious or high profile position until you are very sure of yourself. An early failure can leave a lasting impression.
- Listen, listen, and then listen further. Listening builds trust.
- Spend time with colleagues and coworkers, on and off the jobs. As people see you interacting with others—and with them—they'll assume you are learning things about their culture. On the other hand, if you hang around only with the other refugees and go away on the weekends, they'll assume you are not learning very much.
- Ask questions, all the time, of everyone. People will be impressed that you are asking. And besides, you need to learn as much as you can, and let people know you have learned.
- Work with someone who is credible. People may not entrust you with responsibilities on your own, but they may entrust you and your host country partner with important work.
- Try to exhibit as much cultural sensitivity as possible. Nothing hurts your credibility quite so much as stories about the faux pas you have made. And nothing helps it as much as stories about your sensitivity.
- Be patient. The sheer passing of time will work to your advantage; people will get used to your being around and see you less and less as an outsider.

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