



TOGETHER

Project Number: 2019-1-PT01-KA203-060772

Language barrier

Link: https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/language-barrier [with minor adaptations]
Group size: Any
Duration: 60 minutes
Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To raise awareness about discrimination by border police and immigration authorities.• To develop intercultural communication skills.• To foster empathy with refugees and asylum seekers
Description: <p>This is a simulation of the difficulties that refugees face when applying for asylum. Issues raised include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The frustrations and emotional factors refugees have to face• Overcoming the language barrier• Discrimination during the application procedure <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Let participants arrive but do not greet anyone or acknowledge their presence. Don't say anything about what is going to happen.2. Wait a few minutes after the scheduled start time and then hand out the copies of the "Application for Asylum" (available on the activity's website) and the pens, one to each participant.3. Tell them that they have five minutes to complete the form, but don't say anything else. Ignore all questions and protests. If you have to communicate, speak another language (or a made-up language) and use gestures. Keep all communication to a minimum. Remember that the refugees' problems are not your concern; your job is only to hand out the forms and collect them in again!4. Greet any latecomers curtly (for example, "You are late. Take this form and fill it in. You have only got a few minutes left to do it.")5. When five minutes are up, collect the forms without smiling or making any personal contact.6. Call a name from the completed forms and tell that person to come forward. Look at the form and make up something about how they have filled in the form, for instance, "You didn't answer question 8" or "I see you answered "no" to question 6. Application dismissed." Tell the person to go away. Do not enter into any discussion. Go straight on to call the next person to come forward.7. Repeat this process several times. It is not necessary to review all the applications, only continue for as long as necessary for the participants to understand what is happening. <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Finally, break out of your role and invite participants to discuss what happened.



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Debriefing - Evaluation:

Start by asking people how they felt during the activity and then move on to discuss what happened, what they have learned and the links with human rights.

- How did the participants feel when they were filling out an unintelligible form?
- How realistic was the simulation of an asylum-seeker's experience?
- Do you think that in your country asylum seekers are treated fairly during their asylum application? Why? Why not?
- What could be the consequences for someone whose asylum application is refused?
- Have the participants ever been in a situation where they could not speak the language and were confronted by an official, for instance, a police officer or a ticket controller? How did it feel?
- Which human rights are at stake in this activity?
- What possibilities do asylum seekers have to claim protection from violations of their rights?
- How many asylum seekers are there in your country? Do you think your country takes its fair share of refugees?
- Which rights are asylum seekers denied in your country?

Possible adaptation: Simulation focused on an application for a higher education institution (instead of an asylum application).



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