

Why Iraqis come, and what they have lost

During a recent cultural orientation session delivered by IOM Amman, the participants, all Iraqis, identified what they will gain by resettling in the United States, and what they have lost or will lose by doing so. This exercise is designed to make refugees think about the resettlement process as a long one during which refugees lose and gain many things, and refugees are encouraged to share their hopes and fears.

While only one of the many activities during IOM Amman's four-day cultural orientation sessions, the information shared by refugees in this exercise may be of interest to local service providers working with Iraqi refugees. These are their responses, as interpreted.

Gain	Loss
My life (from a person who had been threatened in Iraq)	Family and country
Personal freedom ("Everything had to do with terrorism." This person said that while many relatives were killed, they themselves were hurt inside more than physically.)	Years of education
Country ("Need a country to protect me and my family.")	House and country
Future	Friends
Future for my children	My family scattered
Better medical services	Social life
Stability	My tradition, culture
Better opportunity for learning (particularly for children)	
A goal, a road forward ("Have to take the first step, like a ladder. Don't have to know what to expect.")	
New values that we need ("When you are lost or doing something wrong, you have to admit it. We have to teach our children that.")	
Justice: law above everything	
Security	
Culture and customs ("I will be introduced to a new culture, and I will take what fits me the most.")	
Citizenship ("All countries recognize the U.S.")	
Respect for human rights	

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