

27 - Refugees' linguistic profiles

Aim: To help volunteers to gather information about individual refugees' competence in the languages they know (see also Tool 11 *Refugees as language users and learners* and Tool 38 *Plurilingual portrait: a reflective task for refugees*), as well as about their interests and priorities.






Volunteers offering language support will probably not be the first people to meet and interview refugees. Some information about the refugees' background, experiences and special needs may well be available in the reception centre. You should try to obtain this information before meeting individual refugees to discuss their language needs. It will be useful when planning language activities to match refugees' **linguistic profiles** and forming groups that are as homogeneous as possible.

Determining refugees' linguistic profiles

- Ask each refugee the 10 questions below and use the linguistic profile form on page 2 to record their answers.
- Where possible, complete the form with other information you have already collected or that you collect using other Tools as indicated.
- Before asking the questions, explain why you are doing so (*"This is not an exam. It is an informal conversation. I need this information in order to better organise our language activities"*).
- If refugees do not speak the host country language or do not feel confident enough to do so, try to use another language.
- If refugees know the host country language, speak clearly and slowly.
- Do not insist that refugees answer all the questions: decide whether certain questions are too sensitive to ask, given the specific circumstances of the individual.
- Bear in mind that the information refugees provide about their language competences may not correspond to your perception because it is based on self-evaluation.
- Where possible, share this information (also to update the form) with other people who are in contact with refugees, such as other volunteers or mediators.
 1. *Do you speak the host country language?*
 2. *Which language would you prefer to speak?*
 3. *What's your name? How old are you?*
 4. *Where do you come from?*
 5. *Are you in [the host country] with other family members?*
 6. *What kind of jobs are you good at? Can you talk a little bit about the jobs you have had?*
 7. *What do you like to do? Can you talk a little bit about your interests?*
 8. *Can you talk a little bit about your studies?*
 9. *Which languages do you speak?*
 10. *What can you do with them (write, listen and understand, read, speak, interact)?*

Linguistic profile

First name and family name				
Gender	M	F	Age	Nationality
Is the refugee in the host country with other family members?			Yes	No
Job experience, interests, education				
Can she/he read and write? (Please refer to Tool 26 <i>First steps in the host country language</i>)			Yes	No
Competence in the host country language				
General oral competence	Beginner	Elementary	Above elementary	
Literacy in target language script	Not literate	Low	Functional	
Mother tongue(s)				
Other languages				

LANGUAGE COMPETENCES	 Spoken interaction	 Spoken production	 Listening	 Reading	 Writing