Topic: Housing

Activity: Cutting Costs: A Lesson Plan for Use With African Refugees

Objectives

- ✓ Participants will better understand that living expenses can be very high in the United States
- ✓ Participants will identify ways to lower their living expenses in the United States

Lesson Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Critical incident (included)
- Optional: Pictures demonstrating ways to keep costs lower (included)

Introduction

Living expenses in the United States can be very high. However, there are a number of ways to keep costs lower.

Practice

(Note: Change names to reflect your participants.)

- 1. Put participants into small groups of 3 to 4 and ask each group to choose a spokesperson.
- 2. Read "Cutting Costs: A Critical Incident for Use With African Refugees" aloud.
- In small groups, participants brainstorm ways Tambo and Fatima* could keep their costs lower. For example:
 - a. Turn off the lights when not in use
 - b. Keep windows well-sealed in winter and summer
 - c. Buy food in bulk
 - d. Keep food clean and fresh
 - e. Use only necessary amounts of water
 - f. Clip coupons and shop cheaply
 - g. Keep belongings clean so they last longer
- 4. Bring the large group together and ask the spokesperson from each group to summarize their small group discussions. Discuss further as necessary.
- 5. Address any of the following reflection questions that may not have been adequately addressed during the previous discussion.

Reflection Questions

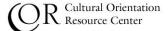
- What challenges did Tambo and Fatima face?
- Why do they want to keep their costs lower?
- What are some ways you can keep your costs lower in the United States?
- What would you do if you were in this situation?

Variations

Show pictures to demonstrate what participants could do to lower living expenses.

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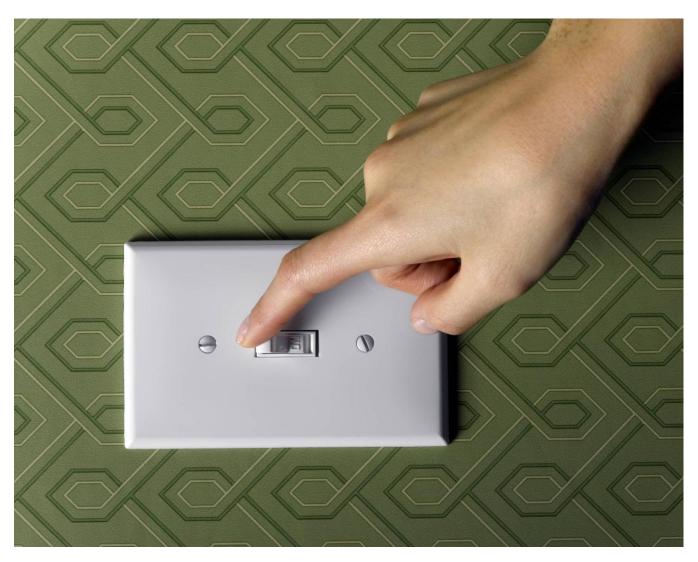
Cutting Costs: A Critical Incident for Use With African Refugees

Tambo and Fatima* arrived in the United States with an elderly aunt and five school-age children. They were fortunate to both find full-time jobs and health benefits quickly, and their aunt received SSI which helped with the family income. However, with such a large family, their living expenses were very high and their monthly income was not covering all their expenses.

^{*} This critical incident is based on the real-life experience of resettled refugees. All identifying information has been changed to protect privacy.



Sample Pictures Demonstrating Ways to Keep Living Expenses Low



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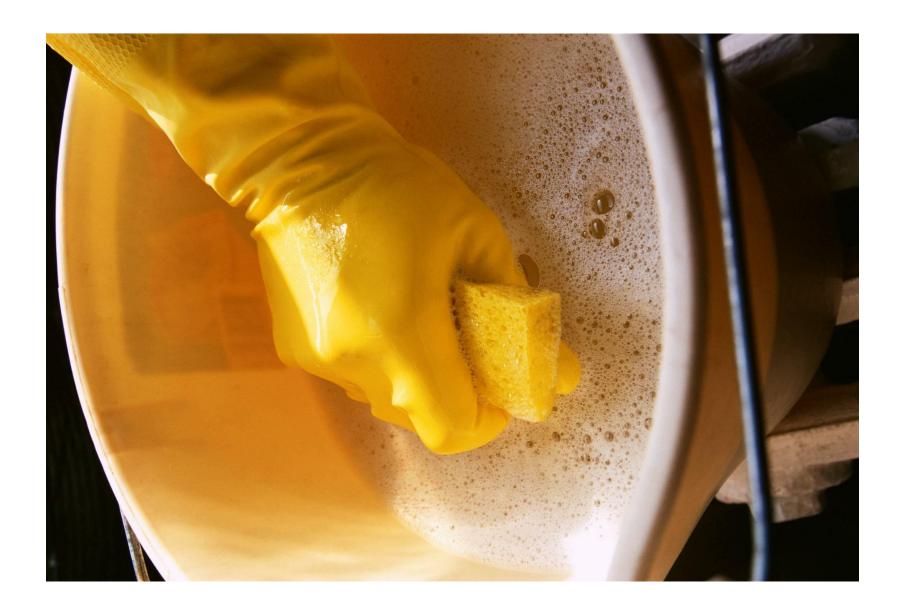
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