



Just Transformation

Extra 1: role-play



Asylum-seekers role-play (30 minutes)

Ask for four volunteers if the group is smaller. The scenario of the role-play is an asylum-seeker visiting an MP's constituency surgery for help. The handout contains explanations of the different roles each of the four volunteers are assigned.

Give the role-play participants five minutes to decide how they would act in this role and then ask them to spend 10-15 minutes acting out the role-play, depending on how the conversation goes.

You must interrupt the conversation after 15 minutes if it is still continuing.

The volunteer playing the church member then has five minutes to work out with the rest of the group a strategy for what to do next. After that time the role-play resumes for five minutes.

End the role-play and ask each participant to share their reflections from their characters' perspectives. Then ask the rest of the group to share their analysis of what they thought was happening – and what they would do if they were in the role of the church member in particular.



Handout: roles for role-play

Member of Parliament

You represent a mixed constituency in East London, which includes a “traditional” white working class, a settled Bangladeshi community, some new wealthy incomers, and a whole host of other national and ethnic groups. The BNP recently won two seats on the local council. The main concerns in your local surgeries are a severe lack of affordable housing, fear of crime and tensions within the community. You are a loyal MP and want to support Government policy on immigration and asylum. You have invited a journalist from a national newspaper to sit in on your surgery today.

Journalist

You work for a national tabloid newspaper, and have been sent to write a story about racial tensions in East London caused by the pressure of continuing immigration on the local community. You are aware that the area suffers high levels of poverty, lack of affordable housing, low educational attainment and the growth of the BNP. The local MP has invited you to sit in on his constituency surgery.

Harris

You are a university-educated Geography teacher from Zimbabwe, with excellent English. Your application for asylum has been refused. The Government has stopped all benefits, and required you to leave the accommodation they provided. It is illegal for you to work. You sleep on the floor of a woman from a local church in East London, and spend your days doing nothing. You would love to go home to help build a new Zimbabwe, but to do so at present would be to risk beatings and death. You can't even get to meetings with fellow exiles, because you don't have the money for a bus fare. You are becoming increasingly desperate and have decided to turn to the local MP for help. You have asked a member of the local church you occasionally go to to accompany you.

Church member

You moved to London for work last year and decided to buy a flat in East London because the prices were cheaper than other areas. You have started going to a local church down the road, but don't have much time to get involved in community activities. You have got to know Harris, a “failed” asylum-seeker from Zimbabwe, who occasionally comes to church. You don't know much about his situation, but he has asked you to go with him to meet your local MP to discuss his situation.