

43 - Finding out about social services

Aims: - Present some key expressions relating to using social services.
- Inform refugees about key social services.
- Enable refugees to begin to communicate with social services staff.

Communicative situations

- Understand signs in social services buildings.
- Ask for simple information about social services.
- Understand simple instructions.

Materials

- Pictures of people, places, and signs related to social services.
- Role-play cards.

Language activities

Activity 1

Use the pictures (a) to:

- Introduce and help refugees to understand the relevant notices and signs relating to support and assistance, e.g. for the elderly, children, women, etc.
- Check their understanding of notices and signs by asking them to match words with pictures.

Activity 2

- Give refugees, for example, a family counselling centre leaflet (preferably with illustrations) containing information about this service.
- Use simple questions to check understanding: e.g. *When is the centre open? Do they have interpreters? Must I go there with someone else?*
- Ask refugees to exchange information about the leaflet in pairs.
- Invite refugees to report back to the group on some of the information they have found.

Activity 3

- Refer to the leaflet again, asking (for example): *Do you know where this place is? Is there a similar service in your country? Who do people talk to in these centres?*
- Then ask how they would manage this kind of interaction in their own languages. Introduce a dialogue like the following:
 - A: *Excuse me, can you help me?*
 - B: *Yes?*
 - A: *I'm looking for the family counselling centre. What floor is it on?*

- B: *It's on the second floor.*
- Check comprehension focusing on 'excuse me, can you help me?' etc.

Activity 4

- Organize role plays combining the pictures and the role-play cards, so that A has a card and B has a picture illustrating the place where the interaction takes place. Invite refugees to request information and respond to the request in an appropriate way.

Ideas for learners with low literacy

- Invite refugees with low literacy to copy the main words that occur in the activities onto cards. Then ask them to identify the words on the cards on signs and in leaflets etc.
- Ask them to read signs and notices related to social services.

Sample materials

(a) Pictures of people, places, and signs related to social services.



Family counselling



Disability



Helping children



Helping elderly people

(b) Role-play cards.



I'm pregnant



My son needs help