

**Topic:** Employment

**Activity:** An Employment Search Case Study

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<b>Objectives</b>	<p>To consider some of the difficulties refugees may face finding employment.</p> <p>To consider ways in which refugees can improve their chances of finding employment.</p>
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Case study (see sample included), one copy per participant</li><li>• Prepared flipchart with reflection questions listed (see samples included)</li><li>• Markers</li><li>• Tape</li></ul>
<b>Lesson Time</b>	30 minutes
<b>Introduction</b>	<p>Incoming refugees are advised to take the first job offer they receive, whether it is in their field or not. This is critical in order for refugees to be able to pay their expenses after resettlement support ends. However, finding that first job may not be challenging. Job developers find that refugees selected for a job are often chosen on the basis of their attitude, as well as on experience and skills.</p> <p>This case study is based on the real-life experience of a Bhutanese man resettled in 2009. This refugee had the advantage of strong English skills, as well as a clear recollection of the job search skills addressed in cultural orientation overseas. He found a job quite quickly after arrival, yet still felt frustrated at the time the job search took. His story shows how being active in the job search can help a refugee find a job, how practicing U.S. styles of interviewing can make a good impression on an employer, and how being open to learning new skills can be beneficial.</p>
<b>Practice</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Put participants into small groups of 2 to 4 and distribute case studies. Have participants read the case study, answering the questions presented in the case study along the way. When finished, have the small groups answer the final reflection questions on prepared flipchart.</li><li>2. Bring the large group together and ask for a spokesperson to share the highlights and important elements from the small group discussions. Discuss further as necessary.</li><li>3. When working with less literate participants, the facilitator can read the case study aloud to the group, and then lead a large group discussion about the reflection questions.</li></ol>
<b>Reflection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are the main issues presented in this case study? How did Sanjay handle these issues? How would you handle these issues?</li><li>• What are some of the resources or supports Sanjay used? How did he use them? What other resources or supports might be available?</li><li>• Can you think of any other issues that Sanjay may have encountered? How might you handle them?</li></ul>

## An Employment Search Case Study

Sanjay\*, a Bhutanese refugee in his mid-twenties, arrived in the U.S. with his wife and son about 18 months ago. Sanjay attended cultural orientation classes near the refugee camp where he lived in Nepal as well as in Kathmandu prior to departure, and learned about travel procedures, U.S. laws, and how to search for a job, among other topics. Sanjay understood that resettling in the U.S. would be challenging and that it would require his best efforts and patience.

Upon arrival, Sanjay reunited with his brother, and also learned about the basics of U.S. life from his resettlement agency case manager. Sanjay also attended employment training sessions at the resettlement agency and completed applications for many jobs. For six weeks, he did not receive any calls back, which he found very frustrating. When Sanjay did have interviews, he remembered to practice what he had learned in his orientation classes: to dress well, be clean, arrive early, look people in the eye, and greet his potential employer in a respectful and friendly manner.

Sanjay's brother was employed at an apartment building, and Sanjay talked to his brother about the challenges he was having finding a job. So Sanjay's brother spoke with his boss about helping Sanjay with employment. The boss said that there was a new maintenance position available, and Sanjay applied. He impressed his brother's boss with his English skills and familiarity with U.S. mannerisms, and was offered the position. Sanjay's new boss felt that Sanjay could learn the skills used for the position while working, or "on the job." Sanjay did so, quickly meeting some Spanish-speaking colleagues who assisted him with job training. He has been working in this job ever since.

Sanjay feels that moving anywhere new will be difficult. But Sanjay also feels that, with time, his life in the U.S. has gotten better, and he feels much more settled and comfortable in his new community. Sanjay has even had the opportunity to use his knowledge and experience in the U.S. to assist newly arrived refugees in their resettlement process.



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

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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.

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