



## Language Support for Migrants *A Council of Europe Toolkit*

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### Tool 23 - Observing situations in which migrants need to use the target language

**Aim:** To suggest ways of gathering information about the situations in which migrants actually use the language they are learning and to offer guidance in using this information when deciding what they need to learn.

The checklist below is designed to help you to make notes when observing situations in which migrants use the target language. If you have the time and can work with colleagues you may be able to carry out systematic observations, but you can also build up information gradually, based on partial observations and your experience.

Observing migrant learners when they use the language in their everyday lives will help you to select appropriate scenarios, situations and functions for language support.

#### Which of the following people do the migrant learners talk to?

- other migrants who speak the same language
- migrants who speak other languages
- volunteers and others working in NGOs, associations, etc.
- cultural mediators
- healthcare workers
- legal aid workers
- administrative authorities (border control officers, police, security staff, etc.).
- public officials (social services, housing assistance, other administrations).
- teachers
- local people in general
- neighbours
- shopkeepers
- other people – who?

#### Try to establish:

- which interactive situations occur frequently
- which conversations generally take place with the help of an interpreter or somebody who knows a language that the migrants also understand

- which conversations are seen by the learners as being between equals, and which they do not consider to be between equals (for example, between an official and a migrant, or between an adult and a child)
- which conversations the learners can prepare for in advance
- which conversations take place in specific locations (offices, shops, on the street) and which do not
- which situations involve more than oral interaction, such as a written questionnaire, reading printed information, etc.
- in which situations the topics of conversation can be anticipated, and in which other the topic cannot be predicted.

Especially where refugees are concerned:

- which conversations make them anxious?
- which are important for their future, and which are just ordinary conversations?
- which conversations are unavoidable?
- which conversations do the learners themselves initiate, and which happen by chance?

(See also Tool 4 – *What is involved in providing language support for recently arrived migrants*).