

54 - Socialising with the local community

Aims:

- Engage refugees in social interaction.
- Enable them to share cultural information and opinions.
- Raise intercultural awareness in the local community.

Communicative situations

- Participate in real conversations.
- Talk about themselves, their lives, their cultures.

Materials

No material is needed. Depending on the context and the refugees' situation, try to organise a meeting with members of the local community with the help of local Institutions such as charities, the local authority, schools etc. It is useful if some of these people have experience of living in another country.

Before refugees arrive, have a short introductory meeting with the members of the local community who attend. Give them some basic information about the group of refugees, their language level and the work you are doing. Explain the plan for the meeting, ask for their cooperation, and answer any questions. Then bring in the group of refugees.

Intercultural language activities

Activity 1

Refugees and members of the local community sit in a circle in the space provided for the meeting. If possible, each refugee should sit between two members of the local community.

With the help of a mediator if one is available, ask refugees to introduce themselves. Then ask the members of the community to introduce themselves too.

Activity 2

Identify people in the group who can act as translators (this may only be possible if a mediator is present). After the introductions, refugees are invited to talk to one of the people next to them about their own language(s) and culture. The person they are speaking to should be ready to ask some questions, and then talk about their own culture, family etc.

Activity 3

Then, all the participants talk to another person about their traditions, favourite music, favourite city etc.

Activity 4

Draw a spider gram on the board (or use a projector). Write the word integration in the middle. Ask all participants to say something (a word or phrase) linked to or associated with 'integration'. Write these down on the 'legs' of the spider. Note: this activity will only work if members of the local community are willing. You only need a few people to answer).

Activity 5

Before the meeting help refugees to talk about a dish from their own country. At the end of the meeting refugees, who are able to, describe a typical dish they know to the whole group. Some members of the local community do the same thing. (Note: ideally at least some refugees and some members of the local community will bring some food to the meeting so that this can be shared in a relaxed way at this point).

A nice way to end the meeting would be to encourage refugees and members of the local community to sing a song in the language of their choice. If children are present involve them in the singing too.