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 Germany

LINK IT ist ein innovatives Projekt, welches die Integration syrischer Kontingentflüchtlinge, die nach Deutschland, Portugal, Rumänien und in das Vereinigte Königreich umgesiedelt werden, fördert. Das Projekt verknüpft die Vorbereitungsphase in Jordanien, im Libanon und in der Türkei mit der Orientierungsphase in Deutschland und erleichtert somit den syrischen Flüchtlingen die Ankunft und Integration im Zielland. Des Weiteren leistet LINK IT einen wichtigen Beitrag zum Kapazitätsaufbau der Gastgemeinden und relevanten Akteuren auf nationaler und regionaler Ebene. Dieses Vorhaben kann unterschiedliche Integrationsangebote der vier teilnehmenden Länder erweitern.

IOM UN MIGRATION

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LINK IT

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1. Background

1.1 Project Description

Throughout the world IOM delivers a variety of essential assistances in the field of resettlement. This includes resettlement services implemented in cooperation with the German Government. Closely linked to the humanitarian tradition of Germany in providing refuge and other forms of protection, the reception of most vulnerable refugees within the resettlement programme is an additional beneficent support of the state. In a pilot phase from 2012 to 2014 the German Government admitted 300 most vulnerable refugees per annum. The admission rate was raised to 500 people per year in 2015. Within the EU-resettlement scheme Germany has agreed to resettle 10.200 refugees over the course of 2018/ 2019.

An important part of resettling refugees to Germany is integration. To facilitate the arrival and settling in Germany, extensive measures must be offered to the target groups. IOM´s efforts in supporting the integration of the resettled refugees into the German society have the objective to start before the departure to the receiving country and then continue after the arrival. The project "Linking pre-departure and post-arrival support to facilitate the socio-economic integration for resettled refugees in the EU (LINK IT)" is closing the gaps in providing needs-orientated assessments and trainings to the specific group. Apart from the offered pre-departure activities, IOM will conduct tailored post-arrival activities within the frames of LINK IT. Among them are post-arrival orientation session for refugees and information sessions for receiving communities, which will include local authorities and employers. This step is regarded as essential because integration is a two-way-process. Therefore, the project intends to not only target resettled refugees and provide them with useful information about the German system and about life in Germany, but also equips receiving communities with the knowledge of the cultural background of the resettled group, which should strengthen them to provide appropriate integration service.

1.2 Target Group

The target group of this session are resettlement support workers from local authorities and Syrian refugees who were resettled to Germany.

Regarding the orientation sessions to local authorities it should be considered that the resettled group consist of most vulnerable people who might have more specific needs due to medical issues or other reasons.

The target group is comprised of practitioners working in the local field of resettlement such as counsellors, project coordinators, social services, NGOs or administrative bodies.

Further targeted are practitioners delivering resettlement services while working with local authorities, such as teachers and other educators, medical staff, volunteers and other relevant actors.

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1.3 Organization, structure and objectives of the Local Authority Session

When organizing these sessions for local authorities the German distribution quote called "Königssteiner Schlüssel" must be considered. Which local authorities are addressed and contacted depends on where the resettled Syrian refugees will be located within Germany.

If smaller communities only host a small number of resettled refugees, the session would not be held in each of those communities, but rather different communities should join in the session.

Once communities are specified, local practitioners will be contacted and invited to participate in the session.

The sessions could either be held at different designated venues throughout the country, depending on where the resettled refugees were distributed to. Another option that is being taken into consideration is to have one single session hosted as a Web-based seminar (Webinar). This would not only be a very cost effective and time efficient way to distribute the information but would also enable us to reach out to communities that otherwise would not profit from the training. To deliver the sessions web-based would mean that a different didactical approach is necessary as no interaction with participants would be possible. If this training method should be used, the trainer would only provide the substantive aspects and the possibilities for exercises will likely be limited. The Webinar will therefore have a shorter duration.

The following descriptions of the different training sections are based on the assumption that the sessions will be held at different venues. For a Webinar the curriculum would need to be adapted accordingly.

The sessions are delivered within one day during the working week. The one-day course will be divided into six different parts:

1. Introduction
2. Intercultural Communication
3. Resettlement in Germany
4. Syria Pre-Conflict
5. Experiences of Syrian Refugees Pre-Arrival
6. Cultural adjustment and resilience
7. Evaluation

The different parts will be divided by two short breaks and a lunch break.

IOM Germany envisages working with a cultural mediator in the implementation phase of the project. This approach will ensure that practitioners fully comprehend and identify Syrian culture, the experiences and expectations of this group and learn of potential misunderstandings. In consequence it will enable them to address challenges encountered.

The training delivered by IOM will mainly serve as cultural information on resettled refugees from Syria. Through intensified knowledge local authorities will be supported in delivering appropriate and culturally aware integration services.

At the end of each training participants are asked to evaluate the course. The evaluation is anonymous and serves as a feedback to the facilitator. The results of the evaluation will be included in the reporting to the project management. If the sessions will be delivered through a Webinar participants are asked to take a survey to evaluate the training.

2. Training Sections[1]

2.1 Introduction

In the first part of the session opening remarks will be given, in which recipients will be welcomed, facilitators introduced, and the outline of the course explained. To establish an interactive environment throughout the day participants should get to know each other. This is to be achieved by an icebreaker activity.

Duration:

Approx. 45-60 minutes

Material needed:

- Name tags
- Stationary
- Material for icebreaker
- Laptop and PPP
- Beamer and screen
- Flipchart and marker
- Refreshments

Venue:

The venue should be prepared in such a way to make communication easy and interactive. Tables and chairs should be adjusted in a square rather than behind one another. Every participant should have an unobstructed view to the panel and screen.

[1]The following content and graphics have been taken and partly adapted from IOM UK " Link IT: Syrian Sessions for Local Authorities" as well as from Admin4All co-funded by the EU, Session 6 handout.

Possible Icebreaker:

"Take one step forward"

In this icebreaking activity participants experience what it is like to feel estranged in a society. Topics touched with this exercise are social injustice, discrimination or exclusion. These might be challenges that Syrian refugees have encountered in the past or might come across in the future.

Each participant receives a different card with his/ her role. Roles can be i.e. undocumented migrant from Mali, resettled refugee from Syria, middle aged prostitute with HIV, daughter/ son of a local bank director, owner of successful import-export company, disabled young man/ woman in a wheelchair, a young Muslim girl with strict religious parents, son of Turkish immigrants who own a fast food restaurant… Participants are asked to read their cards silently and keep the content to themselves.

The moderator will ask them to empathize with their role. In order to do that the facilitator has prepared some questions, such as: How was your childhood? Where did you live? What does your everyday life look like? How much money do you earn?

The facilitator will then place the group in one row and will read different situations and occurrences to them. Every time a participant can answer to one of the statements with "Yes", he/ she can move one step forward. If they cannot, they must stay where they are.

At the end participants should look around to see where they are and where the others are.

In a follow-up phase, participants should guess the role of the other group members and express their feelings while going ahead or staying behind. They should also reflect about how in these experience transfer to daily life and in how far this could be a reality for resettled refugees.

Material needed:

- Role cards
- Questions for trainer
- Open space in venue

2.2 Intercultural Communication

When interacting or meeting with people from a different "cultural" background we often do not only encounter language barriers but also see differences in "cultural" patterns and behaviours. What seems natural to me might cause confusion to somebody with a different background and upbringing and vice versa. A lack of knowledge and understanding for other "cultures" can lead to misunderstanding and even conflict.[2] Almost daily we interact with people from a different "cultural" background and want our encounter to be successful. That is why an intercultural

[2] See https://www.ikud-seminare.de/veroeffentlichungen/interkulturelle-kommunikation.html

practical knowledge is a key qualification. Therefore, in a first step of the session we will focus on the basics of intercultural communication.

Within this part of the session the objectives are:

- Understanding the key concepts related to intercultural communication and competency
- Being able to identify potential sources of intercultural misunderstandings
- Increasing awareness of participants' own "culture" and how this influences the perspective and expectations in intercultural interactions
- Reflecting on the implications of these personal preferences for participants' working with Syrian refugees

Duration:

Approx. 40-60 minutes

- Take time to present the topic
- Reserve time for and actively engage participants to ask questions or make comments

Material needed:

- Laptop and PPP
- Beamer and screen

Presentation

Definitions of "culture"

Before explaining and discussing the topic "Intercultural Communication" and focusing on how communication between people from a different cultural background may be successful, participants should first get a short input of the concepts "intercultural" and "culture".

Intercultural:

It can happen that the terms "intercultural" and "multicultural" are used synonymously, even though they describe two different phenomena. "Multiculturalism" is used to describe different coexisting cultures within one society. The term "intercultural" refers to a process of exchange through people with a different "cultural" background.

Culture:

It is important to understand that the concept of "culture" is socially constructed and refers to an intricate set of phenomena.[3] That is why there are multiple definitions of the term.

These different definitions can be summed up to two different categories:

1. Culture as external:
   "I view culture as a latent, hypothetical variable that we can measure only through its manifestations. The underlying normative value emphases that are central to culture influence and give a degree of coherence to these manifestations. In this view, culture is not located in the minds and actions of individual people. Rather, it is outside the individual. It refers to the press to which individuals are exposed by virtue of living in particular social systems" (Schwartz 2009, p. 128).

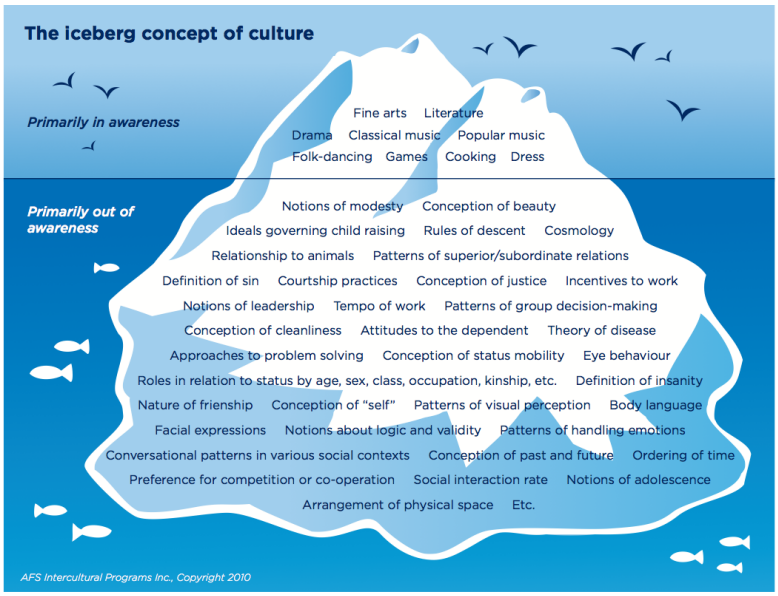
2. Culture as internal, or internal and external
   "…networks of knowledge consisting of learned routines of thinking, feeling, and interacting with other people, as well as a corpus of substantive assertions and ideas about aspects of the world…it is…shared…, among a collection of interconnected individuals who are often demarcated by race, ethnicity, or nationality;… externalized by rich symbols, artefacts, social constructions, and social institutions (e.g. cultural icons, advertisements, and media); … used to inform the common ground for communication among members;… transmitted from one generation to the next…;… undergoing continuous modifications" (Hong 2009, p. 4)[4]

Overall the concept "culture" manifests in two aspects, things we can perceive, such as literature, music, food, language, greetings rituals etc. and dimensions that we cannot, that are hidden, such as norms, feelings, expectations, values etc.

This can be demonstrated in an easier manner through the "iceberg model". This model focuses on both the visible aspects of „culture" (top of the iceberg), which are about 10 percent of the whole, while also emphasizing the hidden elements of a culture, which are represented as the bottom of the iceberg, that can exert great influence on people without being explicit or even conscious:

[3] See JAHODA, Gustav (2012): Critical reflections on some recent definitions of "culture", p. 300, In: Culture & Psychology 18(3) 289-303.
[4] See JAHODA, Gustav (2012): Critical reflections on some recent definitions of "culture", p. 292-297, In: Culture & Psychology 18(3) 289-303.

The Iceberg Model[5]:



Since the hidden parts are by far bigger than the ones we can perceive they can have a much bigger influence. Being the "hidden" elements and thus harder to identify they can often be the cause for intercultural communication conflicts.

It should be emphasized that the definitions of „culture" refer to societies and groups, not to countries and nations. Various groups and subgroups, including groups defined based on ethno-cultural criteria, but also on geographic, professional, ideological or other criteria, may be described using this model.

When analyzing any two groups, one can find similarities and differences at the visible or at the invisible levels. Within larger groups internal cultural variability can exist. In consequence members of two subgroups can be more different between themselves than compared with somebody from another group.

One should not infer that a person living in a certain country, or region, or belonging to a specific ethnic or religious group, must necessarily correspond to the pattern of beliefs and behaviours usually associated with these groups. People have different personalities, with features that may contradict certain cultural prescriptions.

Also, any person belongs simultaneously to a variety of groups and the specific attitudes and behaviours in a certain context may be determined by a conscious or unconscious choice of a reference group for that context. The concept of intersectionality provides a theoretical framework for understanding how multiple categories of identity (such as gender, race, and class) interact and can be very productive when working with refugees whose multiple aspects of identity are all too often overshadowed by their status as refugee. Moreover, many persons feel that they belong

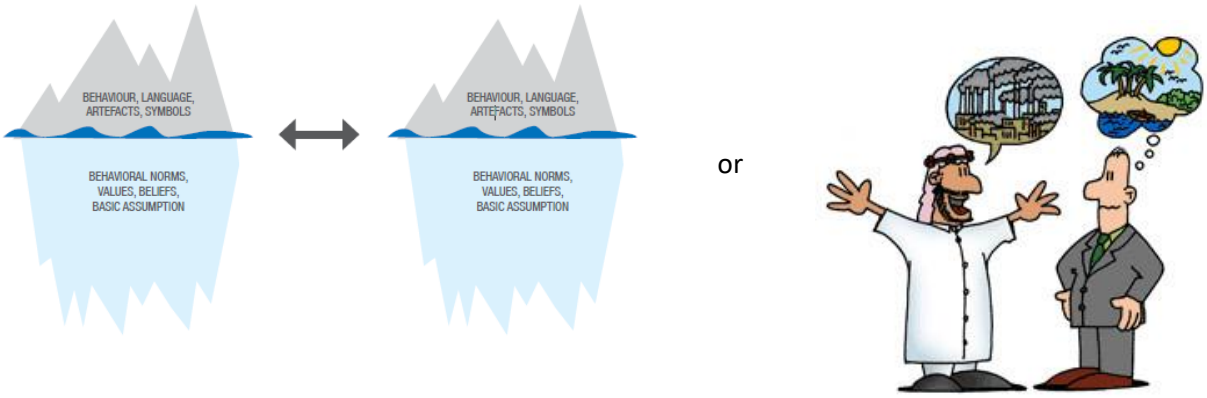
[5] https://myptoolbox.com/2014/05/08/cultural-iceberg/

simultaneously not only to different groups defined by different criteria, but also to several groups defined by the same criteria (multiple cultural affiliations).

Thus, considering the complexity of the elements described above, it is preferable to speak about cultural affiliations of people than of cultures. The cultures of all groups and societies are permanently in evolution. Some change very slowly and may be perceived as static, but changes occur everywhere. In some cases, changes are encouraged and supported, while in other cases they face resistance and are labeled as a loss of authenticity. A major source of cultural change is represented by the interactions between people with different cultural affiliations.

Intercultural encounters

We can speak of intercultural encounter when people who perceive themselves or are perceived as having different cultural affiliations interact.[6] To stick with the image of the iceberg, when encountering people one "iceberg" with its visible and hidden "cultural" elements meets another "iceberg".



To fully understand the visible elements, one must also understand the bottom of the iceberg, the hidden aspects of "culture". The hidden aspects of the iceberg can be seen as the underlying causes of what manifest on the visible side. That is why culture is so much more than the things we can see, like religious believes, rules of relationships, approach to the family, communication styles, modes of thinking, the difference between public and private, gender differences and many more.[7]

To understand how culture has an influence on our behaviour and thinking and therefore can have an effect when encountering people with another cultural background can be explained with the help of cultural dimension concepts. There are different academics whose concepts are well perceived such as Edward T. Hall (1959, 1966, 1976, 1983)[8], Fons Trompenaars (1998)[9] or Shalom H.

[6] http://blog.bildungsdoc.de/interkulturelle-kommunikation-bei-internationalen-begegnungen/
[7] See https://www.commisceo-global.com/blog/intercultural-training-and-the-iceberg-model
[8] Hall, E. (1959). The silent language. New York: Doubleday.
Hall, E. (1966). The hidden dimension. New York: Doubleday.
Hall, E. (1976). Beyond culture. New York: Doubleday.
Hall, E. (1983). The dance of life: The other dimension of time. New York: Doubleday.
[9] Trompenaar, F./ Hamden-Turner, C. (1998). Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business: B&T Verlag.

Schwartz (1992)[10]. The most discussed and used concept is the one developed by Geert Hofstede (2001)[11]. According to his cultural dimension model each national culture contains six dimensions:

1. **Power Distance Index (PDI):** This dimension describes the acceptance of the status quo of people with less power. Hierarchy is tolerated at high power distance and considered legitimate. Low power distance shows the desire for equality and in case of a power difference calls for justification. For example:

Low Power Distance	High Power Distance
People expect to be involved in decision making processes.	People expect to receive clear instructions through superiors.
People think it is normal to contradict superiors.	People think it is very unusual to contradict superiors

2. **Individualism versus Collectivism – IDV**: This dimension defines, to what extent individual self-determination or collectivistic integration is more important. A high value speaks for a focus on a self-determined life, while a low value describes a sense of togetherness. For example:

Individualism	Collectivism
Speaking your opinion is normal.	Self-Initiative is hardly supported.
Taking up the initiative is desirable.	The group is important

3. **Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI):** In this dimension the degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity is expressed. For example:

Weak UAI	Strong UAI
Tolerates deviant and innovative thinking and behaviour.	Suppresses deviant thoughts and behaviour.
Tasks are less strong structured.	Strong structuring of tasks.

4. **Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)**: Characterizes the prevailing value system of both sexes. A low value describes dominant feminine values such as cooperation, caring or equality, while a high value describes the supremacy of male such as dominance, achievement and recognition. For example:

[10] Schwartz, S.H. (1992). Universals in the content and structure of values : Theoretical advances and empirical tests in 20 countries. San Diego: Academic Press

[11] Hostede G. (2001): Culture's Consequence: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations Across Nations, Sage.

Masculine	Feminine
Preference for achievement, heroism, material award…	Preference for cooperation, modesty, caring…

5. **Long-Term Orientation versus Short-Term Normative Orientation (LTO):** Describes whether individual timing is long term thought (thrift and perseverance) or short-term (flexibility, selfishness). The former is defined by a high value, the latter through a low. For example:

Long-Term Orientation	Short-Term Normative Orientation
Plans are made on the long-term.	Short-term planning is more important than long-term planning.
Traditions are important	Propensity to consume
Perseverance in perusing goals.	Avoiding loss of face

6. **Indulgence versus Restraint (IND):** Describes, whether one pursues one's own wishes and impulses (higher value) or rather tries to control them (low value). For example:

Low Indulgence and high restraint	High Indulgance and low restraint
Personal discipline to reach goals.	Laid back attitude to work, economy and deviance.
Low prioritisation of leisure time.	High prioritisation of leisure time.

The Dimensions are not fixed and can be extended. They differ across models, but each provides a framework for understanding what elements of difference can exist between cultures. They should not be seen as labels but as continuums. A certain group or society can be located anywhere on this continuum. [12]

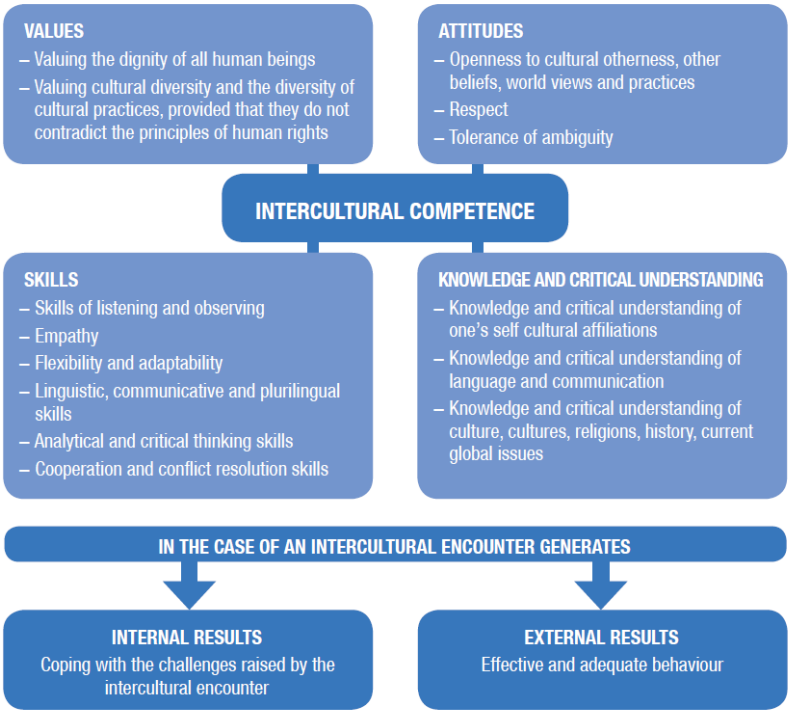
Intercultural competence

Intercultural competence describes the ability to effectively deal with people who have a different cultural background. The effectiveness should be seen from both partners as such. Important factors for intercultural competency are emotional competence and intercultural sensitivity, which allow us to take concepts of perception, thinking, and feeling of other "cultures" into account. This includes that the own experiences of the intercultural competent person are put back and a readiness exists to revise stereotypes and prejudices as well as to learn new things.

[12] See Towers, I/ Peppler, A. 2017, Interkulturelle Kommunikation, Springer Fachmedien, Wiesbaden, p.16ff.
See https://www.hofstede-insights.com/models/national-culture/
See Admin4All Session 6 handout.

For example, a Muslim may be dismissive, if not fearful, or react with a sense of disgust to body contact with dogs. In order to be able to interpret this situation properly, one needs the ability to take of one's own „cultural glasses" off and take into account that this reaction could be based on the fact that dogs in Islam are considered "impure" animals.[13]

The following graphic[14] explains in detail what a person needs to acquire to be considered as intercultural competent:



2.2 Group and discussion activity

Once the presentation has finished, introduce the group exercise "Closeness and Distance"[15]. For the exercise the group needs to be divided into pairs.

The partners face each other on two imaginary lines in the room. The two lines are about 3-4 meters apart. At a signal, all persons from one line (group A) slowly move towards their partner (group B). The members of group B stop the members of group A when they think that they are at the right distance. The following scenes could thus be portrait:

- addressing a stranger to ask for directions in a strange city;
- greeting a stranger,

[13] See https://www.ikud.de/glossar/interkulturelle-kompetenz-definition.html
[14] See Admin4All Session 6 handout.
[15] See http://www.aksb.de/upload/materialien/Sammlung-interessanter_Methoden_fuer_die_interkulturelle_politische_Bildungsarbeit.pdf

- greeting the supervisor/ boss
- greeting a good friend…

If everyone in group B has said stop, it can be checked if there are differences in the distances in the group and how big they are. Then continue with other examples.

Note: Members of group A can still be asked if they agree with the "distance control" or if they would prefer a different regulation.

After the exercise ask participants to identify the cultural dimensions and how they felt when having somebody so close or distant.

Remind participants to keep the six cultural dimensions in their minds as we go through information about Syrian cultures, backgrounds, and customs. Can they identify any differences in cultural dimensions, and potential misunderstandings that may arise from such differences?

2.3 Resettlement in Germany

Objective

Before going into details on Syria and the “cultural” background of the resettled Syrians this section provides some substantive information on resettlement and specifically resettlement to Germany.

The learning outcomes for this session are:

- Understanding the concept and function of resettlement in the worldwide admission of forced migrants.
- Understanding the role of IOM in the process of resettlement.
- Understanding the national legal framework and criteria of resettlement to Germany.

Duration:

Approx. 30-45 minutes

- Take time to present the topic
- Reserve time for and actively engage participants to ask questions or make comments

Material needed:

- Laptop and PPP
- Beamer and screen

Presentation

The concept of resettlement

Due to ongoing conflict or crisis situations many refugees cannot return to their country of origin and are therefore seeking protection in another state. The majority moves to neighboring countries and only a few try to take the dangerous route to Europe.

Definitions

Refugee:

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."[16]

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.

Resettlement:

The UNHCR defines resettlement as

"… the selection and transfer of refugees from a State in which they have sought protection to a third State which has agreed to admit them – as refugees – with permanent residence status. The status provided ensures protection against refoulement and provides a resettled refugee and his/her family or dependents with access to rights similar to those enjoyed by nationals. Resettlement also carries with it the opportunity to eventually become a naturalized citizen of the resettlement country."[17]

Function of resettlement

Resettlement is an international instrument to protect refugees whose lives and liberty are at risk and provide a durable solution for a larger group of forced migrants who are not able to return to their country of origin also in long-term vision of integration.

It further is a burden sharing mechanism, which allows states to support countries of first asylum and through that express their solidarity.[18]

IOM's Approach in Resettlement

IOM has over 65 years of experience in implementing resettlement services to beneficiaries, states and other stakeholders. The objective is to provide guidance and assistance to member states which

[16] Article 1(A)(2) of the 1951 Refugee Convention as amended by its 1967 Protocol, https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/114761/refugee-definition
[17] UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNHCR Resettlement Handbook, 2011, July 2011, available at: http://www.refworld.org/docid/4ecb973c2.html [accessed 9 July 2018]
[18] Ibid.

are new to resettlement and ensure the continued expansion and enhancement of assistances with experienced resettlement states.

IOM offers different services and assistances throughout the resettlement process:

(1) Facilitation of selection missions and visa processing;

(2) health assessments;

(3) pre-departure orientation;

(4) movement management;

(5) post-arrival reception and integration.[19]

Resettlement Process

To select and transfer a refugee within the resettlement procedures is complex and involves the participation of many governmental and non-governmental actors.

Once an individual crosses an international border, they may register with UNHCR to seek refugee status and assistance. UNHCR then does an assessment to determine if the person meets the legal definition and is therefore entitled to a refugee status. At this point, UNHCR may begin to assess if resettlement is a suitable option. If it does seem suitable, UNHCR may ask the individual/family if they are interested in resettlement. If they say yes, their case may then be referred to a resettlement country for consideration, in this case the German Government. The Government may choose to accept or deny the case, and could deny for any reason, including any security concerns.

Resettlement Pre-Condition

To be considered for resettlement the following pre-conditions must be met:

- the applicant or person concerned must be recognized as refugee by UNHCR
- the prospects for different solutions were assessed, and resettlement is identified as the most adequate solution.[20]

Selection Criteria

Since the number of persons that should be resettled outnumbers the resettlement places internationally provided UNHCR has established eight criteria that refugees must meet in order to be considered for resettlement:

- Persons with specific legal and physical protection needs;
- Persons with specific medical needs;
- Persons who are survivors of violence and torture;
- Woman with a specific risk exposure;
- Refugee children and adolescents;
- Older refugees;

[19] See IOM FAQS on Resettlement.
[20] Ibid.

- Persons who have no perspective to integrate in their resent country of residence;
- Persons who have family members in a third country.[21]

A resettled individual may fit one or more of these vulnerability criteria, and there is no hierarchy to the criteria.

Criteria by Germany

Even though UNHCR examines the individual resettlement need the final decision lies with the receiving country. Many states like Germany have additional selection criteria for the reception.

The following criteria are being used by the German Government:

- Maintaining the unity of the family;
- Family or other integration promoting ties to Germany;
- Ability to integrate to German Society (such as education degree, professional experience. language skills);
- Degree of vulnerability.[22]

The Government has also set criteria of who cannot be admitted to Germany within the resettlement programme:

- People who have been convicted for intentional offences;
- People who are connected to or are supportive of criminal or terrorist organizations.[23]

Pre-departure processes

Once a case is provisionally accepted for resettlement to the Germany, the case is referred to IOM for pre-departure services. These services include migrant health assessments, movement services, and pre-departure orientation.

Health Assessment

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

[21] See https://resettlement.de/resettlement/
[22] See http://www.bamf.de/DE/Fluechtlingsschutz/HumAufnahmeResettlement/ResettlementHumanitaereAufnahme/resettlement-node.html
[23] See Country Chapters – UNHCR Resettlement Handbook, http://www.unhcr.org/5162b3bc9.html

for Germany. 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 Germany. IOM collects assessment data and shares it electronically with the BAMF which then shares it with the relevant resettlement coordinators in Germany.

What is included in the health assessments is set out in the Health Protocol, which is established according to the sanitary situation in the country and the requirements of the refugees. The Health Protocol includes general medical investigations and screenings, vaccination measures, tuberculosis management, supply with medication as well as referrals, treatments, pre-embarkation checks and medical escorts.

Visa and movement services

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.

When people have experienced traumatic circumstances, have been living in uncertainty in a foreign country for several years, are leaving friends and loved ones behind, are traveling to the unknown, and in many cases have never flown before, the journey to Germany can be quite stressful. IOM therefore sends escorts to accompany every group coming to Germany 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 Germany upon arrival. In cases of acute medical needs, medical escorts are provided to address any health concerns that arrive en route.

Pre-departure Orientation

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 Germany to set realistic expectations about their resettlement and the support they will receive. Pre-departure orientation covers topics such as:

- An introduction to Germany
- Pre-departure and travel briefings
- Post-arrival services
- Employment
- Housing and benefits
- Education

- Law (including gender equality and domestic violence)
- Health
- Cultural adaptation

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 BAMF, and looks at building skills and attitudes to help with the integration process. Focusing on building personal resources and social networks is also important to establishing a sense of self-efficacy in the shape the life ahead takes from now on. Pre-departure orientation also discusses German values such as gender equality, rule of law, freedom of speech, tolerance, and respect for diversity.

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. One of the central aims of LINK-IT is to utilize the fundaments of knowledge and understanding established through pre-departure orientation more effectively in later stages of the integration process by actively referring to their content and reinforcing their messages at later stages.

Post-arrival process

During the first two weeks after arrival the resettled refugees usually will be housed in a central reception center. There they receive courses on linguistic and cultural orientation as well as information and individual advice from local welfare organizations. Subsequently, the persons are assigned to the Federal States according to the Königsteiner Schlüssel. The redistribution to the municipalities is regulated differently in the Federal States. In some cases, municipalities in one Federal State voluntarily register to receive resettlement refugees. In other States, existing housing in communities or the national distribution key are used as basis of decision-making (ICMCE 2013: 185). With the arrival of the refugees in the municipalities, the responsibility is transferred to them or the Federal State.[24]

National Legislation Germany:

The status and rights given to resettled refugees vary depending on the country. Usually resettled refugees receive a permanent resident permit. In some countries, such as Germany, they receive a temporary residence permit, and are then able to apply for permanent residency after a specified period of legal residency.[25]

In the German legislation resettlement is incorporated in Paragraph 23 (4) Residence Act (Granting of Residence by the highest regional authorities; Admission for special political reason; Resettlement of protection seekers) since August 2015.

[24] https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Publikationen/WorkingPapers/wp70-resettlement-aufnahme-integrationserfahrungen.pdf?__blob=publicationFile
[25] See IOM FAQS on Resettlement

The government, in consultation with the governments of the States, can instruct the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees to admit certain groups of foreigners to Germany who are granted temporary or permanent residence permits upon arrival.

The temporary residence permit enables the holder to these rights:

Residence:	Temporary residence permit for three years and after that permanent residence
	Place of residence within Germany is decided by authorities
Employment:	Holders can seek immediately paid employment
Social benefits:	Holders receive unemployment benefits or social welfare
Family Reunion:	Holders can apply for family reunification of first degree relatives
Integration:	Holders are entitled to 600-900 hours of integration courses
Documents:	Holders receive a travel document for aliens but not a blue refugee passport.[26]

Figures

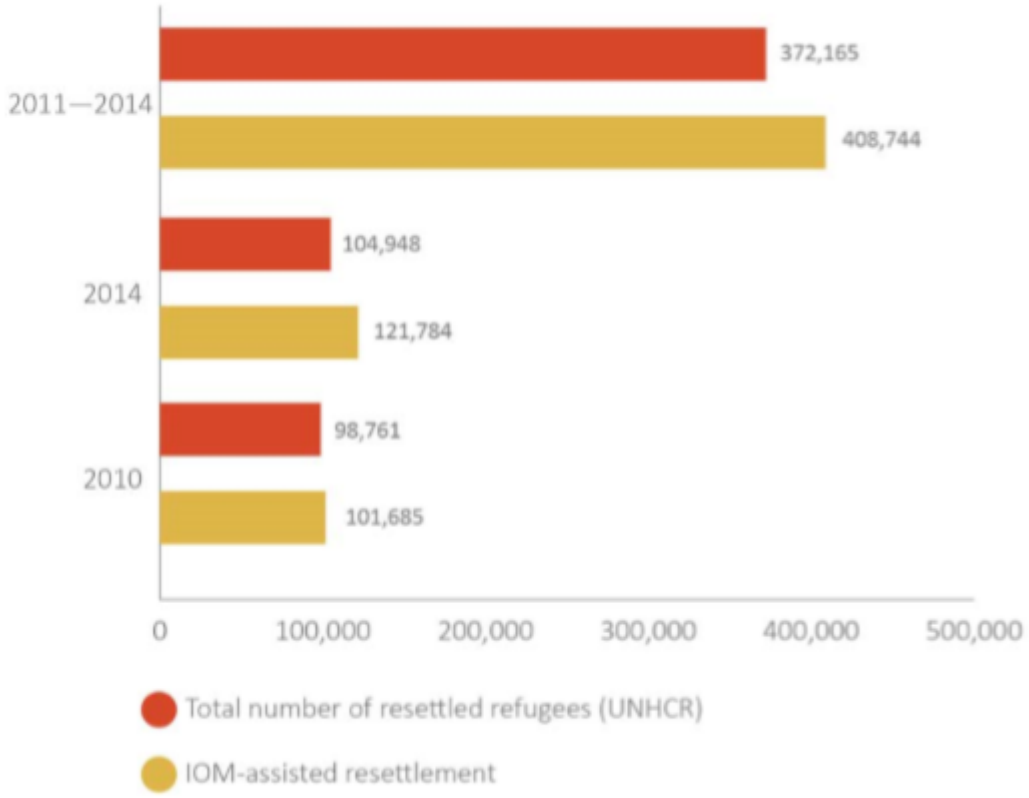
Global:

Within the last ten years, IOM has organized resettlement movement of 892,243 refugees from 186 locations worldwide.

In terms of global resettlement support in 2017, IOM facilitated the resettlement and humanitarian admission of approx. 93,000 persons to 31 countries around the world, of which more than 26,500 were received by 21 countries in the European Economic Area (EEA).

[26] See https://resettlement.de/en/resettlement-2/

Figure 2: Refugees resettled – IOM-assisted versus total (UNHCR data)



The number of refugees resettled with assistance by IOM are higher than the UNHCR total because IOM includes persons participating in (national) humanitarian admission schemes, while UNHCR data largely excludes such persons. [27]

Germany:

Between 2012 and 2017, IOM facilitated the resettlement or humanitarian admission of 11,734 persons from various locations to Germany in close cooperation with the German Government. Prior to that, IOM had supported other humanitarian admission projects, such as the 2009/2010 admission of 2,501 Iraqi refugees from Jordan and Syria.

In 2017, a total 3,015 refugees have been resettled from Turkey, Lebanon and Egypt to Germany.

Challenges

On a global scale the number of refugees in need for protection keeps increasing, as well as the sources of conflict worldwide. Options for regular arrival into destination countries are decreasing and more and more people rely on smugglers and use dangerous passages to cross borders. There is

[27] See https://gmdac.iom.int/sites/default/files/summary_of_iom_stats_2011-2014.pdf

a gap between resettlement needs and the places internationally provided. That leaves many refugees without a durable solution. In consequence the danger that unsafe passages are being taken rises. Further concerns on security matters are increasing, both in the receiving country as well as in the country of first asylum. Receiving countries worry about terrorism attacks. Countries of departure might be to unstable or unsafe to process resettlement quick and safe.[28]On a national scale Germany's legal framework does not grand resettled refugees a refugee status. Further challenges could arise because social benefits and housing assistance are linked to ongoing residence in the resettlement municipality, resettled refugees experience problems in moving to other parts of the country post-arrival.[29]

Feedback round

Before making the transition to the more concrete experiences and backgrounds of Syrians, participants will be given time to ask questions for clarification and share their own views on the content delivered so far. This does not only present an opportunity for exchange and elimination of possible uncertainties but will also add some variety to the format of communication and thereby support participants in refocusing their attention.

2.4 Syria Pre-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 Germany, particularly if differences between Germany 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

Duration

- 90-120 minutes
    - This includes introduction to Syria, presentation on cultural traditions, on family life, on social infrastructure
    - snowball discussion exercise

[28] See UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNHCR Resettlement Handbook, 2011, p.68f, July 2011, available at: http://www.refworld.org/docid/4ecb973c2.html [accessed 9 July 2018]
[29] See https://www.resettlement.eu/country/germany

Materials

- Slides, laptop and beamer
- Intercultural mediator

Presentation

Introduction

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, multi-ethnic. 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 Yazidi[30]. Syria's ethnic demography is also complex. The majority of the population is considered to be Arabic ethnic group, and the second largest group is the Kurdish population. There are also Armenians, Turkmen, Assyrians, Chaldeans and others.

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. Approximately 54% of the population live in urban communities, and 46% in rural[31].

Health System

The health system in Syria has seen marked improvements since the 1970s. Life expectancy was only 56 years in the 70s, then increased to 73 years by 2009. Infant mortality was 132 deaths per 1,000 births, then decreased to 80. Maternal mortality was 482 deaths per 100,000 births, then decreased to only 52[32]. However, despite these gains, the overall investment in the health system (at 3% of

[30] CIA World Factbook: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sy.html
[31] Ibid
[32] Syrian Arab Republic, Ministry of Health Statistics. 2009. [Last accessed on 2012 July 29]. Available from: http://www.moh.gov.sy/Default.aspx?tabid=337

Syria's GDP) is relatively low. As a result, there are marked differences in accessibility. In 2009 in Damascus, there was one doctor for every 339 people. That same year in some rural communities, there was one doctor for every 1,906 people[33]. 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 Homs[34], 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.

> **Beware:** This is of course very different to how the health care system works in Germany and many Syrians misinterpret these differences as denial of quality care rather than one of systems. As a result, Syrians in the Germany could express frustration with the health care system.

Mental health still carries a stigma in Syria, which is reflected to a certain extent in the infrastructure around mental health care in Syria. For a population of 22 million people prior to the conflict, there were only 2 mental health facilities and 70 psychiatrists in the whole country[35]. So only the most severe mental health needs were referred for care.

> **Beware:** It is therefore not common to seek help for issues such as depression or anxiety. Persons seeking help at such facilities might be looked at as danger on society or mentally disturbed person by their peers.

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 neighbors

> **Beware:** Refugee families who have become separated from their social networks due to displacement can face particular struggles.

Education

As previously stated, public education is available for free in Syria. After the year 2000 when current president Bashar al-Assad came to power, some schools were privatized, and currently private schools exist, some of which may focus on religious groups such as Franciscan or Armenian Christian.

Core education is divided into 3 levels: 6 years for primary school (children aged 6-12), 3 years for lower secondary school (children 13-15), and 3 years for upper secondary school (ages 16-18). Prior to 2000, attendance was compulsory up to the 6th grade (about age 12), but after 2000 became compulsory to the 9th grade (age 15).

[33] World Health Organization as stated in "Refugees from Syria", Cultural Orientation Resources Center, 2014
[34] 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
[35] Cultural Orientation Resources Center, "Refugees from Syria", 2014

> **Beware:** As a result, there can be generational differences in terms of educational attainment. People in their 40s or older may have attended less school than younger generations, who are more likely to have finished all 12 years of core education and potentially some university as well.

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. While the literacy rate of Syria is fairly high (86.4% total; 91.7% of men and 81% of women are literate[36]), it is therefore important to keep in mind that these rates refer to literacy in Arabic script that differs from the Latin alphabet used in Germany. There are distinct challenges, that may be faced by Syrians with the respective levels of literacy (literate in both scripts; in one script or illiterate) and being aware of these can help to understand individual differences in the adaptation (and especially language learning) process.

Most classes in primary school are mixed-gender. It is common for classes to become single-gendered toward lower secondary school. This does, however, depend on the resources available to the community, meaning in some communities classes may continue to be mixed-gender if they cannot afford additional teachers. This can potentially present obstacles for some girls to continue their education if their families are uncomfortable with them sharing a class with boys.

Uniforms are mandatory in schools, although since the conflict started there has been less focus on uniforms and more on maintaining student attendance. Until 2001, uniforms until the 12th grade were made to look like military uniforms, while after 2001, it changed to be still uniforms but looking more civilian.

> **Beware:** From 7th till 12th grades, pupils were often monitored on any political activities. The principal of the school was not mercenarily the actual head of the school. Military teachers or the political party instructors were often the most powerful actors on school. This could have an impact on the way teachers in integration courses are perceived. Teachers should take confidence-building measures.

As Arabic is the official language of Syria, instruction is in Arabic. However, it is important to note that the spoken style of Arabic differs significantly from the written Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and Syrian students therefore start learning MSA as a kind of additional language on top of regular foreign languages - still English is often taught starting in primary school. Prior to 2000 English was taught starting in lower secondary school, which means there can be a generational difference in terms of comfort level with the English language. Regardless, quality and frequency of English classes can be limited, particularly compared to European schools.

French and Russian may also be offered as additional foreign language, so it is possible individuals could speak 2, 3, or 4 languages, particularly if they, through ethnic or cultural affiliation, speak another local language in addition to Arabic.

[36] CIA World Factbook

Religious classes are mandatory in Syria, but this is based on one's religion. If someone were Muslim they would be expected to attend Islamic classes, while if they were Christian they might attend Christian classes (should they be available).

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. Some families may not feel comfortable with their daughters moving to dormitories to attend university, although if the school is close enough to attend on a day basis, some families may be more comfortable with that. Other families may be entirely comfortable with their daughters staying in a dormitory, so it does depend on specific family preferences.

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 Integration classes are taught in Germany can be intimidating for some Syrians, which can in turn affect attendance if participants feel discouraged. This is of particular concern if someone is preliterate in their own language. Practical lessons which prioritize important phrases families want to learn for their daily routines, and classes that practice language in real settings, tend to be more popular and can support higher attendance.

Geography, History, and Cultural Groups

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 Germany and are able to express their own preferences.

Cultural traditions presentation

Present the key topics using slides and the below presentation notes. 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 decline the offer first and if repeated eat at least some food, but you will be offered more food if you clear the plate. You can leave some food on the plate to signal you cannot eat more. When visiting a restaurant, it is not seen as polite to split the bill. Rather, individuals will often argue over who will pay the bill, and many Syrian men would not be comfortable with letting a woman pay.

Due to the central role of food in hospitality, sharing food can be a good method of befriending Syrians, both through inviting them to share meals, and through giving them opportunities to share their food with the community.

If you consume food in front of Syrians a bite should also be offered to the counterparts.

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. To many Syrians, having halal options is important. Meals are often finished with tea and fruit.

Food plays a large role in Syrian society. Syrians are aware that their cuisine is very rich and they are proud of that.

It is legal to consume alcohol in Syria, although drinking in public can be stigmatized. In large cities some restaurants and nightclubs may sell alcohol, but it can be less common in other areas. Typically, it would only be those who are less strict in their religious practices who would feel comfortable drinking alcohol.

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. Smoking is common in Syria, particularly after meals. Both men and women smoke, although it can be more common amongst men. Many Syrians, however, do adapt to the smoking regulations of Germany.

Common dishes

- Baba ghanoush: mashed smoked aubergine mixed with tahina (sesame paste), olive oil, and seasonings; may also be topped with pomegranate seeds.
- Tabouleh: salad of finely chopped herbs like parsley and mint, with tomatoes, onions, bulgur wheat, oil, lemon juice, and seasonings.
- Fatayer/manaeesh: Arabic bread stuffed with minced meat, spinach, or cheese.
- Fattoush: salad of mixed greens, herbs, tomatoes, onions, and toasted or fried pieces of Arabic flatbread.
- Baklava: filo pastry filled with chopped nuts and drizzled with honey/syrup, and rose water.
- Halaweh al-jibn: semolina dough stuffed with a sweet cheese or cream, and drizzled with syrup.
- Bouza: hand-churned ice cream, often topped with nuts.

- Qatayef: commonly served during Ramadan, these dumplings are stuffed with sweet cream or nuts, deep-fried, and submerged in syrup.

It is important to note that the rate of diabetes in Syria is higher (at about 11% of the population) than the global average (about 9%[37]). In addition, the combination of a relatively sugary diet and frequent lack of access to dental care as refugees, many Syrian refugees could arrived to Germany with dental health care needs.

> **Beware:** Many Syrians believe that some Syrian dishes are native to Syria (such as Tabouleh, Baklava, Dolma, Kunafe, coffee, etc.,) and they might get offended if it was defined as Turkish or Armenian or Lebanese while it is indeed regionally common to cook those dishes in different countries.

Holidays and celebrations

Below is a list of official 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: falls at the end of Ramadan (the fast). 3 days are officially given to this holiday. As it follows the Islamic calendar (which is lunar), the holiday falls at a different time year to year. It is common to celebrate by visiting friends, relatives, and neighbours with sweets. It is also common to give the children of families some money which is called (Eidieh). It is a form of respect between families.
- Ramadan: Leading to Eid al-Fitr is the month of Ramadan which is characterized by fasting and increased prayers. Due to the lunar calendar this month does not correlate with a specific month in the Gregorian calendar used in Germany but instead shifts every year. During Ramadan Muslims are not allowed to eat or drink in the period from sunrise to sunset. Smoking, cursing and sex are forbidden as well. As a consequence, families and/or friends will often meet to celebrate breaking the fast once the sun sets with a big meal. Certain groups like children, sick people, travelers and pregnant women are excepted from fasting.
- Eid al-Adha: occurring approximately two months after Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha coincides with the end of the Hajj (pilgrimage) and commemorates Ibrahim's (Abraham's) sacrifice to Allah. Some may slaughter an animal (if this can be afforded), and/or exchange meat such as lamb or beef to celebrate.
- Independence Day: taking place on 17 April, this celebrates Syrian independence from France in 1946, when the last French troop left Syria. It is more of a government holiday than a popular celebration.
- Easter: there are two official Easters in Syria: the Western Christian Easter as celebrated in Germany, and Eastern Orthodox Easter, which follows about a week later. While it is not widely common to celebrate, in some areas, such as major cities, it may not only be Christians who celebrate, but some Muslims and those from other religious backgrounds as

[37] World Health Organization, 21 March 2016: http://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/who-helps-diabetes-patients-in-syria

well. Common celebrations in cities can include going to a nice restaurant with famous entertainment.

- Christmas: as with Easter, some Muslims may also enjoy celebrating Christmas with Christian friends, while some, particularly if they are strict in their religious practices, may not feel comfortable with this. Many people, sometimes even Christians, use the Christmas tree for the New Year Eve, rather than Christmas. The Christmas tree is not an old practice in Syria and it is not an exclusive practice of Christian families.
- New Year: the 1st and 2nd of January are official holidays, and some, particularly in cities, may celebrate New Year's Eve with parties to mark midnight. However, for others it is not an important holiday, and people will simply spend the days off with family. Many may take the week before and/or the week after to travel with family.
- Mouloud: this celebrates the birth of the Prophet Mohammed.
- 21 March: officially, Mother's Day is celebrated on this date, with a mother cooking for her family to come visit, who will also bring gifts and more food. However, Newroz (Kurdish New Year) also falls on this date, although it is not an official Syrian holiday.
- Valentine's Day: while not an official holiday, it is quite popular to celebrate in some areas of Syria, with people exchanging red hearts and teddy bears.
- Birthdays: some families may celebrate birthdays, while many others will not. It is not uncommon for Syrians to not know their exact date of birth; it is fairly common to wait to register a child, and some may wait to register several children together.

Except for the Christian holidays no other religious holiday is taken into account in Germany. Practitioners should still be aware of these other traditions as they can have an impact on their Syrian counterpart. Showing respect towards religious rituals could mean to avoid laying meetings or appointments on the Eids or giving room for employees to pray.

Praying times

The faith of Islam officially requires five prayers a day that are supposed to be performed at very specific times, with the earliest prayer (Fajr) scheduled before sunrise and the latest ('Isha) at night. Prayers are to be performed facing Mekka and usually do not exceed a few minutes. While many Syrians (including Muslims) decide not to pray five times, some religious believers attribute great importance to this service and allowing for flexible breaks at the workplace or in public institutions can be an important sign of cultural awareness.

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.

If someone asks for help, they often expect a definitive answer. Phrases such as “I will try to…” or “I will look into if we can…” are not seen as an allowance for limitations in capability or possibility. Rather, many Syrians may read this as an attempt to be evasive because someone is unwilling to help.

Confusion could arise if the German counterpart does not understand that some Syrians don´t like to tell them straight away “no” and instead say “yes” or “maybe” but then don´t stick to it. Saying “no” would be rude in the eye of the Syrian and Germans think it´s rude saying “yes” and then doing the opposite.

When speaking, it is common for women to speak at a lower volume, while men are expected to speak at a higher volume.

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. Someone could ask 100 people for help and get turned down by 99 of those people, but all that matters is they get one “yes”.

As a result, many Syrian refugees may bring this survival technique with them to Germany 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. The simplest method of doing this is to redirect refugees to make that request of the relevant focal point directly, stating they are the person with the most knowledge in this area. It can be very tempting to make promises or parallel offers of help, but this can do further damage by raising expectations or creating confusion, especially when an individual may not know the whole story.

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 (e.g. Kurds). For those who speak Arabic, interpreters who speak the Levantine dialect (from Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon) would be best.

Clothing

Like anywhere, the choice a person makes in their clothing has to do with personal beliefs, values, comfort, and what they grew up with. So 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, which is like a colourful long dress or coat covering the arms to the wrists and legs to the ankles. These are commonly worn with the hijab

(Muslim religious headscarf), which can also have a variety of colours and patterns. 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 jelbab. 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. For those who choose to wear the hijab, they may start around age 13, although depending on the individual or family, they could start earlier or later.

In addition, some women may wear a headscarf that is different from the hijab, which can be worn by both Muslim and Christian women. Some older women from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds may also have some facial tattoos, which is a traditional beauty practice.

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. This form of dress became popular under the Ottoman empire and can be worn by both Muslim and Christian women. It is distinct from the niqab, which is not very common in Syria. Originating in the Saudi Peninsula, it has become a recent addition. Also long and black, this form of dress can be distinguished from the melaya by the fact that it covers most of the face except the eyes. The niqab is worn by Muslim women. The burqa, which covers the entire body including all of the face, originates in Central Asian areas like Pakistan or Afghanistan, and is not worn in Syria.

While it is tempting to use visual cues as a clue to someone's personality or preferences, given the diversity of clothing, it is important to not make assumptions about someone based on the clothing they wear.

For men, traditional clothing includes the jalabiya (in some areas of Syria also called an abaya), which is a long loose robe covering the arms to the wrist and legs to the ankles. Their 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 influential poets, such as Nizar Qabbani, who have been influential in modern Arabic literature. Syrians are also well known for their handicrafts (such as mosaic woodworking), with many of these products exported abroad.

While Egyptian cinema is famous throughout the Arabic-speaking world, Syrian television drama is highly renowned, with many Arabic speakers preferring Syrian dramas prior to the start of the conflict.

Singing is also a very popular pastime, and there are a range of famous Syrian singers using traditional and/or modern pop influences. Leena Shamamean, a singer famous for both her traditional songs and fusions of western and eastern instruments.

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. However, it is usually seen as impolite for youth to make eye contact with elders.

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. You can always follow someone's lead when first meeting them to determine how best to greet them. However, if you offer your hand and someone covers their heart instead, usually they are not insulted, but are rather communicating their preferred greeting.

Same-sex holding hands and greeting kiss does not have any sexual reference. It is very likely for same-sex friends to hold hands while walking in the street.

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.

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 are several facets to family structure in Syria that need to be unpacked.

First of all, there may be single parents, either because their spouse has passed away, or due to divorce. Divorce is legal in Syria, although it does still carry a social stigma, particularly if it is the woman requesting a divorce.

It is also legal to have more than one wife (up to four wives), although this is less common in Syria than some other predominantly Muslim countries. A Syrian man might have a second wife if he is particularly rich, if his first wife is unable to have a child, or if his brother passes away, he may marry

the widow to support her and any children as a continued part of the family. Third and fourth wives in Syria are fairly rare.

You will also notice the idea of nuclear family is between a man and woman. Homosexuality is not only taboo in Syria, but illegal, and can be punished with up to 3 years in prison if prosecuted[38]. Many Syrian families may therefore face some culture shock when encountering attitudes and rights toward LGBTIQ communities in Germany. More importantly, however, there may be LGBTIQ 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. Women can legally marry at the age of 17, and men at the age of 18. It is possible to authorize exceptions, however. In 2017, approximately 13% of women aged 20-24 were married before they were 18 years old[39]. Sexual relationships outside marriage are generally not acceptable.

> **Beware:** In Germany the age for marriage is 18. The marriage of minors below the age of 16 is invalid. These principles also apply if marriages have been effectively concluded under foreign law. Further irritation could be caused when married unaccompanied minors are entrusted in the youth office's care. Persons affected will need to know that German authority will prove if the minor would have to split form their spouse.

In terms of courtship, in some areas if a man and woman are interested in each other, they may speak to their mothers, who would arrange a meeting between the families. If an agreement for marriage is reached, it would then be acceptable for the couple to go out in public together. Other families may be comfortable with their children dating and breaking up without getting married. What would be important is that there was not a known sexual element to the relationship.

In some areas, young men may follow a woman they are interested in down the street, trying to talk to her. In these areas, such behaviour would not be seen as harassment by either men or women, but could cause alarm in Germany. In such incidents, it would be helpful if local authorities could have an open discussion about different expectations in Germany.

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. A good deal of discussion may happen within the household before a decision is reached, and in some families women are quite confident in speaking for the family. However, in some circumstances, a woman may have been

[38] Reid, Graeme, "The Double Threat for Gay Men in Syria", 28 April 2014, Washington Post. Accessed on Human Rights Watch website 5 June 2018.
[39] United Nations Children's Fund global databases, 2018, accessed via https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/child-marriage/ on 12 June 2018

relatively removed from decision-making, and in such situations if she is suddenly the head of household due to the loss of her spouse, some may be overwhelmed with the sudden responsibility of making decisions for the family unit.

Daughters typically help mothers with the housework, but both older brothers and sisters care for younger siblings, for example by dropping them off to school. Along these lines, 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, but allow them to roam and play, particularly in communal settings, with the expectation that all in the community will be looking out for the child's wellbeing. It can therefore be helpful to hold discussions with families of German laws, expectations and attitudes toward parenting. Further explaining potential risks associated in Germany with what may have been common in Syria can also be helpful for better informing behaviour.

Family life

When parents are too old to care for themselves, they often move in with one of their children, typically the eldest son. It is therefore common to have several generations of a family living in the same household. Housing in Germany can therefore be a bit of a shock for some families, particularly in cases of linked families who may be expecting to live in the same housing based on their lived experiences in Syria.

Physical or corporal punishment as a form of discipline can be fairly common in Syria, either in cases of parents disciplining children or, in some cases, a husband may see it as acceptable to "discipline" his wife. While there are general assault laws in Syria, there are no domestic violence laws specifically[40], and as a result there is not a robust legal mechanism around these issues.

Domestic violence is discussed in the pre-departure orientation that Syrian refugees receive before they are resettled to Germany that may cause anxiety with parents that the Government will take their children away from them. If we think of corporal punishment as a disciplinary tactic that has been handed down in Syria through generations, when confronted with how this tactic is no longer acceptable in their new environment, some parents may feel at a loss to guide the development of their children into functioning adults. It can therefore be important to not only discuss the problems with corporal punishment, but also present pedagogical accepted methods to discipline and raise children to replace this "tool". While conversations around domestic violence are started in pre-departure orientation, it is therefore important to consider how to continue this discussion in constructive ways after families arrive to Germany.

Disabilities, both physical and mental, can still carry a stigma in Syrian communities. Having a disabled family member can, for example, affect one's marriage prospects. As a result, disabled family members may be kept more private and within the home. Some parents may also not have even expected disabled children to go to school, as there may not have been supportive services available in Syria to facilitate their education. It can therefore be important to reach out to families

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

in this situation to inform them of options for their family members participating more in education and society, as this may be new to some families.

Finally, keeping pets is not very 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, and when inviting Syrians to an event where pets might be present, it is therefore important to keep pets contained until you get a sense of the individual's comfort level with animals. In the case of dogs the religious reservations mentioned earlier may also play an important role.

Family and neighbors are considered very important and it is common to visit on another spontaneously. In Germany a visit without an appointment could cause confusion.

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 German 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 German 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. It can therefore be helpful to err on the side of caution by arranging visits of female staff, or ensuring the male head is present if there is a male visitor, until you get to know a specific family's preferences.

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 and will be unfamiliar with many of the expectations potential employers often hold for job seekers

in the Germany. It is therefore important to work with Syrian refugees to share the expected process and build necessary soft skills.

When it comes to expectations many Syrians have of the workplace, many are accustomed to receiving their salaries on a weekly rather than monthly basis. This greatly affects how families are used to budgeting, and it can take time and support to adjust to the monthly budgeting model more common in Germany. Syrians in general are also not used to paying taxes as the bulk of Syrian government revenue came from other sources. As a result, for many Syrians the idea of paying taxes will be new, further affecting their budgeting as well as their attitudes and satisfaction with work structures in Germany.

Syrians are typically used to taking several breaks throughout the day, be it to pray, enjoy tea or coffee, and/or socialize. However, the idea of taking holidays throughout the year may be unfamiliar to some, particularly in rural communities. In general, Syrian workplaces follow a more hierarchical structure than is typical in Germany. Bosses tend to share top-down decisions rather than consulting with staff to reach a decision. Being asked to brainstorm or input into work practices will therefore likely be quite new for many Syrians.

Transferring qualifications to Germany has been a challenge for many Syrians. Highly skilled Syrians may therefore struggle to re-enter their professions. It is therefore highly important to build a plan with individuals toward transferring their qualifications (if desired) as early as possible. This is particularly important for managing expectations in terms of how long this process may take and alternative employment that might be needed in the interim, and to help them not feel trapped in entry-level positions during what can be a long process.

Social support

Social services as they are commonly understood in Germany 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. As a result of seeing social services as a replacement for family support, and due to a lack of experience engaging with formal social services systems, many Syrian refugees may therefore hold relatively high expectations of support. When one asks for help from family or friends, they typically feel comfortable making requests that range from major to miniscule. If support workers receive requests for help that appear outside the norm, this can in part be where these requests originate from. It can take time for individuals to adjust and understand the limits and boundaries of formal support networks versus social networks.

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.

Police in different states of Germany have engaged a variety of strategies to support integration of refugees and provide prevention programs to reduce criminal offences.

Snowball discussion exercise

This exercise is designed to help participants connect the information they have received about Syrian life with the cultural dimensions discussed under section 2.2. By using the cultural dimensions to reflect on the input, 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 section 2.2, identify potential differences in cultural dimensions between Syrian and German 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. 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 section 2.2, 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.

2.5 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, Laptop and beamer
- Speakers
- Internet connection to stream video clips
- Three video clips of living conditions in a camp, informal settlement, and urban setting

Presentation

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 lives[41], 5.6 million have fled the country and registered as refugees[42], and an additional 13.1 million people within Syria require humanitarian assistance[43]. At times it has been estimated that up to 5 million people throughout Syria suffered interruptions to water supplies as a result of the conflict[44], with this number increasing at times of heightened conflict[45]. Electrical grids have been similarly affected; in 2015, an estimated 83% of Syrians were living without regular access to electricity[46]. Housing has also been significantly reduced, with over 20% of the housing stock either partially or totally destroyed[47].

As in many conflicts, health facilities have unfortunately been targets in themselves. As of the end of 2015, 640 health workers had lost their lives, and an estimated 58% of public hospitals were either only partially functional, or had closed down completely[48]. There has also been a drastic shortage of medicine, as the majority of medicines used in Syria were produced around Damascus, Homs, and Aleppo, which have been areas of focus for some of the most intense fighting in the conflict[49]. Vaccination programmes have also been disrupted, and many Syrians are increasingly vulnerable to outbreaks and diseases[50].

In addition, schools and the education system have been greatly affected by the conflict. A third of schools have been damaged, destroyed, or repurposed as a shelter for the internally displaced or as a base of operations for military groups[51], and 36% of school-aged children are not attending school[52]. In some areas such as Idlib, 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 students[53].

Increases in unemployment and poverty have also been a major impact of the conflict. By the end of 2014, unemployment rose to 57.7%, with an estimated four out of five Syrians living below the

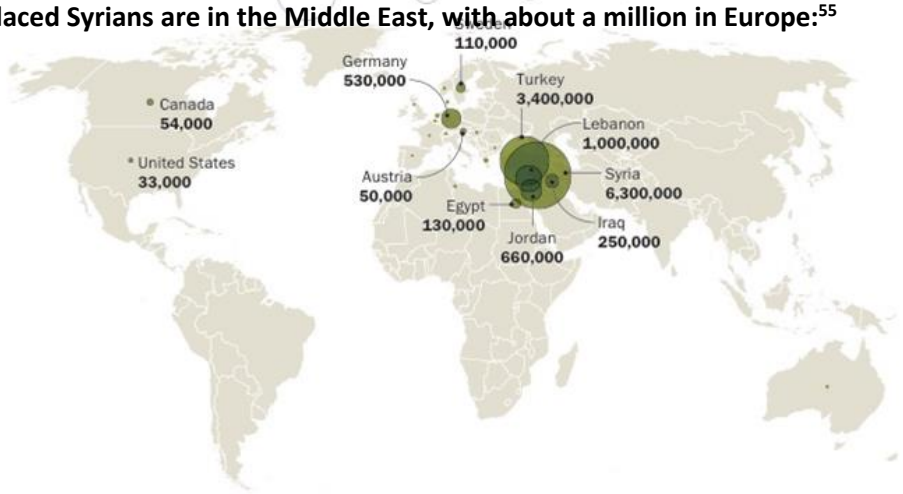
[41] Human Rights Watch, "Syria: Events of 2016", https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/syria
[42] UNHCR, 31 May 2018, https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria
[43] UNOCHA, *2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview: Syrian Arab Republic*, November 2017
[44] UNICEF, "Sever water shortages compound the misery of millions in war-torn Syria", 25 August 2015
[45] For example, over 5 million people living in Damascus alone were without water for a month, Union of Medical Care and Relief Organizations, 23 January 2017.
[46] Boghani, Priyanka, "In Syria, Darkness Takes on New Meaning after Four Years of War", 11 March 2015, *Frontline*
[47] World Bank, 10 July 2017, "The Toll of War: The Economic and Social Consequences of the Conflict in Syria", http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/syria/publication/the-toll-of-war-the-economic-and-social-consequences-of-the-conflict-in-syria
[48] WHO, "Five facts on the Syrian crisis and its impact on health", 12 January 2016, http://www.who.int/hac/crises/syr/releases/28january2016/en/
[49] 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
[50] WHO, "Five facts on the Syrian crisis and its impact on health", 12 January 2016, http://www.who.int/hac/crises/syr/releases/28january2016/en/
[51] UNICEF, *UNICEF's Response to the Syria Crisis: 2018*, https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/files/2018-04_-_UNICEF_response_to_the_Syria_Crisis.pdf
[52] We Made a Promise: Ensuring Learning Pathways and Protection for Syrian Children and Youth, No Lost Generation (NLG) report, April 2018.
[53] 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

poverty line[54]. 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 where the majority of Syrian refugees are in fact located. While the below image from 2017 demonstrates that even in the height of movements to Europe, the vast majority of Syrian refugees were staying in neighbouring countries in the region, not in Europe itself.

Most displaced Syrians are in the Middle East, with about a million in Europe:[55]



It is in light of these numbers 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 Germany are Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, Turkey, and Egypt. The number of registered Syrian refugees per country are[56]:

[54] Al Jazeera, "Aid agencies slam UN Security Council over Syria", 12 March 2015, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2015/03/war-plunged-syrians-poverty-150312022852894.html

[55] "Note: These are stock estimates from the start of the Syrian conflict in 2011. Estimates of displaced Syrians are rounded and include the internally displaced, refugees, asylum applicants and those with protection status. The 10 largest displaced Syrian populations and the United States are labeled; countries with populations below 1,000 not shown. Australia´s estimate include a small number of Iraqi refugees due to data limitation." See http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/01/29/where-displaced-syrians-have-resettled/ft_18-01-26_syriarefugees_map/

- Lebanon: 982, 012
- Turkey: 3,554,072
- Jordan: 666,596
- Iraq: 251,157
- Egypt: 129,737[57]

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. This can depend on the number of refugees, ability for local infrastructure to accommodate refugees, economic health, as well as domestic public opinion. Lebanon, for example, has seen an increase of almost 25% of its total population[58] as a result of Syrian refugees, which can put a great deal of strain on infrastructure and public attitudes. 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. Whether or not refugees have affordable access to legal employment, education, and health care can of course have a huge impact on a refugee's daily life.

A second factor is the specific environment a refugee is living in. Most times when we think refugees we think of camps, because that is what is often shown in the news. However, the reality is that less than 10% of registered Syrian refugees in the region are living in camps[59]. 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 services depending on what is available.

An additional factor is the individual resources a refugee has at their disposal. Were they able to flee with cash savings, or was everything tied up in property and other immovable items? Do they have a social network in the area they have fled to, or are they entirely on their own? These resources also have a huge impact on daily life.

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. In Lebanon, for example, the residency permit must be renewed every year and costs over 200 USD each time. While there have been announcements to waive this fee, it would not cover all Syrians[60].

[56] Figures should be regularly updated to reflect evolving situations in the region
[57] UNHCR, http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria, last accessed on 10 July 2018
[58] European Commission, April 2018, *Managing the Refugee Crisis: EU Support to Lebanon*, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/eu-support-to-lebanon-factsheet.pdf
[59] UNHCR, 31 May 2018, https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria
[60] Human Rights Watch, 14 February 2017, "Lebanon: New Refugee Policy a Step Forward", https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/01/12/lebanon-residency-rules-put-syrians-risk

As many are unable to afford annual renewal fees, an estimated 60% of Syrian adults lack legal residency and subsequent work authorization in Lebanon[61]. 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; for example, in Lebanon approximately 71% living under the poverty line[62].

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 experienced by 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 may have started to dress more conservatively than they would have previously, while others may stay more within the home than the used to, only feeling comfortable going out if they have a male family member to escort them. 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 communities[63].

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

[61] Ibid
[62] UNHCR, 6 January 2017, "Syrian Refugees in Lebanon Vulnerable and Reliant on Aid, Study Shows", http://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2017/1/586f51a44/syrian-refugees-lebanon-vulnerable-reliant-aid-study-shows.html
[63] 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/

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 distress[64]. 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. Show the video from Zaatari camp, settlements in Lebanon, and urban living in Urfa, Turkey after each relevant picture is shown. Before showing the pictures and films, instruct participants to take it in and note what strikes them.

Video links:

- World Food Program, "Three Lives Being Lived in Zaatari Refugee Camp": http://www.wfp.org/videos/three-lives-being-lived-zaatari-refugee-camp
- TRT World, "Thousands of Syrian refugees in Lebanon told to leave camps": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rymFnTGXOwY **[*Presenter's note: be sure to clarify here that these are informal tent settlements, which are distinct from camps in that unlike camps, where the host government puts aside a piece of land for the UN to plan a camp around that meets minimum standards, in informal settlements refugees have essentially built their own structures out of what they can find in any area available, and conditions therefore do not necessarily meet minimum standards and can be more haphazard. In this video, refugees were therefore asked to leave because the settlement was in an unsafe location, too close to military flights.*]**
- UNHCR, "Syrian Refugees: As an Urban Refugee in Turkey": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7t_DGDop81o

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. The family in Zaatari camp spoke of returning to Syria once it's safe to do so. Abdulrahman hopes to settle down in Turkey and continue his studies. The facilitator should use this as a lead in to the discussion of durable solutions.

2.6 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:

[64] 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

- 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 and other practitioners 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

- 15-20-minute presentation on cultural adjustment
- 15-20-minute presentation on resilience
- 45-60 minute exercise and group discussion activity

Materials

- Slides, Laptop and beamer
- Exercise handout
- Stationary

Presentation

<u>Presentation on cultural adjustment</u>

Oftentimes, discussions on adjusting to a new culture tend to focus on culture shock, which is a description of the negative emotions and experiences that come from a much larger cultural adjustment process. It is therefore helpful to examine what it is that we mean by culture shock specifically. It is common to come across definitions similar to the following:

"A state of bewilderment and distress experienced by an individual who is suddenly exposed to a new, strange, of foreign social and cultural environment."[65]

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 ("bewilderment and distress"). There are a wide range of feelings and symptoms associated with cultures shock, such as: feeling homesick, helpless, isolated, disorientated, depressed, sad…

The second issue with this definition is that it 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

[65] From Dictionary.com

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 time[66].

As we have seen from section 2.2, 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 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. The individual is no longer able to accurately read a situation, and may therefore not know how to best respond. This of course results in misunderstandings, which can range from the severe to the benign, but all of which contributes to culture shock[67].

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 town[68].

- Anger
- Boredom
- Irritability
- Anxiety
- Intense homesickness
- Panic attacks
- Loss of motivation
- Excessive amounts of time spent on insular activities such as sleeping or watching TV
- Loss of self-confidence
- Feelings of helplessness or hopelessness
- Withdrawal
- Compulsive behavior
- Suicidal thoughts[69]

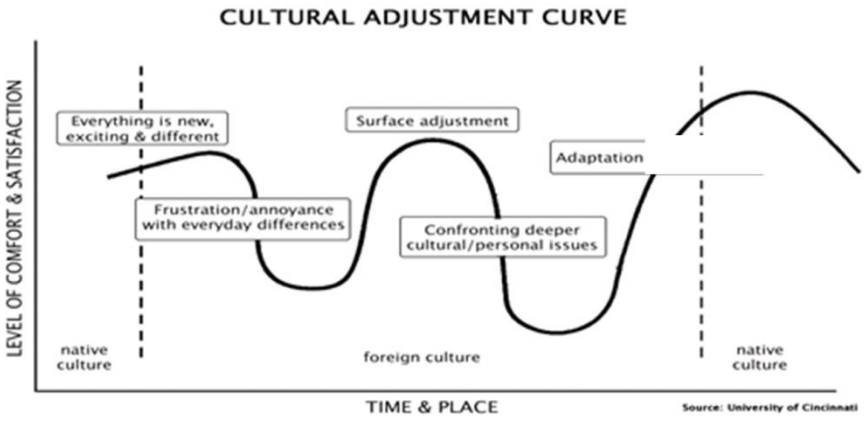
Some of these symptoms overlap with symptoms of trauma, and it is important to note that if someone is suffering from PTSD, it may compound their experiences of culture shock. A person can have several symptoms at the same time, symptoms can come in cycles, and a pattern can develop over time. Yet without knowing or understanding culture shock, the person experiencing it may have a difficult time understanding where there 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

[66] 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/
[67] Ibid
[68] Ibid
[69] 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/

nuanced framework for understanding cultural adjustment, as it acknowledges the second major dip that many may experience. The below graph 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 first is commonly referred to as the honeymoon stage. When first arriving in a new country, you can feel the excitement of new experiences and opportunities. You encounter fascination with both large and small differences, and feel a sense of optimism and hope for the future.

However, over time all the newness of the culture remains, but you do not have a routine to ground yourself in the experience. In this second stage, you can start to feel overwhelmed and unable to manage daily life effectively. On day one, having one hot tap and one cold tap is a fascinating difference, but on day thirty, you just want one tap with a manageable water temperature. You insulted someone but you do not know how, or how to make it better. The clerk at the store got annoyed with you because you took a long time to count out your money.

Over time, however, you can start to build a routine and a sense of how to manage daily life, which brings you to the third stage of surface adjustment. At this point, you may have a favourite grocery store and you know where every item you want is located in the store. You may have started to make some friends, and you may even have your first new job. All of this can contribute to feeling like you now know how life works in this new environment.

However, what that then gives you is time to reflect on the deeper differences in the fourth stage. It is here that you may start to grapple more with that part of the "cultural iceberg"[70] that is underneath the water, and your own identity in this new culture. Yes, you have friends, but you do not understand half of what they are discussing because it is movies and music and history you have not experienced with them. You are tired of always translating your thoughts into a foreign language. Your new job does not give you the status, rewards, and identity you may have spent much of your life building for yourself. You are exhausted and discouraged that life is not more simple and natural after all the effort you have put into understanding this new environment. You

[70] See Section 2.2.

can feel disconnected from a place you have already worked so hard just to adjust to at the surface level.

When confronting the fourth stage, if you are able to mindfully look at the differences you are willing to accept, and what of yourself you can keep and what you are willing to change, you start to renegotiate your identity. One's self-identity may show different facets from one cultural environment to another. By renegotiating your identity, you may begin to feel at home in your new cultural environment, bringing you to the fifth stage of adaptation.

There are a few things to unpack from this model. While it is drawn with a solid line, it is more accurate to think of it as a squiggly line, with little ups and downs all along the way. One can be in a larger dip but still feel a sense of achievement one day, or at a larger peak and still have a particularly challenging day.

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. For example, children tend to do better, as they learn the language faster and adapt more quickly. Those who have travelled before, or with higher levels of education, may also fare better, as they have some experiences to help them through the challenges. It may therefore be the elderly, those with limited formal education, or those who never intended to leave their home town let alone their country who may particularly struggle.

Unfortunately, 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.

The cultural adjustment model can also be thought of as cyclical, with people periodically bouncing back to times of daily frustration or challenges with deeper differences, even after largely feeling at home in a culture. These reversions may not be as challenging or shocking as they were at first, but can still periodically occur[71].

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 Germany. However, the vast majority have not always been refugees. They had lives and achievements and goals long before they were forced to flee. Those lives were put on hold when they were displaced, and many are looking to restart normal life once they arrive in a resettlement country. Many will therefore base their expectations not on comparisons with their lives as a refugee, but with the lives they had before displacement. Unfortunately, that is not something that can be replicated, either in Germany or anywhere else in the world, and as they work to adjust to Germany, many will also be

[71] 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/

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.

Presentation on resilience[72]

"We need to get rid of that thinking that our people are traumatized. We were traumatized, yes this is true and that is fine. But that does not mean what we are. We are something different and we can provide. We can offer. We can contribute."[73]

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. Just as people who have refugee status were not always refugees throughout their lives previously, the term "refugee" does not need to be the defining feature of the shape their lives take moving forward. 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 situations*".[74] While it may be tempting to think of resilience as an innate quality, research suggests it is in fact an ongoing, dynamic process[75].

Focusing on resilience requires a change in perspective in which efforts no longer centres around deficits and risk factors, but rather looks at what resources and capacities are available to solve problems, and how to value and expand the potential of a refugee. Strengths-based frameworks can therefore play a major role in moving beyond narratives of trauma (which can cause more harm than good when overemphasized) to facilitate resilience[76].

Focusing on strengths and supporting resilience therefore requires not just individual resources, but those of an immediate and broader social environment as well. It is something we can work with refugees to foster, working to rebuild their long-term abilities to handle current and future challenges in Germany.

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

- Helpful attitudes include:
  - Self-efficacy
  - Confidence and self-esteem
  - Optimism

[72] The below content is adapted in large part from the Admin4All curriculum, Session 10.
[73] Refugee participant in study developed by Marlowe, J. (2009). Beyond the discourse of trauma: Shifting the focus on Sudanese refugees. *Journal of Refugee Studies, 23*(2).
[74] Admin4All curriculum, Session 10.
[75] Hutchinson, M. & P. Dorsett (2012). What does the literature say about resilience in refugee people? Implications for practice. *Journal of Social Inclusion*, 3(2).
[76] Ibid

  - 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.

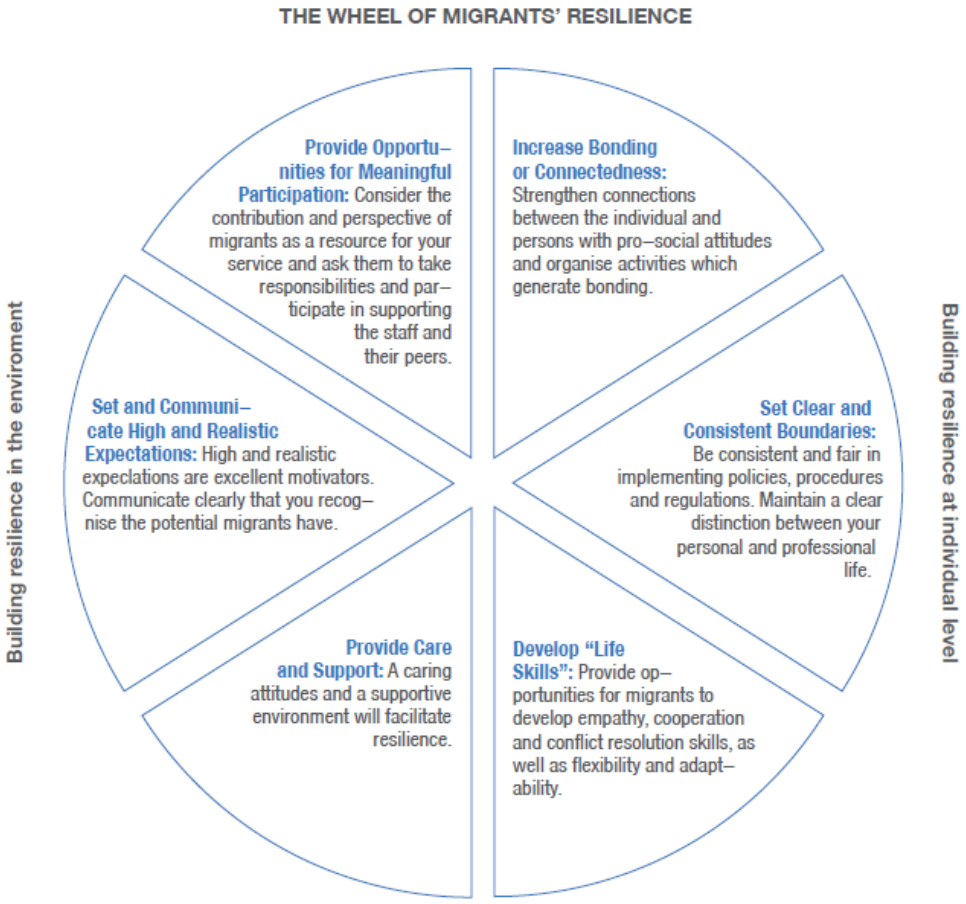
Yet personal resources are only a part of the resilience puzzle. Links to immediate social environments are equally important, including:

- 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.



Care and support: Listen to a refugee's concerns (even when it is often repeated) and answer their questions, clearly, consistently and appropriately. Be careful of providing too much information in one meeting as it may overwhelm and create more confusion than it clarifies.

High expectations: Express your certainty that an individual can handle a specific situation or task, and that you believe in their strength and resourcefulness. If creating an action plan to address a situation that requires actions from both staff and the refugee, you can always adapt tasks to varying skill levels based on that individual's needs.

Opportunities for participation: Brainstorm with refugees for ways of addressing problems, both on an individual support level and in terms of the broader support practices of your organization. Encourage refugees to take responsibility for supporting staff and/or other refugees, and create buy-in into the process.

Bonding or connectedness: Provide refugees with positive activities to be done together with other refugees and/or other members of the community. Offering opportunities for refugees to share their culture with their new community is as important as inviting them to existing cultural events in the receiving community.

Clear and consistent boundaries: Be fair and consistent in setting boundaries, as well as in communicating which staff member is responsible for handling what kinds of issues. As discussed in section 2.3, refugees may ask many different people for help as possible, even if it is not their area of focus. It is important to redirect them to the appropriate person consistently to communicate the boundaries of the support system.

Life skills: Encourage refugees to communicate their thoughts (while balancing the need to ensure conversations do not escalate to focusing only on a problem and not a solution). Provide opportunities for refugees to develop and practice empathy, cooperation, and flexibility (for example, by setting new tasks or going for field trips within a regularly scheduled integration or orientation class)[77].

Training exercise[78]

This exercise is designed to help participants to identify the different stages of 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 can change as a result of individual transformation, and the individual needs for support. It will enable practitioners to identify useful ways to handle the symptoms of culture shock and putting them into practice.

Duration:

Approx. 45-60 minutes

Material needed:

- Handouts
- Stationary
- Flipchart and marker

Participants read through a number of comments likely to be made by individuals in one of the five stages of culture shock. They should each comment and write down what stage of culture shock they think the individual concerned is most likely to be in.

Comments:

1. 'We do that too, only in a different way.'

[77] Adapted from Admin4All curriculum Session 10, and from *Using the Resiliency Wheel in Crisis Intervention*, Nan Henderson M.S.W., https://www.resiliency.com/free-articles-resources/crisis-response-and-the-resiliency-wheel/, last accessed 11 June 2018.
[78] The exercise has been taken from: http://www.culturewise.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Cultural-awareness-training-exercise-pack.pdf

This document was funded by the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund

2. 'Why can't they just ...?'

3. 'I can't wait to tell ... about this.'

4. 'You don't understand them like I do.'

5. 'Isn't this exciting?'

6. 'These people are so damn ...'

7. 'Only ...more months before I can go home'

8. 'Aren't they interesting?'

9. 'Actually, I am beginning to like this'

10. 'Everything here is so difficult!'

11. 'We would never do that where I come from'

12. 'On the other hand, why shouldn't they do that?'

Culture-shock Checklist handout

Ask participants to read each of the following strategies and techniques for dealing with culture shock. On the right-hand side, they should write down some specific behaviours that describe how you can put each strategy or technique into practice. The first two have some examples already inserted:

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Strategies and techniques	How you can put this in practice.
1. Anticipate it - do not let it take you by surprise.	For example, make a list of all the things likely to cause me culture shock.
2. Find out as much as you can about where you are going before you leave.	For example, attend a country-specific briefing. Read a cultural awareness book.
3. Identify familiar things you can do to keep you busy and active.	
4. Fight stress, do not deny your symptoms and do not give in to them.	
5. Monitor your drinking and eating habits.	
6. Give yourself time to adapt. Making mistakes is a normal part of learning.	
7. Discuss your experiences with your colleagues.	
8. Expect the same symptoms when you come home.	
9. Think about the positive aspects of culture shock.	
10. Retain a sense of humour!	

After giving the participants 10-15 minutes to fill in the blanks, bring the groups back to present their ideas. Allow/encourage participants from other tables to contribute to the topic if appropriate.

In terms of supporting refugees to build up resilience the participants should further be encouraged to discuss:

- What services are currently provided amongst the participants that could help building up resilience?
- What possible changes might they make to services to better meet his needs for resilience support in the assigned sector(s).

Participants should write their ideas down on flipchart paper. Give groups twenty -30 minutes for this discussion.

2.7 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.

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