Mothers' Union Listening, Observing, Acting (MULOA)
Crossing the River exercise/ mime

Objective: This is a mime (a silent drama) to help people think about how to develop something for themselves and not be dependent on outside welfare support.

Preparation: Ask three participants to read through the activity and practise the mime. Then they can show it to the rest of the group and use the questions at the end for discussion.

Activity:

1. Two lines fairly wide apart are drawn on the floor in chalk to represent the banks of the river. String can also be used if you do not want to draw on the floor. Pieces of paper are used to represent stepping stones and another large piece of paper is put in the middle of the river representing an island.
2. Two people come to the river and look for a place to cross. The current is very strong and they are both afraid to cross.
3. A third person comes along and sees their difficulty. He leads them up the river and shows them some stepping stones. He encourages them to use the stones but they are both afraid, so he agrees to carry one on his back.
4. By the time he gets to the middle of the river, the weight on his back seems very heavy, and he has become tired, so he puts the person down on the island.
5. The man goes back to get the other person on the bank who also wants to climb on his back. But the man refuses. Instead he takes her by the hand and encourages her to step on the stones herself.
6. Halfway across the river, she starts to manage alone. They both cross the river.
7. When they get to the other side, they are very happy. The person who has learned how to cross the river returns to the island to help his/her friend across.

Discussion questions

- *What did you see happening in the mime?*
- *What different approaches were used to help the two people across?*
- *Who could each person represent in real life?*
- *What does each side of the river represent?*
- *In what ways do communities become dependent?*
- *What must we do to ensure that those we work with develop a sense of independence?*