



Guide to Materials

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants' (USCRI) Somali Bantu Community Orientation materials! USCRI's purpose in creating these materials is to provide resettlement agency staff with a resource to use when conducting orientation classes for Somali Bantu refugees. Included in the materials is a curriculum for classroom sessions, descriptions of trips into the community, handouts for clients and service providers, and a list of other resources.

Thank you to the USCRI affiliate offices, as well as IOM, CAL, and all other organizations that contributed to the creation of these materials. USCRI particularly thanks the International Institute of St. Louis for providing a copy of their week-long Somali Bantu orientation curriculum to use as a source of ideas.

OBJECTIVES OF COMMUNITY ORIENTATION

Comprehensive community orientation is crucial to the successful resettlement of the Somali Bantu refugees. The Somali Bantu come from a rural setting, and their traditional culture is in many ways different than the culture of the communities they are resettling to in the United States. The objective of Somali Bantu Community Orientation is to facilitate a smooth transition for the Somali Bantu into U.S. communities by providing, at completion of orientation, an understanding of:

- the clients' house and community in the United States
- the role of the resettlement agency and other service providers
- the rights of refugees in the United States
- individual responsibilities in the United States

Investing time and resources into comprehensive community orientation upon arrival of Somali Bantu clients may in many situations prevent misunderstandings and inaccurate expectations at a later date, both on the side of the resettlement staff and on the side of the clients.

FACILITATION TIPS

The following are tips for facilitating Somali Bantu community orientation classes:

- Before the sessions begin, have necessary materials prepared. Requisition necessary materials as stated in the orientation curriculum. Have enough chairs, preferably in a circle. Have a watch or a clock available. Arrange transportation in advance for any trips into the community.
- Take time at the beginning of each day to review the schedule. Cover basics such as where the toilet is and at what time you will take short breaks, lunch breaks, etc.
- Confirm that clients understand your language and accent – if they do not, conduct classes with the assistance of an interpreter.
- Set a group learning atmosphere by listening to clients carefully and respectfully.

- Draw on the experience and knowledge of your clients. Adult learners build on a foundation of life experience – it is important that they connect what they are learning to this foundation. Adults also tend to be relevancy-oriented, so assist the clients in identifying objectives before the orientation sessions.
- Demonstrate new procedures, and demonstrate again.
- Take time every day for an open question and answer forum.

CONTENTS AND COURSE STRUCTURE

The Somali Bantu community orientation materials include two model schedules, a classroom curriculum, descriptions of community trips, and attachments. The classroom curriculum addresses the orientation facilitator, and contains step-by-step directions on how to conduct the orientation sessions. If text is included in a box entitled “Note to Facilitator,” this is information intended as a direct comment to the facilitator.

The materials are flexible; the schedules are meant as possible models. Agencies may wish to use certain sessions and omit other, or to use curriculum to complement existing agency materials – agencies may also wish to use the curriculum for weekly classroom sessions after initial orientation.

Finally, this is a working document. Please feel free to forward suggestions, orientation materials, stories, and best practices, for inclusion.