

**Topic:** Cultural Adjustment  
(IOM Middle East)

**Activity:** “KWE” (Know, Want, Expect) Small Group Activity

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**Evaluating**

- What participants know about the United States
- What they want to know about the United States
- Refugee expectations for assistance in their resettlement

**Introduction**

This small group exercise gives participants the opportunity to express their knowledge and thoughts about three important topics:

- What they already know about the United States. This gives them a sense of confidence, that they are not going into this resettlement experience completely unprepared.
- Their concerns about resettlement and other issues that they would like to address in this CO training. This furthers participants’ sense of ownership of the training sessions by showing that the trainer is interested in *their* concerns, and that the topics covered in the training have a direct relevance to their own lives and immediate futures.
- Participants’ expectations for assistance in the United States. This challenges existing refugee assumptions by giving them the opportunity to consider, perhaps for the first time, whether their expectations are realistic or not. This part of the exercise also gives the trainer a good idea about what topics need to be given extra emphasis in order to deal with possible unrealistic expectations.

**Time**

20-30 minutes

**Materials**

- Flipchart paper, 2 sheets per group
- Marker pens, 1 per group
- Tape or push pins to put the papers up on the walls

**Practice**

1. Have the group divide into small groups of four to five people per group. This can be done in many ways, but the trainer should try to make sure that people from the same families are not in the same groups. Counting off from one to four or one to five is one way to break up groups of people who are sitting together.
2. Topic 1:
  - a. Distribute two pieces of large flip-chart paper and a marker pen to each group. Ask the groups to write down anything they know about the United States. If a group has trouble getting started, tell them that what they write down can be absolutely anything – geography, famous people and places, weather, economic or political facts, and so forth. Try to get every participant to contribute something.
  - b. After five minutes or so, or when you notice that the groups are no longer writing very much, ask each group to have a representative read ONE of the things their group wrote down to the entire group. Continue until each group has read one thing, then continue for a second or third round. Usually three rounds is enough to get most of the ideas.
  - c. Usually one of the things written down will be the number of states in the United States, and this number is often wrong, or different groups will have

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different numbers. Let them discuss this for a bit, then ask for at least two volunteers to come up to the front and count the number of stars on the U.S. flag. Ask the group what the stars represent, so that everyone understands that each star stands for one state. Hopefully the counters will come up with the number 50! If not, ask them to count again.

3. Topic 2:

- a. Now ask the groups to write on the other side of their papers what more they would like to know about the United States, and about what life is like for refugees who go there.
- b. Process as before. This time, when the groups have finished reading their questions or concerns to each other, put the papers up on the wall towards the front of the classroom. The trainer now goes point by point, quickly addressing (or, even better, getting the participants to come up with the answers for) the issues which are NOT covered in the CO training, and affirming to the group that the rest of the points will be covered in some depth during the next four days.
- c. At the end of each training day, ask participants to circle or cross out the questions or topics that have been addressed that day. This gives a clear picture that progress is being made in the training, and that the refugees' own concerns are clearly being taken seriously and addressed in the sessions.

4. Topic 3:

- a. Ask the participants to write down the kinds of assistance they expect to receive after resettling in the U.S. If they say they don't know, have them write what kinds of resettlement assistance they would LIKE to receive. If necessary, give an example of an unrealistic expectation (but don't tell them it's unrealistic yet!), such as "Each family will receive a car," or "Our housing will be paid for one year," or "We will be given a house to live in." Process as before. The trainer does not need to comment on what has been written.

5. After the groups have finished reading their expectations, have them put the lists up on a wall, apart from the questions from Topic 2. Ask the participants to keep these expectations in mind throughout the session, and review them at the end of each day, asking participants to circle those expectations that have been confirmed, and cross out those that have been debunked during that days' training.

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