

Topic: Employment
(Original plan developed by November 2009 U.S. Cultural Orientation Professional Development Workshop participants in New York, NY, and further developed by the Cultural Orientation Resource Center)

Activity: Motivations to Work While on Public Assistance

Target Audience	Employable heads of households on public assistance.
Objectives	To inspire and promote independence and self-sufficiency, the intrinsic motivation to work, and the valuing of work over dependency.
Lesson Time	Two day workshop, 1½ hours each day
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Case study (see sample below) <p>For participants with little or no education and literacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visual aids that represent accepting a job, and turning down a job (perhaps one picture of someone working on an engine with an engineering diagram, and another of the same person sitting at home)• Visual aids representing potential goals and steps to attaining them (owning a car or house or rural property, traveling to visit family and friends, sending money to family overseas, university education, marriage of children, knowing a trade, different examples of attainable work, reading, writing and accounting skills, etc.)
Discussion Questions	<p>Day 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How did you support your family in your home country?• How did your parents support you when you were young?• What motivated your parents to work?• What motivated you to work? <p>Day 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you hope to be doing five years from now?• What do you hope that your children will be doing here when they are adults?• What are some steps that can be taken now to help make those goals a reality for your children?

Practice

Day 1:

- a. Make a list of different jobs/activities that participants and their parents engaged in to support their families.
- b. Make a list of the motivations participants and their parents had for working.
- c. Divide participants into 2 groups and present them with the case study. Have one group discuss the benefits of accepting the job, while the other group discusses the benefits of not accepting the job.
- d. After the discussion, each group should present the benefits they discussed as a large group.

Day 2:

- a. Ask participants about their hopes for the future and the future of their children. Make a list of these hopes and goals.
- b. Divide participants into two groups. Help each group to brainstorm the steps taken to achieve the goals they have discussed.
- c. Have groups present the steps they established to the larger group. Ask for suggestions on other steps which could be taken, and provide existing community resources which can assist with those steps.
- d. As a large group, create an Action Plan for achieving specific goals which were brought up.
- e. Remind participants of Day 1's case study, and of the family and father's dilemma about accepting the job.
- f. Divide participants into the two groups to prepare a presentation of their recommendations for what the father should do and reasoning.
- g. Bring the large group together for presentations.

Evaluation

The participant responses to the case study on the second day should be a good evaluation tool; if there has been a shift in understanding and expressing why the father from the case study should work even though there is no direct financial incentive, then the lesson will have been successful.

Cultural Notes

Because participants from remote, isolated areas may not be exposed to what possibilities exist for them in the United States, be prepared to suggest attainable goals and work opportunities, both verbally and with visual aids.

Variations

1. For clients with literacy and education, consider using more verbal lists and fewer visual aids. Offer different examples of work and goals. Perhaps change the case study to be about accepting an internship. If addressing female participants, include work examples that could be attractive and unthreatening for people whose family roles may not have previously included work outside the home environment.

Case Study:

The father of a family of five children has been offered a full-time job where he will learn how to work as a mechanic on school buses. Through this job, he will also have the option to take free classes so that he can get a license that will allow him to legally drive school buses. This family receives \$1,000/month in cash benefits. The full-time job that the father has been offered pays \$800/month after taxes. He learns that as soon as he starts working, his cash benefits will decrease by the amount of his salary. He would earn \$800/month for his full-time job, but his cash benefits would decrease to \$200/month. If the father accepts the job, he will work 40 hours per week, and his family will have \$1,000/month. If the father does not accept the job, he can stay at home and his family will still receive \$1,000/month.