




LINK IT

Linking pre-departure and post-arrival support to facilitate the socio-economic integration for resettled refugees in the EU

Host Community Information Sessions

Curriculum United Kingdom

 **LINK IT** is an innovative project aimed at delivering better integration outcomes for Syrian refugees resettled from Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey to Germany, Portugal, Romania and the United Kingdom. The project focuses on strengthening the link between pre-departure and post-arrival integration support of refugees.

The aim of this curriculum is to enhance the capacity of receiving Local Authorities and prepare host communities by providing cultural backgrounds of Syrian refugees.



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Table of Contents

Target Groups and Objectives	1
Structure and Methodology	2
Preparation and Evaluation	3
Unit 1: Introduction	4
Welcome and introduction	4
Icebreaker activity	5
Unit 2: Intercultural Competency	5
Presentation	6
Discussion activity	10
Unit 3: Syria before the Conflict	11
Introduction to Syria presentation	11
Cultural traditions presentation.....	13
Family life presentation.....	16
Social infrastructure presentation.....	18
Video activity	19
Snowball discussion exercise.....	19
Unit 4: Experiences of Syrian Refugees Pre-Arrival	20
Presentation on conditions in the region.....	20
Presentation on resettlement and pre-departure	23
Unit 5: Cultural Adjustment and Resilience	25
Presentation on cultural adjustment	26
Letters to Rania group discussion activity	28
Presentation on resilience	28
Cultural adjustment in a family unit discussion activity.....	30
Resilience discussion activity.....	31
Evaluation	31

Target Groups and Objectives

Target participants for these sessions include:

- Local authority staff in the United Kingdom, including policymakers such as councillors, administrative staff, resettlement project coordinators, and focal points from relevant sectors including housing, social services, and community cohesion
- Civil society partners contracted by or working with local authorities to deliver resettlement and integration services
- Frontline professionals working with local authorities to deliver resettlement and integration services, including health staff, educators, ESOL providers, police, landlords, volunteer befrienders, and any other relevant parties identified at the local authority's discretion

The objective of the session programme is to further develop the capacity of local authorities in delivering strong services to, and supporting the resettlement and integration of Syrian refugees in the United Kingdom. To achieve this, general competencies enhanced as a result of receiving a session are envisioned as:

- Knowledge and critical understanding of the backgrounds of Syrian refugees, including aspects of life in Syria prior to the conflict as well as the effects of the conflict and conditions Syrian refugees face in the MENA region
- Skills related to interactions with members of varying cultures, and Syrian individuals specifically
- Attitudes and approaches to service delivery for effective and sustainable integration of Syrian refugees in the United Kingdom

Structure and Methodology

Given the diversity of local realities in the United Kingdom and backgrounds of session participants, as well as the constantly evolving nature of the Syrian conflict and conditions facing refugees, the session curriculum is designed with an adaptive approach to ensure the material is as up-to-date as possible, and tailored to individual learning needs.

To accomplish this, a pre-session questionnaire should be distributed to session participants in the weeks preceding a scheduled session, which participants are requested to complete and return to facilitators prior to the session date. Questionnaire responses inform facilitators of the roles and backgrounds of participants as well as their learning goals, empowering facilitators to add or detract from content as is suitable. In addition, activities are designed to make session content relevant to the lived experiences of participants, connecting them to themes of refugee experiences to encourage further empathy and insight.

The curriculum units are presented in a suggested sequential order, with some subsequent activities making reference to earlier units. However, the curriculum is divided into discrete units with the understanding that the order of units may be rearranged, or some units dropped, to meet the learning needs and time constraints of a given session. It is therefore also intended for facilitators to use their discretion to determine the optimal sequence of units for a given group of participants.

The general session structure is presented below:

- Unit 1: Introduction
- Unit 2: Intercultural Competency
- Break
- Unit 3: Syria before the Conflict
- Lunch
- Unit 4: Experiences of Syrian Refugees Pre-Arrival
- Break
- Unit 5: Cultural Adjustment and Resilience

The session curriculum is structured for delivery over one day. The curriculum aims to provide a balance between information provisions and interactive exercises. Given the volume of information to impart, it is recommended that frequent breaks are also considered for a full day session to support sustained engagement and allow time for participants to network and explore areas of future collaboration/coordination with each other.

The facilitator's approach should include:

- Encouraging peer learning and supporting participants in identifying their own potential solutions to challenges they have encountered in their work
- Recognizing participants as experts in their own right, and facilitating connections between existing expertise amongst participants while encouraging them to apply that expertise with a new lens of understanding
- Creating a safe and inclusive atmosphere that encourages all contributions and questions without fear of judgement

- Presenting a balanced understanding of the complexities and strengths of Syrian refugee issues, without generalizations and emphasizing the importance of individuality

Preparation and Evaluation

To make best use of in-session time, the curriculum requires pre-session participant reflection and engagement along two points. The first, as mentioned in the Structure and Methodology section, is to distribute pre-session questionnaires to all participants prior to a session. The facilitator is then to shape and refine a session's content to suit the questionnaire responses.

The second, should Unit 5 be included in a session, would be to distribute the pre-session reading and discussion guide. Participants should be requested to read the article and consider the provided discussion questions prior to the session, and come prepared to discuss the questions on the day. It should therefore be made clear that participation implies the commitment to complete each of these tasks.

Prior to a session, the facilitator will also need to coordinate with the local organizer to communicate the equipment, seating, and venue needs, and to confirm the number and profiles of participants to finalize content and handout arrangements.

At the end of the session, participants should be given anonymous evaluation forms to complete with their feedback on the facilitator, content, and programme. Completed evaluations should be collected by facilitators at the end of the session to ensure the maximum amount of feedback is received as possible. The facilitator will then review the evaluations for inclusion in programme reporting. The facilitator is also encouraged to share a summary of evaluation responses with the local organizer.

Unit 1: Introduction

Objective

This unit is designed to get participants thinking about what they hope to get out of the session. It sets a tone for the day, establishes the facilitator's expertise, and aims to create a link between participants' experiences and some of those felt by refugees to encourage empathy and understanding. The learning outcomes for this session are:

- Understand the purpose and structure of the day
- Establish a safe and friendly environment
- Encourage discussion and interaction amongst participants and with facilitators
- Understand the commonality/shared experiences of trying to adjust to a new environment

Structure and Methods

- 10-minute welcome and introduction
- 15-minute Opposite-Hand Writing icebreaker activity

Materials

- Slides, computer and projector
- Paper and pens (if participants brought none)
- Flipchart stand with paper and markers

Procedure

1.1 Welcome and introduction

Welcome participants and thank them for dedicating the time to attend the session. You may want to liaise with the local authority contact to see if they would like to open the day, particularly if pre-session questionnaires indicate some questions that are specific to local procedures and logistics.

Introduce IOM as an organization (global role, history in resettlement in the UK, and what the local office currently focuses on). Have each facilitator introduce themselves, particularly where they are from, their current role, and their experience relevant to the topic(s) being covered in the session. This can include education and work.

Once introductions are established, show a slide outlining the topics and timeline for the day to help set expectations. Thank participants for completing the pre-session questionnaire, and state that their inputs have been incorporated to the extent possible. Encourage them to ask questions through the day should they have questions or learning needs that have not been directly addressed.

1.2 Icebreaker activity

Instruct participants to take a blank sheet of paper (they can use the back of their agendas) and fold it in half. They can then unfold it again.

Ask participants to write their names, roles, and the organizations they represent on the right-hand side of the paper. If they are volunteers, they can write “volunteer” and the organization they are supporting.

Once this is done, ask participants to put their pens in their opposite hands, and on the left-hand side of the paper write the answer to three ice-breaker questions you will give them.

Once this is done, instruct each table group (sized approximately four to six people) to briefly introduce themselves using only the information written down. Clarify they will have only three to five minutes (whatever is appropriate). After introductions, ask groups to discuss how it felt to write with the opposite hand. What were the feelings, strategies, or reactions they had? Allow no more than five minutes for this.

After tables have discussed this topic, bring the small groups back to plenary and ask for volunteers to offer one of the feelings or reactions their table discussed.

Write down each response as they are offered. Once everyone who wants to has offered a feeling or reaction, link these responses to the cultural adjustment experience. Post the flipchart paper on the wall so these responses remain visible.

Unit 2: Intercultural Competency

Objective

Before exploring Syrian culture in more concrete detail, it is important to further understand the challenges of intercultural interactions, and the role which culture can play in an individual's fundamental understanding of how the world operates. This unit therefore addresses key concepts related to intercultural communication, identifies potential sources of intercultural misunderstandings, increases awareness of participants' own cultural assumptions, and reflects on the implications of these assumptions for participants' work with Syrian refugees. The learning outcomes for this unit are:

- Understand the key concepts related to intercultural communication and competency
- Be able to identify potential sources of intercultural misunderstandings
- Increase awareness of participants' own cultural elements and how this influences perspective and expectations in intercultural interactions
- Reflect on the implications of these personal preferences for participants' work with Syrian refugees

Structure and Methods

- 20-minute introductory presentation on intercultural communication
- 30-minute small-group discussion activity on idioms as a reflection of one's own cultural expectations

Materials

- Slides, computer and projector
- Paper and pens (if participants brought none)
- Example idioms for discussion exercise
- Flipchart stand with paper and markers

Procedure

2.1 Presentation¹

Present the key topics using slides and the below presentation notes. Reserve time for participants to ask questions or make comments to fully engage with the material.

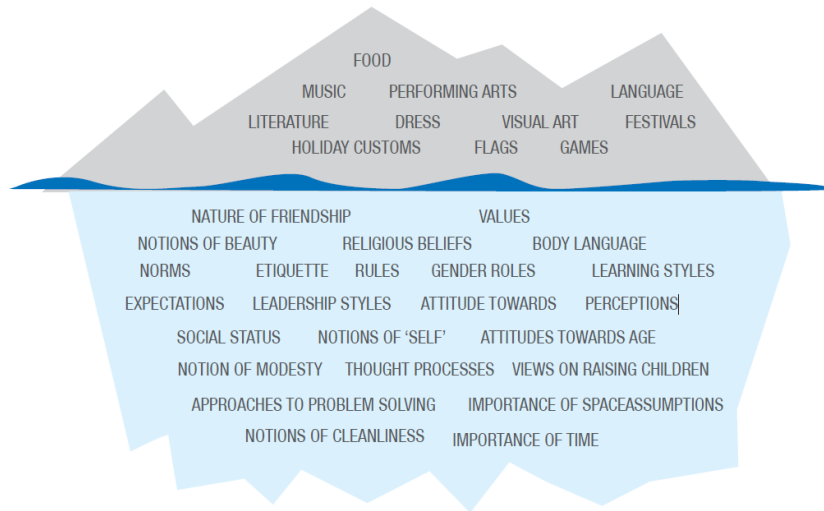
Definitions of "culture"

In order to understand the elements of successful intercultural communication, it is important to understand what constitutes a "culture", and therefore identify what an intercultural encounter actually is. There are a variety of definitions and ways in which to understand the concept of "culture", and here we have two examples of potential definitions:

- *"Knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by [a human] as a member of society."* (UNESCO)
- *"Fuzzy set of attitudes, beliefs, behavioural norms, basic assumptions and values that are shared by a group of people, and that influence each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the "meaning" of other people's behaviour."* (Spencer-Oatey, 2000)

While the multifaceted nature of culture can cause confusion in the absence of a single definition, these two understandings are not so much disagreeing with each other as they are representing different levels of culture. Both definitions combined in fact provide a more nuanced understanding of culture, which is perhaps most easily demonstrated through the "iceberg model".

¹ The following content and graphics have been adapted from Session 6 of the Admin4All training curriculum developed by IOM and the European Union.



We can find cultural differences at both the visible and invisible levels. While it is relatively easy to identify differences in language, diet, dress, and daily customs, the underlying orientations that shape our understanding of the world and how we approach situations can be substantially more difficult to identify, even for our own culture.

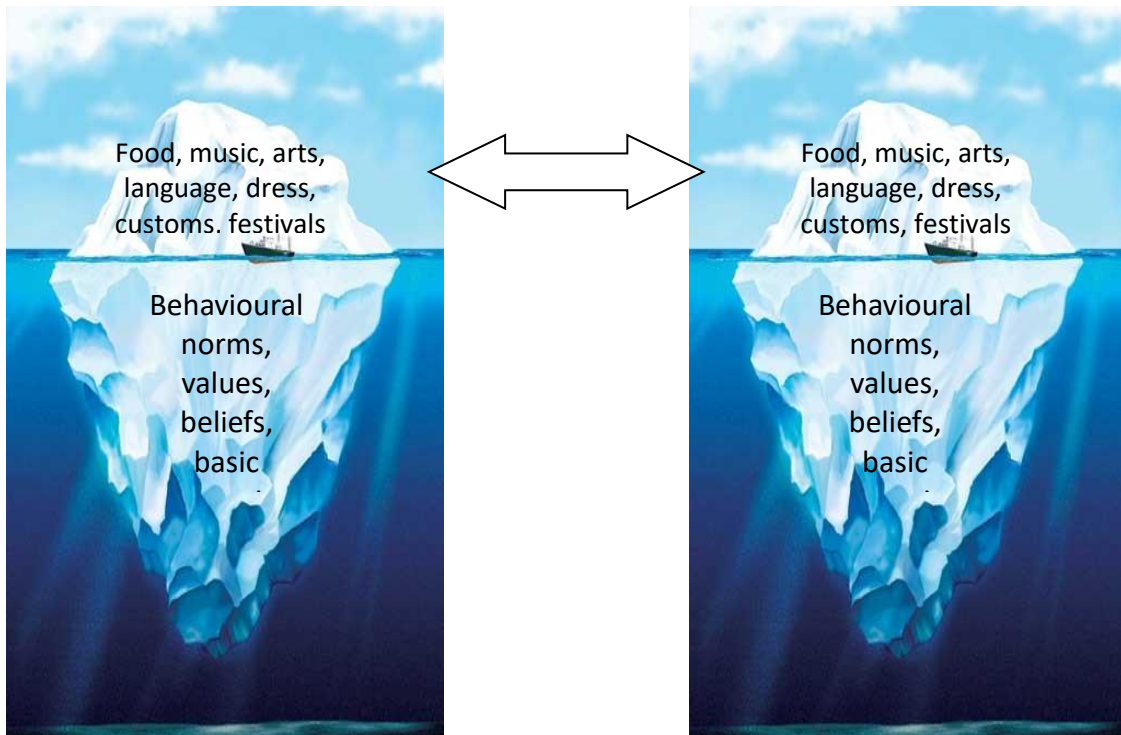
It is important to note that “culture” most accurately refers to groups, not countries. Within a single country you can find a variety of groups and subgroups, which can range in identifying factors from ethno-religious criteria to geography, profession, ideology, etc. Individuals also have different personalities that may contradict some cultural trends or expectations. An individual can also belong to several cultural groups simultaneously, and may consciously or unconsciously adapt their behaviour based on what identity or cultural affiliation best suits a specific context. Given this complexity, it is perhaps more accurate to discuss the cultural affiliations of people rather than cultures as a whole.

We cannot therefore assume that simply because an individual is from Syria they will automatically subscribe to beliefs and behaviours common to the region. In this session we will look at some of the variety of cultural groups in Syria and, while we will discuss common cultural trends, it is vital to remember that each individual carries their own experiences and ideas, and should be approached as the individual that they are.

Furthermore, cultural groups are perpetually evolving. Some members of a group may encourage change, and some may see it as a loss of “true” culture. Given the myriad and sudden changes the conflict in Syria has wrought for individual Syrians, it is important to acknowledge that attitudes and behaviour may be influenced both by conditions in Syria before the conflict, and the series of events since the conflict started.

Intercultural encounters

An intercultural encounter takes place when people who either perceive themselves or are perceived by others as having different cultural affiliations interact.



Given how easy it is to identify visible differences, many intercultural encounters tend to focus on those visible elements. However, focusing on these factors alone will inevitably limit our understanding of the expectations and behaviours of members of another culture. Yet it can be difficult to identify and understand the more hidden elements, despite the highly important role they play.

Models to understand intercultural interactions have been evolving since the 1960s, and today there are a number of different models seeking to unpack these hidden elements. One popular characteristic across a number of models looks at cultural dimensions, which provide spectrums for preferred sets of behaviours within a cultural group. Identified dimensions differ across models, but each provides a framework for understanding what elements of difference can exist between cultures. It is therefore important to see dimensions not as labels, but as spectrums of potential beliefs or behaviors, with different cultural groups falling anywhere along this continuum².

² The dimensions listed in this unit are a combination of two models, one by Dr. Geert Hofstede and the other by Dr. Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner.

Low Context ←—————→ High Context

How does communication work?

Low Power Distance ←—————→ High Power Distance

What role does hierarchy play?

Individualism ←—————→ Communitarianism

How are interests and decision-making oriented?

Low Uncertainty Avoidance ←—————→ High Uncertainty Avoidance

How important are structures and conventions?

Pragmatic ←—————→ Normative

How are values oriented?

Achievement ←—————→ Ascription

Is status based on performance or social category?

Sequential Time ←—————→ Synchronic Time

How is society's understanding of time structured?

Neutral ←—————→ Emotional

How do people express emotion?

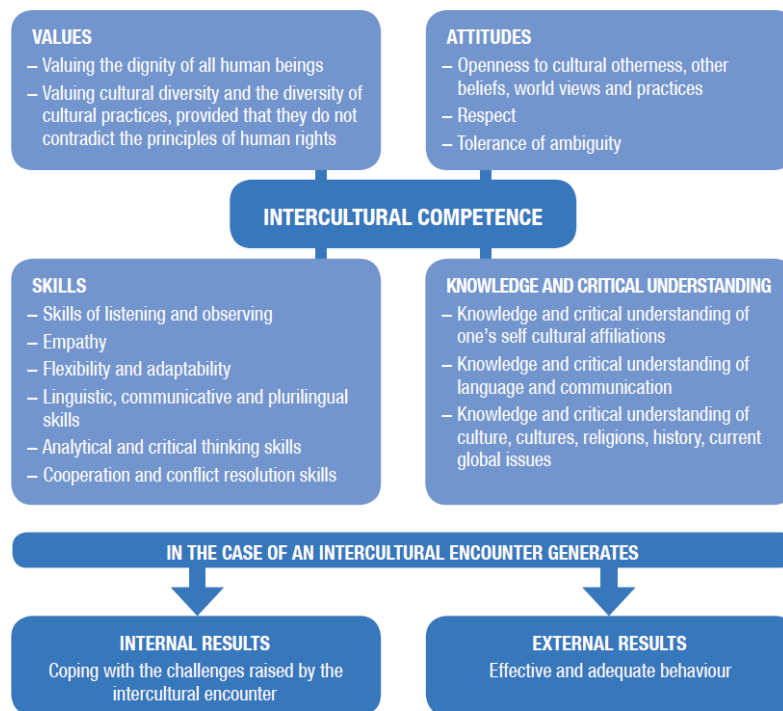
Internal Control ←—————→ External Control

Do we control or are we controlled by our environment?

Intercultural competence

Intercultural competence can be defined as “the ability to mobilize and deploy relevant values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding in order to respond appropriately and

effectively to the demands, challenges and opportunities that are presented by intercultural encounters”³. So while cultural dimension can be an immensely helpful tool in understanding cultural perspectives different from our own, it is not enough on its own to translate into meaningful intercultural interactions. Knowledge is but one pillar of intercultural competence, with values, skills, and attitudes playing equally important roles, as demonstrated in the below Admin4All graphic based on the work of the Council of Europe:



Although each element of this model deserves in-depth exploration, this session is focused on building knowledge and critical understanding of the backgrounds and experiences of Syrian refugees. However, it is important to note the other elements of intercultural competence and to emphasize that you can build relevant skills, attitudes, and values to help increase your intercultural competency.

2.2 Discussion activity

Once the presentation has finished, divide participants into groups of five. Ask each group to write down five common idioms from their own culture. Provide an example idiom to help initiate brainstorming.

Once each group has written down some idioms (no more than five minutes), give groups ten minutes to discuss the cultural dimensions the idioms reflect. Discuss the implications of the example idiom as a demonstration.

After groups have discussed their idioms, invite each group to present one of their idioms and what cultural dimension it reflects. Write them down on the flipchart for all to see.

³ Admin4All Session 6 handout.

Ask participants to hold these idioms and identified cultural dimensions in their minds as we go through information about Syrian cultures, backgrounds, and customs. Can they identify any similarities/differences in cultural dimensions, and potential misunderstandings that may arise from any differences?

Unit 3: Syria before the Conflict

Objective

This unit provides a brief overview of life in Syria before the conflict started. Particular emphasis should be given to conditions in Syria that inform expectations amongst many Syrians in the UK, particularly if differences between the UK and Syria are causing frustrations or misunderstandings. The learning outcomes for this session are:

- Understand the lived experiences of Syrians and identify how this informs their expectations and understanding of life in a resettlement country
- Identify cultural aspects of Syria that present opportunities for engagement in the resettlement country (food, entertainment, interests)
- Reflect on implications for cultural misunderstandings/integration challenges in the resettlement country and explore how to anticipate/mitigate these challenges

Structure and Methods

- 20-minute introduction to Syria
- 30-minute presentation on cultural traditions
- 20-minute presentation on family life
- 20-minute presentation on social infrastructure
- 10-minute activity featuring videos of urban and rural street scenes, and brief discussion
- 30-minute snowball discussion exercise

Materials

- Slides, computer and projector
- Handout on Syrian geography, history, and cultural groups
- Speakers
- Two video clips of urban and rural street scenes

Procedure

3.1 Introduction to Syria presentation

Present the key topics using slides and the below presentation notes. Pre-session questionnaire results may necessitate that the amount of time and detail spent on individual topics either increases or decreases based on participant learning needs. The following notes represent common,

core topics, but may be adjusted to suit specific session needs. Reserve time for participants to ask questions or make comments to fully engage with the material.

Introductory overview

Prior to the conflict, Syria was a fairly developed country with relatively strong employment. Across the Arab world, Syrians were known for their skills in hospitality and construction. There is also a strong entrepreneurial class in Syria, with many small or family businesses. In addition, there was a professional class of doctors, engineers, chemists, professors, journalists, etc.

Syria is a multicultural, multi-religious country. In terms of demographics, 87% of the population are Muslim, and of that, 74% are specifically Sunni Muslim, with the remainder coming from other interpretations such as Shiite. About 10% of the population are Christian, and the remaining 3% coming from other religions including Judaism, Druze, and Yazidi⁴.

Health care and education are available for free or at little cost in Syria. However, due to historic neglect of rural areas in Syria, the degree to which services can be accessed can differ between communities, as do some aspects of daily life. This divide between rural and urban communities is a theme we will see throughout this section.

Health System

The health system in Syria has seen marked improvements since the 1970s. Cities may have state-of-the-art facilities, while those living in rural communities may have to travel quite some distance to access a clinic.

About 90% of the medication used in Syria was produced in Syria, mainly in facilities around Damascus, Aleppo, and Homs⁵, which is important to keep in mind when assessing how things have changed since the start of the conflict.

When it comes to expectations of health care systems, many Syrians are used to same-day appointments, fairly direct access to specialists, and direct access to many pharmaceuticals where they can simply describe their symptoms to a pharmacist and receive antibiotics without a prescription. Mental health still carries a stigma in Syria, which is reflected to a certain extent in the infrastructure around mental health care in Syria. It is therefore not common to seek help for issues such as depression or anxiety.

Infant and early childcare in Syria relies strongly on family support. Pregnant women and new born babies are looked after by mothers, mothers-in-law, sisters, or neighbours. As a result, refugee families who have become separated from their social networks due to displacement can face particular struggles.

Education

⁴ CIA World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sy.html>

⁵ WHO, "Syrian Arab Republic experiencing severe shortages in medicines and pharmaceutical products", 8 August 2012, <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/syrian-arab-republic-experiencing-severe-shortages-medicines-and>

As previously stated, public education is available for free in Syria. Core education is divided into 3 levels: 6 years for primary school, 3 years for lower secondary school, and 3 years for upper secondary school, and is compulsory to the 9th grade.

However, despite compulsory attendance regulations, there are those Syrians who have reported receiving little to no formal education. Some have also been preliterate in their native language as well.

Most classes in primary school are mixed-gender. It is common for classes to become single-gendered toward lower secondary school. Uniforms are mandatory in schools, although since the conflict started there has been less focus on uniforms and more on maintaining student attendance.

As Arabic is the official language of Syria, instruction is in Arabic, although English is taught starting in primary school. French and Russian may also be offered as additional foreign language.

Religious classes are mandatory in Syria, but this is based on one's religion. It is not typical to be required to attend a religious class that is not one's own religion, meaning that the world religions component of the British curriculum has presented a surprise for many Syrian families.

While the degree to which education is prioritized does of course differ from family to family, there can be geographic trends. It is common in rural communities for children to leave school earlier to help contribute to the family business or finances. In cities it is often more common to prioritize university. In terms of women attending university, it depends on one's family.

Learning a Foreign Language

It is important to note that foreign languages are often taught through rote memorization and in Arabic. As such, the immersive style in which ESOL is taught in the UK can be intimidating for some Syrians, which can in turn affect attendance if participants feel discouraged.

Geography, History, and Cultural Groups

For more information on the geography and history of Syria, as well as further information on specific cultural groups that have resettled to the UK, refer participants to the handout. It is important to emphasize that while we may assume Syria is a homogenous society, the reality is that it is quite multicultural, and we should avoid assuming the cultural and religious needs of an individual before they arrive to the UK and are able to express their own preferences.

3.2 Cultural traditions presentation

Present the key topics using slides and the below presentation notes. Pre-session questionnaire results may necessitate that the amount of time and detail spent on individual topics either increases or decreases based on participant learning needs. The following notes represent common, core topics, but may be adjusted to suit specific session needs. Reserve time for participants to ask questions or make comments to fully engage with the material.

Cultural diversity

As Syria is a diverse and multicultural society, there are a variety of different traditions, foods, clothing, and preferred ways of interacting with one another. What will be discussed in this presentation are common trends to many Syrian cultural affiliations, but it is important to always keep in mind that these are not hard and fast rules, and that preferences and routines can vary from group to group, as well as individual to individual.

Cuisine

Syrian hospitality is commonly very welcoming and centres around sharing food. When visiting someone's house, you will often be given the equivalent of a meal, rather than just tea and biscuits. It is polite to eat at least some food. When visiting a restaurant, it is not seen as polite to split the bill. Rather, individuals will often fight over who will pay the bill.

Common meals can vary from place to place within Syria, but in general Syrian cuisine is known for its use of spices. Meals typically involve quite a few vegetables and fruits, as well as grains like rice and bulgur wheat. All different types of meat are also eaten, although pork is not common. For many Syrians, having halal options is important. Meals are often finished with tea and fruit.

Common drinks include tea, Arabic coffee (with thick grounds, which people may add sugar to), and yoghurt drinks, including ayran (yoghurt mixed with water and salt). Fizzy drinks are quite popular with adults and children alike. It is legal to consume alcohol in Syria, although drinking in public can be stigmatized. Smoking is common in Syria, particularly after meals. Both men and women smoke, although it can be more common amongst men.

Common dishes

- Baba ghanoush
- Tabouleh
- Fatayer/manaeesh
- Fattoush
- Baklava
- Halaweh al-jibn
- Bouza
- Qatayef

Holidays and celebrations

Below is a list of holidays in Syria. It is important to note that not all official religious holidays are Muslim, underscoring the pluralist nature of Syria before the conflict.

- Eid al-Fitr
- Eid al-Adha
- Independence Day
- 2 Easters

- Christmas
- New Year
- Mouloud
- Mother's Day/Newroz 21 March
- Valentine's Day
- Birthdays

Arabic phrases

It can be helpful to learn at least a few basic Arabic phrases to help build good will. For those interested in learning, Modern Standard Arabic is a good option, as it is fairly close to Syrian Arabic. To learn 20 basic phrases, participants can visit:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/other/arabic/guide/phrases.shtml>. Participants can click on the blue buttons to hear a native speaker pronounce each phrase.

Communication

In Syrian communication, it is generally polite to decline an offer the first few times it is given, and then accept. It is therefore common for people to wait to be offered several times before indicating their true desire, and for the offering party to continue to make the offer several times.

With officials, many Syrians can be quite direct, particularly when it comes to pursuing someone's perceived rights and entitlements. This is in part due to issues of corruption in Syria, where many will not automatically trust that the answers and options they are being given are true and transparent. In addition, it can be a human (not just Syrian) survival technique to ask as many people for help as possible in times of need. As a result, many Syrian refugees may bring this survival technique with them to the UK, and ask multiple people for help until they get the answer they feel they need. It is therefore very important for managing expectations and fostering trust with officials for everyone, including volunteers, to coordinate with each other in addressing needs.

When arranging interpreters, it is always important to know what language an individual is most comfortable in, especially when discussing sensitive matters. While the majority will likely be comfortable with Arabic, some may have alternative language needs. For those who speak Arabic, interpreters who speak the Levantine dialect would be best.

Clothing

In Syria, you can see a wide range of different clothing, differing from one place to another, one cultural group to another, or from person to person.

For women, some will wear a long jelbab or manto. These are commonly worn with the hijab (Muslim religious headscarf). This type of dress is quite common in rural communities and/or conservative communities.

Many other women might wear the hijab, but pair it with a tailored top and skirts or trousers, instead of the jellaba. Other women may dress in a way typical to many Western communities. It is important to note that not all Muslim women wear the hijab, and that not all women who wear the hijab are strict in their religious practices.

In some old city centres like in Aleppo and Damascus, some women may wear the melaya, which is a long black robe covering the entire body, while giving the option to show one's face, and can be worn by both Muslim and Christian women. It is distinct from the niqab, which is not terribly common in Syria.

For men, traditional clothing includes the jalabiya, which is a long loose robe covering the arms to the wrist and legs to the ankles. They colours may vary depending on the season, with white common in the summer and brown more common in the winter. Today, it is worn as daily wear most commonly by older men in the countryside, with many younger men and men in urban communities wearing typical Western wear. However, some men may choose to wear it for Friday prayer.

Syrian art

There are a variety of folk and traditional dances across Syria, which are common in celebrations, parties, and weddings. Men and women may dance in separate groups, or together, depending on the comfort and preferences of the group involved.

Syria also has a proud history of poets who have been influential in modern Arabic literature. Syrians are also well known for their handicrafts, with many of these products exported abroad. Syrian television drama is highly renowned. Singing is also a very popular pastime, and there are a range of famous Syrian singers using traditional and/or modern pop influences.

Customs

How Syrians interact between genders can depend on one's cultural community, religious beliefs, and what they grew up with. Depending on someone's religious background, men and women may be uncomfortable making eye contact with each other, whereas many other Syrian men and women will feel very comfortable making eye contact.

Some men and women may be uncomfortable shaking hands between genders, while others are entirely fine with shaking hands with the opposite gender. Not shaking hands between genders is therefore not meant as offence. Hugs between genders can also depend on the individual, with some feeling comfortable, and others feeling it might only be appropriate if the woman is older/man younger.

Some gatherings and celebrations like weddings may separate based on the preferences of the attendees, while others may be comfortable with the men and women staying in the same space.

3.3 Family life presentation

Present the key topics using slides and the below presentation notes. Pre-session questionnaire results may necessitate that the amount of time and detail spent on individual topics either

increases or decreases based on participant learning needs. The following notes represent common, core topics, but may be adjusted to suit specific session needs. Reserve time for participants to ask questions or make comments to fully engage with the material.

Family structure

The nuclear family in Syria is commonly understood to consist of a married man and woman, with or without children. However, there may be single parents. Divorce is legal in Syria, although it does still carry a social stigma. It is also legal to have more up to four wives, although this is less common in Syria than some other predominantly Muslim countries.

Homosexuality is not only taboo in Syria, but illegal⁶. Many Syrian families may therefore face some culture shock when encountering attitudes and rights toward LGBT communities in the UK. More importantly, however, there may be LGBT members of the Syrian community who face particular challenges, feel isolated, and/or may be in need of extra support.

Arranged marriages and marriages between cousins are still fairly common across Syria. Sexual relationships outside marriage are generally not acceptable.

Family roles

Women are generally responsible for housework, whether they are a housewife or working outside the home. In some communities it may be common for women to be housewives, while in others whether or not a woman works outside the home may depend on what makes economic sense for the family, and/or her own career goals.

Fathers are typically considered the main decision-maker for the family; however, it is perhaps most accurate to think of them as public-facing figureheads for the family. Both older brothers and sisters care for younger siblings. It is quite common for Syrian families to have an expectation of community caretaking for children, where parents do not necessarily keep an eye on their children at all times, with the expectation that all in the community will be looking out for the child's wellbeing.

Family life

It is common to have several generations of a family living in the same household.

Physical or corporal punishment as a form of discipline can be fairly common in Syria. While there are general assault laws in Syria, there are no domestic violence laws specifically⁷, and as a result there is not a robust legal mechanism around these issues.

Disabilities, both physical and mental, can still carry a stigma in Syrian communities. As a result, disabled family members may be kept more private and within the home.

⁶ Reid, Graeme, "The Double Threat for Gay Men in Syria", 28 April 2014, Washington Post. Accessed on Human Rights Watch website 5 June 2018.

⁷ United Nations Children's Fund, *Syria: MENA Gender Equality Profile*, October 2011.

Finally, keeping pets is not terribly common in Syria, and as a result the cats and dogs many Syrians may have previously encountered would likely have been feral, and therefore legitimately dangerous. There is thus likely to be a genuine fear of pets amongst many Syrians.

3.4 Social infrastructure presentation

Present the key topics using slides and the below presentation notes. Pre-session questionnaire results may necessitate that the amount of time and detail spent on individual topics either increases or decreases based on participant learning needs. The following notes represent common, core topics, but may be adjusted to suit specific session needs. Reserve time for participants to ask questions or make comments to fully engage with the material.

Housing

Some differences in common housing features between British and Syrian households include having a hose or bidet to wash with after using the toilet. This is quite common in Syria, and many families will be surprised by British bathrooms not having this feature. Some may therefore request adaptations in available, or may adapt over time.

Some families may also be used to single-level housing, and may be surprised by stairs present in the household. Stairs can particularly cause concern for those with young children. However, over time many do adjust to this.

It is polite when visiting a home to remove one's shoes, particularly if a family observes Muslim prayer, which often takes place on the floor.

Some families may also not feel comfortable receiving a male visitor if the male head of household is not present. Other families may be completely comfortable receiving male visitors in such circumstances.

Employment

The formal job-search process involving applications and interviews which is common in Western countries is not widespread in Syria. Many Syrians instead rely on personal networks to locate work. Many are accustomed to receiving their salaries on a weekly rather than monthly basis. Some Syrians may not have had to pay tax previously. Syrians are typically used to taking several breaks throughout the day. In general, Syrian workplaces follow a more hierarchical structure than is typical in the UK. Transferring qualifications to the UK has been a challenge for many Syrians. Highly skilled Syrians may therefore struggle to re-enter their professions.

Social support

Social services as they are commonly understood in the UK do not really exist in Syria. Instead, many would be used to relying on extended family or community networks for help when needed. As refugees, however, these networks have been disrupted, and many Syrians may therefore expect government services to fill this sudden gap.

Law enforcement

Due to issues of corruption in Syria, even prior to the conflict police were not necessarily seen by many Syrians as a source of help or protection. The conflict helped exacerbate this perception, as law enforcement was accused by some of involvement in disappearances. Many Syrian refugees are therefore likely to distrust police, and it is important to have strategies in place for police to proactively explain their role in the community and engage these communities.

3.5 Video activity

Screen video clips of urban and rural street scenes. Once the videos have been shown, ask participants to share in plenary what struck them from the videos. Follow up each point with any further explanations of common behaviour in Syria, and/or implications for Syrian expectations in the UK.

3.6 Snowball discussion exercise

This exercise is designed to help participants connect the information they have received about Syrian life with the cultural dimensions discussed in Unit 2. By using the cultural dimensions to reflect on the information they have received about Syria, participants will be encouraged to deepen their understanding of the “invisible” facets of the cultural groups they work with, and how this understanding can better inform their work.

To start the exercise, ask participants to choose one partner from a different table than the one they are sitting at. This will encourage interaction with a broader pool of participants. Once each participant has chosen a partner, inform them they will have 5-10 minutes to discuss the following:

“Using the information about Syria shared in the presentations, and your own culture’s characteristics as explored in Unit 2, identify potential differences in cultural dimensions between Syrian and British communities. What misunderstandings might you anticipate encountering, or have already encountered based on these differences?”

Encourage participants to reflect on their own culture’s facets as expressed in the idioms analysed in the group discussion activity of Unit 2. Are there any differences with what they have learned of Syrian cultural groups? If needed, clarify that given time constraints they may not necessarily discuss each cultural dimension. They can focus on the dimensions that most immediately strike them or seem most relevant to their work or interactions with Syrian refugees.

Once the pairs have discussed the first question, ask each pair to join another pair so their group totals four. It does not matter if the pairs are currently sitting at the same table or a different table. Once each group has been formed, explain they will have 10 minutes to discuss the following:

“Keeping in mind the intercultural competence model and your own cultural assumptions explored in Unit 2, how might these insights into the cultural dimensions of Syrian communities further inform or change the ways in which you respond to anticipated or previously encountered challenges?”

After groups are given time to discuss this second question, bring all the groups back to the plenary to share some of their discussions and/or experiences. Given the limited time for this exercise, it may not be possible for each group to share their discussions, so you can ask for volunteers to share something they found particularly interesting. You can also encourage participants to continue their discussions over the next break. Close out the discussion by mentioning that not every cultural dimension will even necessarily be reflected in the information we received today, but by practicing how to use them to reflect on potential sources of misunderstandings, they can still be used in future to nuance interactions with Syrian cultural groups.

Unit 4: Experiences of Syrian Refugees Pre-Arrival

Objective

This unit is designed to show how many Syrians have been affected by the conflict, common experiences as refugees prior to resettlement, and experiences through the resettlement process itself. Particular emphasis should be given to trends that can indicate the types of vulnerabilities and challenges many Syrian refugees may encounter as a result of these experiences. The learning outcomes for this unit are:

- Understand some of the causes of displacement
- Understand the conditions refugees may have faced and the impact on their vulnerabilities/needs
- Understand the importance and nature of resettlement
- Understand the pre-departure process to better inform post-arrival support and strengthen the integration continuum

Structure and Methods

- 20-minute presentation on conditions in the region
- 15-minute activity featuring pictures and videos of living situations in the region, and brief discussion
- 20-minute presentation on pre-departure services

Materials

- Slides, computer and projector
- Speakers
- Internet connection to stream video clips
- Three video clips of living conditions in a camp, informal settlement, and urban setting

Procedure

4.1 Presentation on conditions in the region

Present the key topics using slides and the below presentation notes. Pre-session questionnaire results may necessitate that the amount of time and detail spent on individual topics either increases or decreases based on participant learning needs. The following notes represent common,

core topics, but may be adjusted to suit specific session needs. Statistics should be updated by facilitators regularly to reflect changes in the situation. Reserve time for participants to ask questions or make comments to fully engage with the material.

Conditions in Syria

The conflict in Syria began in 2011. As of February 2016, over 470,000 people have lost their lives⁸, 5.6 million have fled the country and registered as refugees⁹, and an additional 13.1 million people within Syria require humanitarian assistance¹⁰. Water and electrical supplies have been interrupted, and housing stock destroyed.

As in many conflicts, health facilities have unfortunately been targets in themselves. There has also been a drastic shortage of medicine, and vaccination programmes have also been disrupted.

In addition, schools and the education system have been greatly affected by the conflict, with some schools damaged, destroyed, or repurposed. In some areas, schools are under additional pressure to accommodate an influx of displaced children, requiring schools to work on a double-shift system of morning and afternoon classes to absorb the increased number of students¹¹.

Increases in unemployment and poverty have also been a major impact of the conflict. In addition to all of these stressors, some may have experienced bombings, chemical attacks, loss of loved ones, and sexual violence.

Concentration of refugee movements

In recent years, when the media in western countries covers Syrian refugees it has often been with a focus on the numbers coming under their own steam to seek asylum in European countries. It is therefore worth noting that the majority of Syrian refugees are in fact located in countries neighbouring Syria.

It is in light of this that we can see the importance of resettlement. It provides opportunities to some of the most vulnerable refugees in the region who may otherwise have very limited recourse for support. Resettlement is also an important sign of committing to share responsibility for refugees with those countries on the frontline of the crisis.

Conditions in neighbouring countries

The neighbouring countries that Syrians are being resettled from when coming to the UK are Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, Turkey, and Egypt.

⁸ Human Rights Watch, "Syria: Events of 2016", <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/syria>

⁹ UNHCR, 31 May 2018, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria>

¹⁰ UNOCHA, *2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview: Syrian Arab Republic*, November 2017

¹¹ Theirworld, "Education in Syria: battling against school attacks, lost teachers and book shortages", 10 August 2017, <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/education-syria-battling-against-school-attacks-lost-teachers-and-book>

When discussing the kinds of conditions refugees may encounter in these areas, there are a few different factors at play.

Individual countries are affected differently by the refugees they are receiving. As a result, the ways in which each country responds to refugees can vary, particularly in terms of the rights and entitlements they may afford refugees.

A second factor is the specific environment a refugee is living in. The vast majority are living in a variety of situations dispersed throughout urban, peri-urban, and rural communities. Living outside camps can help Syrian refugees live more anonymously and access a greater range of opportunities. However, this can also mean more difficulties in accessing some services depending on what is available.

An additional factor is the individual resources a refugee has at their disposal.

As a result of these factors, the conditions refugees encounter can range from person to person. However, we can speak to some general trends and challenges facing many refugees in the region.

Common challenges

Access to legal employment is a challenge for many Syrian refugees. While it is often possible to apply for a work permit as a Syrian refugee, in some countries it is prohibitively costly to do so. Throughout the region, many Syrians are resorting to working illegally or begging on the streets, opening them up to exploitation. In some cases, children may also need to work to help support the family, detracting from their education and opening them up to exploitation as well. Poverty is a major issue for many Syrian refugee families.

As a result of poverty, adequate shelter is also a problem for many. While some may be able to rent adequate accommodation, many Syrian refugees must deal with issues of overcrowding, squatting in unfinished buildings, repurposing buildings into accommodation, or offering services in exchange for housing. Accompanying this problem are issues with accessing appropriate water and sanitation facilities, which can also result in health problems. Sharing of resources can also heighten tensions with local communities, as in Jordan where a severe drought has lasted over the past several years.

While many countries offer free access to education, there are still significant barriers for many Syrian children in attending school, either because of limited openings, issues with transportation, bullying from other children, or the need for children to work for the whole family to survive. Some health services are also available for free, although in some countries this does not extend to chronic treatment needs (such as dialysis), and costs for such care are impossible to manage by many families. There have also been reports of Syrians being denied care, either because a facility is unaware of their responsibilities to refugees, or because of discrimination.

Women and girls

It is important to note the particular vulnerabilities facing many women and girls. Sexual violence may have been a reason some fled the situation in Syria, but this is also a risk that continues for many as refugees in a neighbouring country. As a result, many have adopted coping strategies to try

to limit such risks. Some families may also consider obtaining a husband for unmarried daughters as a form of protection, as well as an influx of much-needed financial relief. As a result, there has been an increase in incidents of early or forced marriages amongst Syrian refugee communities¹².

Specific needs

A report by HelpAge International and Handicap International found that approximately 30% of Syrian refugees in the MENA region have at least one kind of specific need, which they define as an impairment, chronic disease, or injury. Of this number, about one third have more than one specific need, and the elderly are disproportionately affected, with 77% of those 65 years or older suffering from a specific need. In addition, those who have a specific need are twice as likely to report signs of psychological distress¹³. This report indicates the number of complex needs amongst the Syrian refugee population, and underlines the importance of resettlement as an option for meeting the needs of those with particular vulnerabilities.

Living situations

Show pictures of different living situations, i.e. displacement within Syria, camps, informal settlements, and urban living conditions.

Allow about five minutes after the viewings for participants to share their reactions. Close this discussion by noting that in the videos, people spoke of different hopes for the future.

4.2 Presentation on resettlement and pre-departure

Refugee and resettlement definitions

There is a specific legal definition of “refugee” that is distinct from how the term is commonly used in informal conversations. While the public may often understand a refugee as someone who has been forced to flee due to war, persecution, or natural disasters, the legal definition of a refugee as set out in the 1951 Refugee Convention is someone who:

*"owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it."*¹⁴

¹² UNFPA, 8 February 2017, “New study finds child marriage rising amongst most vulnerable Syrian refugees”, <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2017/02/new-study-finds-child-marriage-rising-among-vulnerable-syrian-refugees/>

¹³ Handicap International & HelpAge International, 9 April 2014, “Hidden Victims of the Syrian crisis: disabled, injured and older refugees”, <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/hidden-victims-syrian-crisis-disabled-injured-and-older-refugees>

¹⁴ Article 1(A)(2) of the 1951 Refugee Convention as amended by its 1967 Protocol, <https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/114761/refugee-definition>

A refugee therefore must be outside their country of origin or nationality, and is unable to return home due to fear of persecution for the above reasons. The fact that a refugee must have crossed an international border is why refugees under the resettlement programme are being resettled from neighbouring countries in the region, rather than from Syria directly.

When talking about refugee displacement, there are three recognized “durable solutions”. The first is voluntary repatriation, meaning a refugee returns to their country of origin once it is safe to do so. The second is local integration, which is when a refugee settles down in their country of first refuge. The third is resettlement, which is when a third country offers legal and physical protection to a refugee.

Resettlement is intended for the most vulnerable refugees. UNHCR therefore considers seven vulnerability criteria when assessing if resettlement is appropriate for a specific case. A resettled individual may fit one or more of these vulnerability criteria, and there is no hierarchy to the criteria.

Pre-departure processes

Once a case is provisionally accepted for resettlement to the UK, the case is referred to IOM for pre-departure services. These services include migrant health assessments, movement services, and pre-departure orientation. IOM has screening locations across the Middle East and Africa, and the process begins with a pre-examination information session, in which doctors explain to individuals what will be included in the examination process. Screenings include radiological and laboratory diagnostics, including chest x-rays to screen for tuberculosis.

As many refugees have fled without their medical records, IOM doctors also sit with individuals to record their medical history. Vital signs are also measured, and vaccinations are made up-to-date. IOM also undertakes a general physical with each individual, which are to ensure it is safe for that individual to travel. Should they have a condition that would make it unsafe to travel, that condition would need to be stabilized before they could depart for the UK. For example, if an individual had a communicable disease it would need to be treated before travel. Physicals also flag health concerns for further follow-up upon arrival in the UK. IOM collects assessment data and shares it electronically with the Home Office, which then shares it with the relevant resettlement coordinators in the UK.

What is included in the health assessments is set out in the Health Protocol, which is established by Public Health England. The Health Protocol is available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-entry-health-assessments-guidance-for-uk-refugees>.

In terms of movement services, IOM helps refugees apply for and collect visas and other important travel documents. IOM ensures refugees have their important documents with them throughout the journey provided in IOM bags. IOM also arranges travel (which can include commercial and charter flights), as well as accommodation if there is a long stopover. In terms of luggage allowances, IOM has different agreements with various commercial airlines, but refugees could potentially be allowed twice the amount of luggage as a typical passenger. It is therefore helpful to incorporate this into

airport pick-up planning, although some have also arrived simply with a backpack because it is all they own.

IOM also sends escorts to accompany every group coming to the UK through resettlement. Escorts strive to ease the journey as much as possible through, for example, helping individuals go through airport security and border control, ensuring refugees eat and stay hydrated, answer questions about the journey, and connect refugees with resettlement partners in the UK upon arrival. In cases of acute medical needs, medical escorts are provided to address any health concerns that arrive en route.

The final service is the provision of pre-departure orientation for refugees. The intent of this orientation is to build a foundation for longer term integration by providing basic information about the journey and raise awareness about what awaits them in the UK to set realistic expectations about their resettlement and the support they will receive.

Given the amount of information to convey in a relatively short amount of time, and the fact that an individual's memory and concentration can be affected by factors such as anxiety due to the uncertainty and circumstances in their life, it is not expected for people to remember every detail covered. Rather, pre-departure orientation focuses on key messages set by the Home Office, and looks at building skills and attitudes to help with the integration process.

IOM strives to use facilitators who are multilingual and multicultural to help bridge gaps in understanding, and sessions are built to be as participatory as possible to aid in information retention.

Unit 5: Cultural Adjustment and Resilience

Objective

This unit is designed to get participants thinking about their own experiences with transition and adjusting to a new environment. By being able to empathize with these experiences, this unit seeks to create enhanced understanding of the source of some emotional expressions of adjusting to a new culture, and how to support individuals through the process of adjustment. The learning outcomes for this session are:

- Understand the stress and symptoms of culture shock and its effects on a person's attitude and wellbeing
- Be able to empathize from personal experience
- Understand the stages of cultural adjustment
- Understand supports and challenges in adjusting to a new environment
- Understand resilience and how support workers can encourage it amongst refugees as they work to adjust to a new environment
- Understand how family dynamics can be upset as individuals adjust at different paces: explore who benefits, who is demoralized, and how to support each individual within this dynamic

Structure and Methods

- 10-minute presentation on cultural adjustment
- 20-minute Letters to Rania group discussion activity
- 10-minute presentation on resilience
- 50-minute cultural adjustment in a family unit group and plenary discussion activity
- 40-minute resilience group and plenary discussion activity

Materials

- Slides, computer and projector
- Flipchart paper with notes from Opposite-Hand Writing icebreaker activity at beginning of the day
- Letters to Rania activity handout
- Paper and pens (if participants brought none)
- Pre-session distribution of link to NY Times Article “Wonder and Worry as a Syrian Child Transforms” and discussion guide handout
- Group discussion table handouts for “Wonder and Worry as a Syrian Child Transforms” for distribution in the session

Procedure

5.1 Presentation on cultural adjustment

Culture shock:

“A state of bewilderment and distress experienced by an individual who is suddenly exposed to a new, strange, of foreign social and cultural environment.”¹⁵

While such a definition is technically correct, there are a couple of different issues to address. The first is that this definition gives a limited set of symptoms and can give the impression that the person experiencing culture shock understands what is happening to them. However, the experience is often gradual and nuanced, and can be difficult for someone to recognize the source of their difficulties, even for themselves. It can therefore be more helpful to think of culture shock as the stress of transition, but a transition that is affecting every part of someone’s life at the same time¹⁶.

As we have seen from Unit 2, as each individual grows up within a society, they develop a set of tools and a framework for understanding the various situations they encounter, and for determining

¹⁵ From Dictionary.com

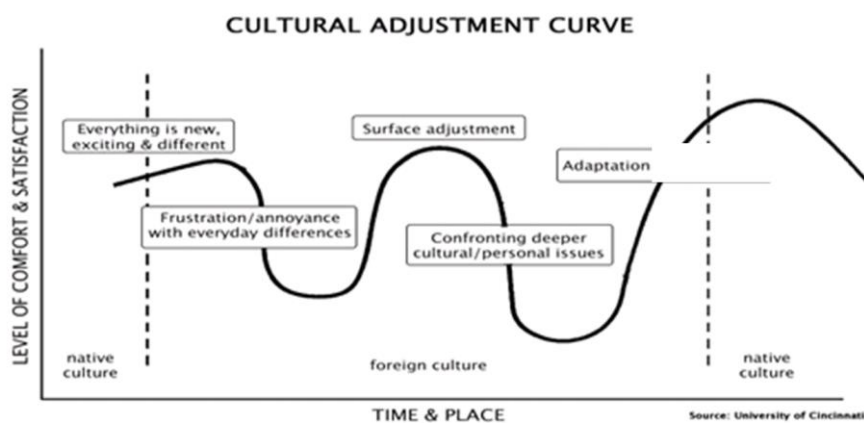
¹⁶ Richey, Michael, “JET [Japan Exchange and Teaching] Programme Culture Shock: Culture shock can be tough, but understanding it doesn’t have to be”, 23 June 2015, <https://www.tofugu.com/japan/culture-shock-in-japan-on-the-jet-program/>

how best to respond to that situation. Once in a new cultural environment, however, those cultural dimensions don't always work as well as they used to.

Transition is something we have all experienced in our lives, whether we've lived in a different country or not: going to university, starting a new job, or moving to a new town¹⁷. A person can have several symptoms at the same time, symptoms can come in cycles, and a pattern can develop over time. Yet without knowing or understanding culture shock, the person experiencing it may have a difficult time understanding where their emotions and reactions are coming from.

Culture shock, however, is the description for the difficulties of a larger cultural adjustment process. There can be positive emotions in adjusting to a new culture as well, which we will see in the below model.

When discussing cultural adjustment, many use the "U model", as the graph draws the letter "u" with one major dip in the middle. However, the "W model" presented below may offer a more nuanced framework for understanding cultural adjustment, as it acknowledges the second major dip that many may experience. The below graph is a potential method for understanding cultural adjustment, but should not be used prescriptively, as individual means of adjusting always varies.



There are five basic stages in the W Model.

- The "honeymoon" stage
- Frustration/annoyance with daily differences
- Surface adjustment
- Confronting deeper differences
- Adaptation

It is also important to note that there is no set timeline. The amount of time it can take someone differs from individual to individual. The experiences, skills, and attitudes someone brings with them can also affect how the weather the challenges and the time in which the process can take.

¹⁷ Ibid

Not everyone will necessarily reach a point of adaptation. Some may linger at surface adjustment, or in a dip of frustration. While there are things that resettlement workers and volunteers can do to support someone as they go through trying to adjust to a new culture (to be explored in the Resilience presentation), but ultimately it is that individual's journey to make.

Finally, some have likened the W Model to a model of grief. It is important to keep this in mind, because it is easy to fall into the trap of assuming that the conditions and experiences a refugee has faced were so awful that they will be endlessly grateful for what life affords them in the UK. However, the vast majority have not always been refugees. They had lives and achievements and goals long before they were forced to flee, and as they work to adjust to the UK, many will also be coming to terms with that much larger loss. It is our responsibility to keep this in mind when managing those moments of frustration that individuals may express.

5.2 Letters to Rania group discussion activity

This exercise is designed to help participants connect the cultural adjustment model with an individual's struggles, achievements, and symptoms. Analyzing the stages using an example will create a foundational understanding to better inform the subsequent discussion activities analyzing how dynamics within family units can change as a result of individual transformation, and the individual needs for support and the role resilience plays in working with each individual.

Distribute the Letters to Rania handout, ensuring each participant has their own copy. Explain that the handout contains fictional letters from a woman named Alia to her friend Rania describing how she finds life in the UK. Specify that the letters are out of sequential order. Instruct participants to read through the letters and decide with their table groups what order the letters should go in based on the sequence of stages used in the W Model. Ask participants to reach a consensus within their table group to encourage more conversation as to why the letters should go in any particular order. Instruct them to also identify the symptoms they see.

Tables typically need no more than 5-10 minutes to discuss. Once the majority seem to have reached a conclusion, bring them back to a plenary discussion and ask a volunteer to identify which letter they think best represents the honeymoon stage. The order of the letters should be BEACD.

5.3 Presentation on resilience¹⁸

While it is important to understand and acknowledge the challenges refugees may have experienced in displacement or continue to face as they work to adjust to a new environment, the primary role of resettlement is to support individuals in rebuilding the lives they want to lead. Resilience plays a major role in cultural adjustment and facilitating an individual's ability to move beyond the circumstances of their displacement to the future goals they have for themselves.

"Resilience is the capacity to face challenging or threatening circumstances without giving up, struggle against adversity, and maintain or regain strength after experiencing stressful and difficult

¹⁸ The below content is adapted in large part from the Admin4All curriculum, Session 10.

situations".¹⁹ While it may be tempting to think of resilience as an innate quality, research suggests it is in fact an ongoing, dynamic process²⁰. It is something we can work with refugees to foster, working to rebuild their long-term abilities to handle current and future challenges in the UK.

Personal resources such as attitudes and skills are very important in generating resilience.

- Helpful attitudes include:
 - Self-efficacy
 - Confidence and self-esteem
 - Optimism
 - Openness to bonding with others
 - Tolerance of ambiguity
- Useful skills include:
 - Empathy
 - Emotional intelligence
 - Flexibility
 - Problem-solving skills
 - Communication skills

An individual may currently have some of the above attitudes and skills, may have had others previously that have since diminished, and may have never possessed yet others, but they can be built and encouraged.

Yet personal resources are only a part of the resilience puzzle. Links to immediate social environments are equally important, including:

- Stable emotional relationships with at least one relative, friend, colleague, etc.
- Positive role models
- Positive relationships with siblings and/or peers

The broader community provides the final pieces important to resilience, including:

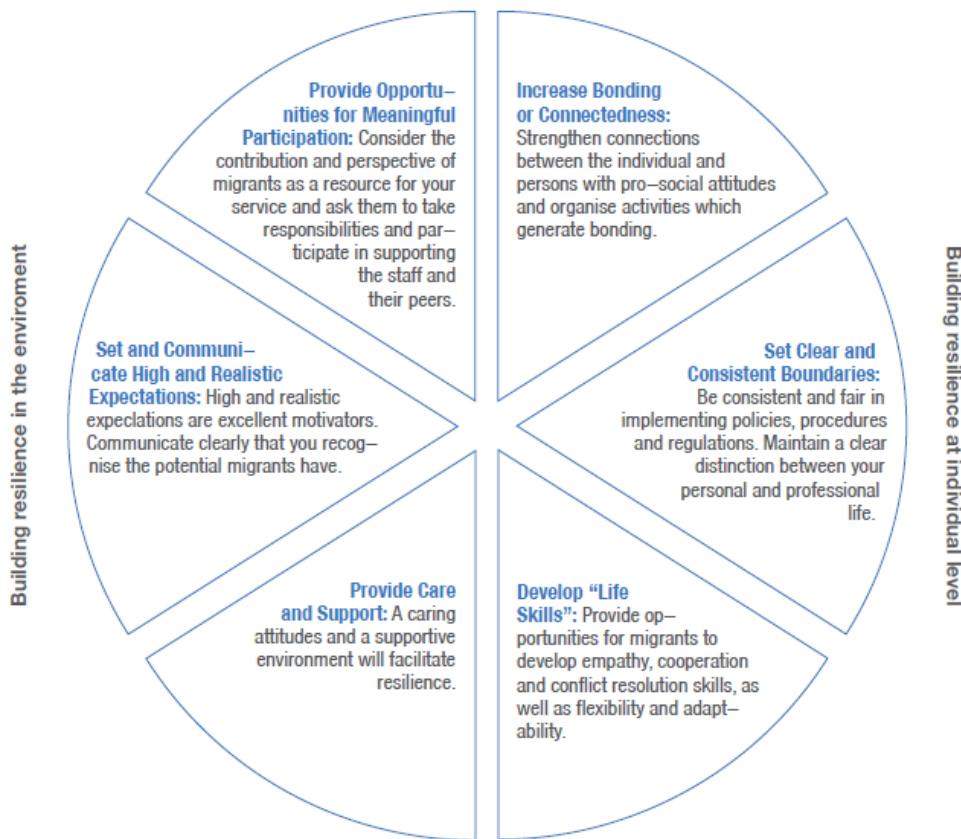
- Varied, adapted, and accessible socioeconomic support
- A familiar and friendly physical environment
- Accessible and consistent information
- Opportunities to participate in social events and meet new people
- Opportunities to contribute to the community

The below wheel of resilience demonstrates some of the key aspects to consider both in direct support to individual migrants, and in developing an environment which fosters resilience.

¹⁹ Admin4All curriculum, Session 10.

²⁰ Hutchinson, M. & P. Dorsett (2012). What does the literature say about resilience in refugee people? Implications for practice. *Journal of Social Inclusion*, 3(2).

THE WHEEL OF MIGRANTS' RESILIENCE



5.4 Cultural adjustment in a family unit discussion activity

This activity is designed to explore how family dynamics can be complicated and changed as each individual member adjusts to their new environment at different paces and in different ways. It provides an opportunity for participants to brainstorm and exchange experiences in how to assist and understand individual refugees within the complexities of family dynamics. While the article focuses on a family resettled through sponsorship in Canada rather than local authorities in the UK, it does an excellent job of describing the issues from individual family members' points of view, and covers topics common across resettlement programmes.

Distribute one group discussion table handout per table group. The purpose of this handout is to remind participants of the questions they have been asked to consider after reading the "Wonder and Worry" article to guide their group discussion

Ask the groups to discuss the questions in the order presented to them. Clarify that it is alright if they do not get through each question. Inform groups they will have 20 minutes for this discussion.

After the 20 minutes of group discussion, bring the groups back to the plenary for a joint discussion. Pose one of the questions to the plenary and ask for a volunteer to summarize their group's discussion around the question. Allow/encourage participants from other tables to contribute to the

topic if appropriate. Repeat for each question until you have covered them all, or until the remaining 30 minutes allotted for plenary discussion has expired.

5.5 Resilience discussion activity²¹

This exercise is designed to link resilience and cultural adjustment by building off of the discussion of the Mohamed family in the “Wonder and Worry” article as a case study. It provides an opportunity for participants to more concretely look at their existing services and those services might change if incorporating a strengths-based framework to build resilience.

Begin the exercise by identifying that Abdullah may particularly benefit from (re)building resilience, and recall the resilience wheel from 5.3 Emphasize that we as professionals, directly or with other stakeholders, can contribute to providing support and services based on the six different sectors of the wheel.

Divide participants into three or six groups depending on the total number of participants. If there are more than fifteen participants, divide into six groups. Assign sectors of the resilience wheel to each group. If there are three groups, assign two sectors of the wheel to each group. If there are six groups, assign only one sector per group.

Ask each group to reflect on Abdullah’s potential needs for support in the sector(s) of the wheel assigned to their group. What services are currently provided amongst the participants that could help with this area of resilience for Abdullah? What possible changes might they make to services to better meet his needs for resilience support in the assigned sector(s)? If participants feel that not enough information is provided in the article, they may extrapolate using experiences with other refugees as necessary.

Each group should write their ideas down on flipchart paper and assign a group member to present their findings. Give groups twenty minutes for this discussion.

Once the group discussion is completed, invite each group to share in plenary and request comments or suggestions from other groups. Plenary discussion should be limited to twenty minutes.

Conclude the activity by emphasizing that these points could provide a list of suggestions for future projects or improvements the better support the resilience of refugees.

Evaluation

After the exercise thank participants for their active discussions and attendance. Give them time to ask some final questions. Leave your mail address for participants to get in touch if they should need further information after the completion of the information session. Hand out the evaluation form and ask participants to take their time and fill them out. After the evaluations forms have been returned say goodbye to participants.

²¹ Adapted from Admin4All curriculum Session 10.

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