

## 31 - Selecting situations to focus on in language support activities: a checklist

**AIM: To help you choose suitable communication situations on which to base your language support activities.**

### Introduction to the checklists

The following lists are aimed at beginners in the target language. They are organised in two ways. First by the domain in which the refugees will use the language. The first domain is the personal domain, which includes the personal aspects of communication; the second is the public domain, which refers to communication with people from the host community; finally the occupational domain, which is the world of work.

The second list is organised by communication scenario. You can use these lists to select situations that are relevant to the specific needs of the refugees you work with.

### List organised by domain

#### Personal domain

In this domain of communication refugees:

- learn to take advantage of the languages they already know in the new environment.
- get used to learning on their own.
- learn to deal with certain immediate aspects of their practical and social lives, for example, getting around, accommodation, health, leisure activities, their children's education, etc., using their native language and/or the target language and/or any other languages that they know and that the people they interact with also know.
- manage certain aspects of their relations with friends and neighbours in the target language.
- [...]

#### Public domain

In this domain of communication refugees:

- start to establish social relationships with native speakers (neighbours, acquaintances, etc.).
- learn to talk about themselves, their lives, problems and life stories.
- start familiarising themselves with the written language through the Internet.
- [...]

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## Occupational domain

In this domain of communication refugees:

- who are starting a job begin to familiarise themselves with certain aspects of the sector or the company they are working for (working hours, definition of tasks, labour laws, trade union activities, recreational or cultural activities, hierarchical relations, matters relating to pay, etc).
- engage in basic social relations with other members of the work community.
- need to be able to understand basic health and safety regulations.
- [...]

## List organised by (communication) scenario

(Communication) scenarios are groups of predictable situations that are an integral part of social interaction.

### Beginning to socialise (face to face)

In this scenario, refugees learn to:

- participate a little in ordinary, everyday conversations with neighbours or acquaintances.
- start talking about themselves, their lives, families, personal histories.
- [...]

### Beginning to socialise (by remote means)

In this scenario, refugees learn to:

- understand a name or telephone number they hear on the phone or voicemail.
- understand and are able to give simple information by phone or SMS (e.g. *my name is Aliaa and I am 17 years old*).
- copy out a text onto a greeting card or e-mail etc.
- [...]

## School and children

In this scenario, refugees learn to:

- engage in contacts with the school's administrative staff and teachers (with the help of a school mediator if necessary).
- introduce themselves.
- understand school timetables.
- [...]

## Using the health services

In this scenario, refugees learn to:

- understand simple instructions (*Stay in bed*).
- explain a medical problem to a professional (doctor, pharmacist), if necessary using gestures and their first language.
- answer direct questions (*Does it hurt here?*).
- ask for an appointment and understand the answer.
- understand the instructions for using medication (Take three times daily).
- [...]

## Beginning to use the media

In this scenario, refugees learn to:

- read a TV or cinema programme.
- understand the news, in particular international news, sports news, etc.
- [...]

## Starting to process information

In this scenario, refugees learn to:

- understand instructions for use (especially illustrated instructions for a familiar object such as a photocopier).
- [...]

## Starting to cope with telephone conversations and text messages

In this scenario, refugees learn to:

- send a simple message for exceptional reasons (My flight has been delayed; I will arrive in 20 minutes).
- receive and understand simple, predictable messages.
- [...]

## Beginning to manage the learning process

In this scenario, refugees learn to:

- understand factual (oral) information about the classes.
- understand the work they need to do (homework, deadlines for handing it in, etc).
- [...]

## Buying, shopping

In this scenario, refugees learn to:

- ask for an item that they can see in the shop.
- ask about the price and quantities (weight, size).
- ask for explanations or details concerning the price.
- understand the signs indicating where the different sections or departments (of a supermarket or department store) are.
- recognise the generic name of certain products (*flour, salad*) or brand names (*Coca-Cola*).
- identify certain advertising information (*reduced, special offer, etc*).
- [...]

## Finding accommodation, living in a house or apartment

In this scenario, refugees learn to:

- understand certain information given in rental advertisements (price, surface area).
- understand at least in part, and with the help of a dictionary or of another person, the instructions for use of common household appliances (e.g. a boiler, iron, television), where the instructions are brief and contain plenty of illustrations.
- participate in simple, routine conversations with neighbours on predictable subjects (cleanliness of the building, noise, rubbish collection and recycling, etc)
- [...]

## Using postal and banking services

In this scenario, refugees learn to:

- identify the different counters.
- change money, withdraw money transfers.
- use an ATM (these often operate in several languages).
- transfer money abroad.
- [...]

## Getting around, travelling

In this scenario, refugees learn to:

- understand simple directions.
- answer simple, predictable questions (border controls, customs) about how long and where they are staying, etc.
- partially fill in the relevant forms (family name, first name, nationality, etc).
- understand simple instructions (*Please open your suitcase*).
- ask for transport information (timetables, price of tickets, etc).
- recognise and understand the most common urban signs.

- recognise and understand the most common road signs: *road block, reduce speed now, one-way street*.
- [...]

## Communicating (partially) at the place of work

In this scenario, refugees learn to:

- understand simple information about the job.
- express needs (*I need another 10 of these*), including in writing (short message).
- understand simple oral instructions about the tasks to be performed.
- [...]

## Getting food (canteen, restaurant)

In this scenario, refugees learn to:

- order food and drink in a self-service restaurant serving familiar types of food (*hamburger, pizza, sandwich*), where the food is visible and accompanied by pictures and/or written descriptions.
- attract the waiter's attention (Excuse me, can I order please?)
- have the content of a dish explained to them.
- [...]

### Note

This list covers communication situations that beginners in the target language can manage, often with the help of the people they are talking to. Refugees will not always be able to understand or make themselves understood. But these scenarios show the kinds of conversations which they can participate in with some level of success, and which can help them to develop their language skills.