

*Living in the United States:
Life Skills for Burundian Refugees
Volume 2*

A Guide for Facilitators

U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
Supporting the Successful Integration of Burundian Refugees
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Introduction

Welcome to *Living in the United States: Life Skills for Burundian Refugees, Volume 2, A Guide for Facilitators*. The U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) created the life skills materials for Burundian refugees to use as they adjust to their resettlement communities in the United States. USCRI designed these materials for individual or group use with or without a facilitator. Using the materials in groups with a facilitator, however, enhances the learning experience for participants and encourages further discussion, questions, and participatory activities. The purpose of *A Guide for Facilitators* is to assist you, the facilitator, to use the life skills materials as effectively as possible whether you are a refugee resettlement agency employee, another service provider, or a volunteer. Thank you for taking the time to use the life skills materials and helping Burundian refugees in their adjustment to living in the United States.

How to Use this Guide

This guide will assist you in explaining and expanding upon the eight life skills topics in Volume 2. The materials are flexible and we encourage you to modify the lesson plans, as well as add your own questions and activities, to fit the needs of the participants. In this guide, each topic has a set of objectives, discussion questions, suggestions for further review, and evaluation questions. These are further explained below.

Objectives are listed at the beginning of each chapter outlining ideas participants should be familiar with after completing the topic. To best achieve these objectives, we suggest using the *Life Skills* video, in combination with the corresponding print materials, group discussion, and other activities.

Further Review helps to explain issues in the life skills topics in greater detail and/or cover areas that were not addressed. Facilitators may want to cover these points after watching the video.

Discussion Questions are suggested for each topic to encourage critical thinking and problem-solving, and to help clients relate and apply the topic to their personal lives. Some questions are more useful to ask before watching the video, while some are better suited for discussions during or after the video.

Activities encourage participants to apply or further explore the topic. Many activities bring lessons into practice through role-play, site visits, or guest speakers. Furthermore, they help participants practice skills that are important to living in the United States. Activities will be most effective when carried out after watching the *Life Skills* video. This is your chance to be creative!

Evaluation Questions check participants' understanding of the topic, as well as serve as a checklist for facilitators to rate the effectiveness of the lesson plan. After facilitating some or all of the topics, please fill out the Life Skills evaluation form included on the following page to help USCRI evaluate the materials' effectiveness and improve on future resources.

Life Skills for Burundian Refugees, Volume 2 Evaluation
Questionnaire for Facilitators

Please answer the following questions after facilitating Life Skills workshops. Your responses will assist us in developing future Life Skills topics to support the successful integration of Burundian refugees. The completed questionnaire can be emailed to Jessica P. Hansen at jhansen@uscrdc.org, or mailed to USCRI, 2231 Crystal Drive, Suite 350, Arlington, VA 22202-3711. Evaluation forms can also be downloaded at www.refugees.org. Thank you!

1. Overall, how effective do you find the Life Skills materials?

Not at all Somewhat Very

Comments: _____

2. Did you find the facilitator’s guide useful? Why or why not?

3. How would you improve these materials?

4. Additional comments or suggestions for future topics:

TOPIC 1 - LAWS AND RIGHTS

Objectives

- Understand the basics about the legal system in the United States.
- Identify key rights and responsibilities of living in the United States.
- Learn about basic driving laws, criminal offenses, and the punishments that could result from breaking the law.
- Know when to use emergency and non-emergency phone numbers.



Further Review

- Share local non-emergency numbers for the police and medical transportation, and explain when to use these and when to use 911.
- Describe what information is important and useful to the police when a crime is committed (for example: physical descriptions or license plate numbers).
- Go over local laws, such as drinking in public, and noise violations.
- Explain where and how to fill out an AR-11 form.
- Locate the nearest police station, fire department, hospital, and Department of Motor Vehicles.
- Give information about how to access study materials for the driving test.
- Discuss what car insurance the state requires, or any alternatives to insurance.
- Explain what to do if someone fails a driving test or has a license revoked.
- Share what to do if someone receives a ticket from a police officer or a court summons.
- Review the rights individuals have and how to act if confronted or arrested by police.
- Describe how to request an interpreter when talking to the police.
- Explain how to file a complaint if someone is mistreated by a police officer.
- Explain how disregarding the law could lead to deportation.

Discussion Topics

- Why is knowing, understanding, and following the law so important?
- Which rights do you feel are most important and why?
- Why is it important to learn local driving laws and receive a driver's license before you begin to drive?
- What concerns do you have about the laws or the legal system in the United States?
- Are there any situations you can imagine in which you are not sure if you should call 911 or a non-emergency number for the police?

Activities

- Driving test: Go over study materials and basic driving laws and give a practice written test.
- Mock pull-over: Set up chairs like seats in a car. Have participants simulate being pulled over by a police officer and demonstrate the proper steps to take, including how to request an interpreter, if needed.
- Imaginary accident: Have two sets of people pretend they've gotten into a minor accident. Have them demonstrate how to notify the police, what information to exchange, etc.
- Emergency vs. non-emergency: Give a list of examples and have the group respond with whether they should call 911 or the non-emergency number.

Evaluation Questions

- What are two examples of rights and two examples of responsibilities you have while living in the U.S.?
- What are two things you must have before you begin driving a car?
- What are some of the consequences for breaking the law?
- What are some instances for which you would call 911? What about some instances for which you would not call 911, but the non-emergency number?

TOPIC 2 – MANAGING YOUR MONEY

Objectives

- Learn how to create and use a budget to help manage finances.
- Identify the differences between “wants” and “needs.”
- Understand how to apply for and use a credit card.
- Learn what credit is, and how to build and maintain good credit.

Further Review

- Further explain credit, loans, interest rates, and other financial terms.
- Explain IOM loan repayments and their relationship to building credit.
- Share information on identity theft and the importance of protecting personal and financial information. Outline what steps to take if someone loses their wallet or thinks he/she might be the victim of identity theft.
- Identify local resources that provide help with and information about finances.
- Describe the process of wiring money overseas and list local stores/agencies where this can be done.



Discussion Topics

- Why is budgeting important?
- What are the benefits and consequences of using a credit card? A loan?
- What are some ways to cut back on expenses? (For example: use coupons, shop at thrift stores or dollar stores, and conserve water and electricity)
- Why is it important to maintain good credit and to have savings?

Activities

- Budgeting practice: Have everyone create a sample budget.
- Getting credit: Go over a credit card application. Explain how to fill it out, but also spend time explaining annual percentage rates, interest, and fees.
- Review a credit card statement as a group, explaining phrases such as previous balance, new balance, statement closing date, payment due date, finances charges, etc. Also explain why it is important to review each item on the statement in order to prevent or stop identity theft.
- Guest speaker: Have someone familiar with finance (for example: a local professor or credit counselor) speak to the group and answer questions.
- Wants vs. needs: Make a list of possible expenses and have the group label them as “wants” and “needs.”

Evaluation Questions

- How do you decide what your priorities are when creating and using a budget?
- What is the main difference between a “want” and a “need”?
- What do you need to have to open a credit account?
- What are some ways to build and maintain good credit?

TOPIC 3 – USING A BANK

Objectives

- Identify the benefits of using a bank.
- Understand the difference between a checking and savings account.
- Learn how to open a bank account and write a check.
- Define debit card, direct deposit, and Automated Teller Machine (ATM).



Further Review

- Identify local banks and how to find the right bank to fit certain needs.
- List ways to monitor a bank account and how to balance a checkbook.
- Define additional banking terms (for example: minimum balance, overdraft, electronic funds transfer, and online banking)
- Detail good safety precautions for ATM transactions. Also explain what to do when being contacted via the phone, mail, or email for personal information such as social security number, bank account number, and credit card number.
- Outline the average cost of ATM transactions and the benefits of using an ATM owned by the same bank that provided the ATM card for use.
- Explain the benefits of direct deposit.

Discussion Topics

- What should you consider when deciding whether to use a credit card or a debit card for a purchase?
- What concerns do you have about getting and using a credit card?
- Why is it important to try to open a savings account and to add money to it as often as possible?
- What are some ways you can avoid fees to your accounts?
- Why could happen if you share your personal information with the wrong person/people?

Activities

- How to pay: Make a list of potential expenses (for example: groceries, telephone service, rent, a car, gasoline, and school supplies) and have the group decide if you would use a check, credit card, or loan to pay for it.
- Check writing practice: Have participants fill out a sample check.
- Mock bank transactions: Role play activities such as opening an account and depositing or withdrawing funds.

Evaluation Questions

- What are the benefits of using a bank?
- How do you open a bank account?
- What are the main types of accounts and the differences between them?
- What are the steps you must take to fill out a check properly?
- What is a debit card and how does it work?
- What is direct deposit and why is it useful?
- What is an ATM?

TOPIC 4 - EDUCATION

Objectives

- Understand the school system in the United States.
- Outline ways that parents can be involved in children's education.
- Identify options for adults interested in continuing their education.

Further Review

- Review local schooling options (for example: public, private, charter, or magnet).
- Identify local schools and which school(s) children will attend.
- Explain how school buses work, how to find out where/when bus pick-ups are, how far you must live from school to get picked up by bus, and what to do if there is no nearby bus service.
- Review sample academic calendar and classroom rules.
- Go over when it is appropriate to keep children home from school (for example: illnesses, family death, or other emergencies).
- Explain attendance rules and review appropriate ways of notifying the school about absences.
- Describe how to help children with their homework, but ensure that the children are doing and understanding the work.
- Provide information about English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).
- Share some reasons adults may want to consider pursuing continuing education.
- Discuss local colleges, community colleges, vocational schools, and universities.



Discussion Topics

- What are some things parents can do to help their children do well at school?
- What are some ways that parents can be more involved in the education of their children?
- What are some challenges your children might encounter in school?
- What concerns do you have, if any, about schools in the United States?
- What jobs are you interested in pursuing and what degrees, if any, might those jobs require?
- What are the benefits of continuing adult education?
- What are potential sources of financial aid?

Activities

- Go on a tour: Visit a local school and meet with members of the staff and administration.
- Understanding the grading scale: Post a sample report card for a grade school, high school, and college, and go over the various grading scales and what they mean.
- Map it: Locate bus stops each family needs to know about and show how to reach them.
- Guest speakers: Bring in local teachers or administrators to provide information and answer questions.

Evaluation Questions

- What are the different grades and types of schools in your community?
- When does the school year typically begin and end?
- Around what age do children begin school and around what age do they graduate?
- What are a few basic classroom rules?
- What should you do if your child is ill and needs to stay home from school?
- What options are available for people who want to continue their education after graduating from high school or obtaining a GED?

TOPIC 5 – PARENTING

Objectives

- Identify and practice good parenting techniques to meet U.S. expectations of parenting standards.
- Learn about what constitutes child abuse and neglect.



Further Review

- Go over local, state, and national laws pertaining to child abuse and neglect.
- Identify childcare options within the community.
- Identify support and resources for parents in the community.
- Talk about the age a minor legally becomes an adult in the United States and what rights, privileges, obligations, and consequences come with this (for example: right to vote, register for Selective Service, being tried as an adult for a crime, etc.)
- Examine how to talk to children about difficult issues, including drug abuse and sex.
- Discuss ways to ‘childproof’ the home to ensure child safety.
- Review childhood illnesses and how to prevent them.

Discussion Topics

- What are some important aspects of parenting in your culture?
- What are some examples of parenting techniques from your culture that may not match what is expected in American culture? (This could be an opportunity to bring up physical disciplining and how it’s viewed in the United States.)
- How are your children adjusting to life in the United States? (This may be an opportunity to discuss parental frustrations with children’s behavior and discuss how to help children adjust and deal with stress.)
- Why is it important to set clear rules and be consistent about enforcing them?
- What are some examples of child abuse? Neglect?
- Why is it important to ensure that children do not experience abuse or neglect?
- How do you currently reprimand your children for misbehavior? What are some other ways to handle misbehavior?
- What sort of information do you need about a babysitter or daycare provider to know if they are the right person to care for your children?

Activities

- Discipline chart: Map childhood behavioral issues and discuss appropriate parenting techniques to use.
- Guest speaker: Have a childcare expert, child home safety instructor, or a representative from Child Protective Services as a guest speaker.
- Parenting practice: Role-play and try using techniques, such as time-outs or providing acceptable choices for children to choose from.

Evaluation Questions

- What are some good parenting practices?
- What is the difference between child abuse and neglect?

TOPIC 6 – FAMILY COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Objectives

- Build good and healthy communication skills with which to interact with the family.
- Learn to discuss difficult topics, such as money, with partners or family.
- Learn some good techniques to use when communicating with children.
- Set goals as individuals and as a family, and learn how to support each other in achieving those goals.



Further Review

- Talk about family communication norms in the United States.
- Describe effective goal setting strategies.

Discussion Topics

- How do you feel about how your family currently communicates? Does everyone communicate well, listen, and understand one another?
- What are some topics that have been difficult to discuss with your family?
- What activities do you do together as a family?
- What are ways to show someone that you are giving them your undivided attention and trying to understand things from their point of view?
- Why is it important to make time to do things together as a family?
- How can you ensure that your children will learn about their culture, while they are adjusting to U.S. culture?
- Why is it important to set goals?

Activities

- Meeting practice: Demonstrate how to conduct a good and productive family meeting.
- Role play: Take turns communicating and actively listening.
- Goal setting: Practice setting goals and discuss ways of supporting one another in achieving these goals.
- Finding support: List the current challenges each person is facing and discuss ways of helping one another.
- Guest speaker: Host a family guidance counselor or family communication professional.

Evaluation Questions

- What are some good communication skills you can use with your family?
- What are some steps you can take to make discussing difficult topics easier?
- How is communicating with children different from communicating with adults?
- What are some of your goals as an individual and a family? What are ways in which the support of others will help you reach your goals and what support can you provide to your family?

TOPIC 7 – DOMESTIC VIOLENCE*

**Note: Before facilitating workshops on domestic violence, consult a professional family/marriage therapist or counselor, or other social worker specializing in domestic violence. If possible, invite a professional to facilitate any discussion or activities. They will often do so free of charge.*

Objectives

- Recognize what qualifies as domestic violence and abuse.
- Learn relevant rights and what to do if they are violated.
- Understand ways to get help if domestic violence occurs.



Further Review

- Go over relevant local laws about domestic violence issues.
- Share contact information for domestic abuse hotlines, shelters, and other local resources.
- Show the locations of local shelters and how to reach them.
- Describe examples of less recognized forms of abuse, such as economic or emotional abuse, including: preventing a partner or family member from contacting friends or family; withholding funds; name-calling, threats, and intimidation; and preventing a partner from getting or keeping a job.

Discussion Topics

- Is it ever appropriate or necessary to abuse someone, whether physically, emotionally, mentally, or economically? How are these behaviors viewed in your country versus in the United States?
- Why is domestic abuse considered a serious problem?
- Why is it important for someone who is being abused to seek help?
- What are the indirect consequences of domestic violence? (For example: arrest, deportation, restraining/protection order that does not allow partners to be near one another.)

Activities

- **Group Activity:** Have participants stand in a circle. Have them walk to the right for a minute then stop, keeping the circle formation. Give each person two post-it notes. They should write down two problems in their life, one on each post-it. Everyone can then fold the post-its and put one under their left foot. Have them walk in a circle without losing the post-it note. Stop to discuss how it is different from walking without a problem underfoot. Have them place the other post-it under their right foot and walk while keeping both post-its under their feet. Stop and discuss how this compares to walking with one and no post-its. The exercise is meant to have participants think about the impact that problems have on their lives and families. (You could explain how different shoes affect the exercise – some shoes help you deal with problems better, shoes are analogous to resources, etc.) This exercise should be followed with a discussion of problems and stress that can escalate into fights. “Good fights” are natural conflicts within relationships that can often be resolved with good communication skills. “Bad fights” involve verbal, emotional, or physical abuse. The outcomes/consequences of both types of fights can also be discussed.
- **Guest speaker:** Host a speaker, such as a counselor for domestic violence or a law enforcement official, who works with cases of domestic violence.

Evaluation Questions

- What is domestic violence?
- What are some different types of abuse? What are some signs that someone you know is being abused?
- How can you protect your right to safety and security in the United States?
- Who can you go to and what are some things you can do if you or someone you know is a victim of domestic violence?

Topic 8 – ALCOHOLISM

Objectives

- Learn appropriate alcohol consumption amounts.
- Understand some of the causes and consequences of excessive alcohol consumption.
- Identify ways to get help for yourself or someone you know who exhibits signs of alcoholism.



Further Review

- Identify local resources for people who may need support in managing their alcohol consumption.
- List some alternatives to drinking.
- Provide tips to curb, monitor, and manage alcohol consumption.
- Go over the serious consequences of drunk driving.
- Share important drinking laws (for example: drinking in public, drinking and driving, etc.).
- Describe regional, cultural, or religious norms in the United States in relation to alcohol.
- Explain the connections between alcohol abuse and domestic violence.

Discussion Topics

- Is it ever alright to drink alcohol?
- When can it be inappropriate or dangerous?
- Why is it against the law for people under 21 years old to drink alcohol in the United States?
- What are some things you can do to be a responsible drinker? (For example: appointing a designated driver, taking a taxi or bus instead of driving, or setting appropriate limits for yourself.)

Activities

- Alcoholic content: Examine different types of alcohol, their alcoholic content, and what this means in terms of how much is appropriate to drink.
- Know the signs: Review a chart (many are available online) that describes levels of intoxication.
- Role-play: Read scenarios in which someone is faced with difficult decisions when drinking alcohol, and practice making responsible choices.
- Guest speaker: Host the leader of local alcoholic support group or a health professional.

Evaluation Questions

- What is the difference between appropriate and excessive alcohol consumption?
- What are some of the reasons people drink alcohol?
- What are some of the negative consequences of drinking excessively? How could these consequences affect your new life in the United States?
- What are ways to get help for alcoholism?