

# SECTION I

## FUNDAMENTALS OF HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

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# HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

## What Are Human Rights?

*Human rights are the rights a person has simply because he or she is a human being.*

Human rights are held by all persons equally, universally, and forever. Human rights are **inalienable**: you cannot lose these rights any more than you can cease being a human being.

Human rights are **indivisible**: you cannot be denied a right because it is "less important" or "non-essential." Human rights are **interdependent**: all human rights are part of a complementary framework. For example, your ability to participate in your government is directly affected by your right to express yourself, to get an education, and even to obtain the necessities of life.

Another definition for human rights is those basic standards without which people cannot live in dignity. To violate someone's human rights is to treat that person as though she or he were not a human being. To advocate human rights is to demand that the human dignity of all people be respected.

In claiming these human rights, everyone also accepts the responsibility not to infringe on the rights of others and to support those whose rights are abused or denied.

### **Human Rights as Inspiration and Empowerment**

Human rights are both inspirational and practical. Human rights principles hold up the vision of a free, just, and peaceful world and set minimum standards for how individuals and institutions everywhere should treat people. Human rights also empower people with a framework for action when those minimum standards are not met, for people still have human rights even if the laws or those in power do not recognize or protect them.

We experience our human rights every day when we worship according to our belief, or choose not to worship at all; when we debate and criticize government policies; when we join a trade union; when we travel to other parts of our own country or overseas. Although we sometimes take these actions for granted, not all people enjoy all these liberties equally. Human rights violations also occur everyday when a parent abuses a child, when a family is homeless, when a school provides inadequate education, when women are paid less than men, or when one person steals from another.

### **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

Rights for all members of the human family were first articulated in 1948 in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Following the horrific experiences of the Holocaust and World War II, and amid the grinding poverty of much of the world's population, many people sought to create a document that would capture the hopes, aspirations, and

protections to which every person in the world is entitled and ensure that the future of humankind would be different. See Appendix D for the [complete text](#) and a [simplified version](#) of the UDHR.

The 30 articles of the Declaration together form a comprehensive statement covering economic, social, cultural, political, and civil rights. The document is both universal (it applies to all people everywhere) and indivisible (all rights are equally important to the full realization of one's humanity). A **declaration**, however, is not a treaty and lacks any enforcement provisions. Rather it is a statement of intent, a set of principles to which United Nations **member states** commit themselves in an effort to provide all people a life of human dignity.

Over the past 50 years the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has acquired the status of **customary international law** because most states treat it as though it were law. However, governments have not applied this customary law equally. Socialist and communist countries of Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Asia have emphasized social welfare rights, such as education, jobs, and health care, but often have limited the political rights of their citizens. The United States has focused on political and civil rights and has advocated strongly against regimes that torture, deny religious freedom, or persecute minorities. On the other hand, the US government rarely recognizes health care, homelessness, environmental pollution, and other social and economic concerns as human rights issues, especially within its own borders.

Source: Adapted for *Human Rights Here & Now* (University of Minnesota Human Rights Resource Center, 1997) from Costain, P., "Moving the Agenda Forward," *Connection to the Americas* 14.8 (October 1997): 4.

## A Short History of Human Rights

The belief that everyone, by virtue of her or his humanity, is entitled to certain human rights is fairly new. Its roots, however, lie in earlier tradition and documents of many cultures; it took the catalyst of World War II to propel human rights onto the global stage and into the global conscience.

Throughout much of history, people acquired rights and responsibilities through their membership in a group – a family, indigenous nation, religion, class, community, or state. Most societies have had traditions similar to the "golden rule" of "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." The Hindu Vedas, the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi, the Bible, the Quran (Koran), and the Analects of Confucius are five of the oldest written sources that address questions of people's duties, rights, and responsibilities. In addition, the Inca and Aztec codes of conduct and justice and an Iroquois Constitution were Native American sources that existed well before the 18th century. In fact, all societies, whether in oral or written tradition, have had systems of propriety and justice as well as ways of tending to the health and welfare of their members.

### **Precursors of 20th Century Human Rights Documents**

Documents asserting individual rights, such as the Magna Carta (1215), the English Bill of Rights (1689), the French Declaration on the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789), and the US Constitution and Bill of Rights (1791) are the written precursors to many of today's human rights documents. Yet many of these documents, when originally translated into policy, excluded women, people of color, and members of certain social, religious, economic, and political groups. Nevertheless, oppressed people throughout the world have drawn on the principles these documents express to support revolutions that assert the right to self-determination.

Contemporary international human rights law and the establishment of the United Nations (UN) have important historical antecedents. Efforts in the 19th century to prohibit the slave trade and to limit the horrors of war are prime examples. In 1919, countries established the **International Labor Organization (ILO)** to oversee **treaties** protecting workers with respect to their rights, including their health and safety. Concern over the protection of certain minority groups was raised by the League of Nations at the end of the First World War. However, this organization for international peace and cooperation, created by the victorious European allies, never achieved its goals. The League floundered because the United States refused to join and because the League failed to prevent Japan's invasion of China and Manchuria (1931) and Italy's attack on Ethiopia (1935). It finally died with the onset of the Second World War (1939).

### **The Birth of the United Nations**

The idea of human rights emerged stronger after World War II. The extermination by Nazi Germany of over six million Jews, Sinti and Romani (gypsies), homosexuals, and persons with disabilities horrified the world. Trials were held in Nuremberg and Tokyo after World War II,

and officials from the defeated countries were punished for committing war crimes, "crimes against peace," and "crimes against humanity."

Governments then committed themselves to establishing the United Nations, with the primary goal of bolstering international peace and preventing conflict. People wanted to ensure that never again would anyone be unjustly denied life, freedom, food, shelter, and nationality. The essence of these emerging human rights principles was captured in United States President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's 1941 State of the Union Address when he spoke of a world founded on four essential freedoms: freedom of speech and religion and freedom from want and fear (See [Using Human Rights Here & Now](#)). The calls came from across the globe for human rights standards to protect citizens from abuses by their governments, standards against which nations could be held accountable for the treatment of those living within their borders. These voices played a critical role in the San Francisco meeting that drafted the **United Nations Charter** in 1945.

### **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

**Member states** of the United Nations pledged to promote respect for the human rights of all. To advance this goal, the UN established a **Commission on Human Rights** and charged it with the task of drafting a document spelling out the meaning of the fundamental rights and freedoms proclaimed in the Charter. The Commission, guided by Eleanor Roosevelt's forceful leadership, captured the world's attention.

On December 10, 1948, the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)** was adopted by the 56 members of the United Nations. The vote was unanimous, although eight nations chose to abstain.

The UDHR, commonly referred to as the international Magna Carta, extended the revolution in international law ushered in by the United Nations Charter – namely, that how a government treats its own citizens is now a matter of legitimate international concern, and not simply a domestic issue. It claims that all rights are **interdependent** and **indivisible**. Its Preamble eloquently asserts that:

*[R]ecognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world.*

The influence of the UDHR has been substantial. Its principles have been incorporated into the constitutions of most of the more than 185 nations now in the UN. Although a **declaration** is not a legally binding document, the Universal Declaration has achieved the status of **customary international law** because people regard it "as a common standard of achievement for all people and all nations."

### **The Human Rights Covenants**

With the goal of establishing mechanisms for enforcing the UDHR, the UN Commission on Human Rights proceeded to draft two **treaties**: the International Covenant on Civil and Political

Rights (ICCPR) and its **Optional Protocol** and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Together with the Universal Declaration, they are commonly referred to as the **International Bill of Human Rights**. The ICCPR focuses on such issues as the right to life, freedom of speech, religion, and voting. The ICESCR focuses on such issues as food, education, health, and shelter. Both **covenants** trumpet the extension of rights to all persons and prohibit discrimination. As of 1997, over 130 nations have **ratified** these covenants. (See From Concept to Convention: How Human Rights Law Evolves).

### **Subsequent Human Rights Documents**

In addition to the covenants in the International Bill of Human Rights, the United Nations has adopted more than 20 principal treaties further elaborating human rights. These include conventions to prevent and prohibit specific abuses like torture and **genocide** and to protect especially vulnerable populations, such as refugees (Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951), women (**Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**, 1979), and children (**Convention on the Rights of the Child**, 1989).

In Europe, the Americas, and Africa, regional documents for the protection and promotion of human rights extend the International Bill of Human Rights. For example, African states have created their own Charter of Human and People's Rights (1981), and Muslim states have created the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (1990). The dramatic changes in Eastern Europe, Africa, and Latin America since 1989 have powerfully demonstrated a surge in demand for respect of human rights. Popular movements in China, Korea, and other Asian nations reveal a similar commitment to these principles.

### **The Role of Nongovernmental Organizations**

Globally the champions of human rights have most often been citizens, not government officials. In particular, **nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)** have played a cardinal role in focusing the international community on human rights issues. For example, NGO activities surrounding the 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, drew unprecedented attention to serious violations of the human rights of women. NGOs such as Amnesty International, the Antislavery Society, the International Commission of Jurists, the International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs, Human Rights Watch, Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, and Survivors International monitor the actions of governments and pressure them to act according to human rights principles.

Government officials who understand the human rights framework can also effect far-reaching change for freedom. Leaders like Nelson Mandela, Abraham Lincoln, Lyndon Johnson, and Václav Havel have brought about great changes under the banner of human rights.

Human rights is an idea whose time has come. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a call to freedom and justice for people throughout the world. Every day governments that violate the rights of their citizens are challenged and called to task. Every day human beings worldwide

mobilize and confront injustice and inhumanity. Like drops of water falling on a rock, they wear down the forces of oppression and move the world closer to achieving the principles expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Source: Adapted for *Human Rights Here & Now* (University of Minnesota Human Rights Resource Center, 1997) from Shiman, D., *Teaching Human Rights*, (Denver: Center for Teaching International Relations Publications, U of Denver, 1993): 6-7.

# THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

## Preamble

**Whereas** recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

**Whereas** disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

**Whereas** it is essential, if a man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

**Whereas** it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

**Whereas** the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

**Whereas** Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

**Whereas** a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

**Now Therefore,**

## The General Assembly Proclaims

This Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

## Article 1

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

## **Article 2**

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

## **Article 3**

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

## **Article 4**

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

## **Article 5**

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

## **Article 6**

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

## **Article 7**

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

## **Article 8**

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

## **Article 9**

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

## **Article 10**

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

## **Article 11**

1) Everyone charged with a penal offense has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defense.

2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offense on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offense, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offense was committed.

## **Article 12**

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

## **Article 13**

1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State.

2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

## **Article 14**

1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

## **Article 15**

1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.

2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

## **Article 16**

1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

#### **Article 17**

1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

#### **Article 18**

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public and private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

#### **Article 19**

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

#### **Article 20**

1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

#### **Article 21**

1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

## **Article 22**

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

## **Article 23**

- 1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
- 2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
- 3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
- 4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

## **Article 24**

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

## **Article 25**

- 1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
- 2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

## **Article 26**

- 1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
- 2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote

understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

### **Article 27**

1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

### **Article 28**

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

### **Article 29**

1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

### **Article 30**

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

## **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (abbreviated version)**

- Article 1 Right to Equality
- Article 2 Freedom from Discrimination
- Article 3 Right to Life, Liberty, Personal Security
- Article 4 Freedom from Slavery
- Article 5 Freedom from Torture and Degrading Treatment
- Article 6 Right to Recognition as a Person before the Law
- Article 7 Right to Equality before the Law
- Article 8 Right to Remedy by Competent Tribunal
- Article 9 Freedom from Arbitrary Arrest and Exile
- Article 10 Right to Fair Public Hearing
- Article 11 Right to be Considered Innocent until Proven Guilty
- Article 12 Freedom from Interference with Privacy, Family, Home and Correspondence
- Article 13 Right to Free Movement in and out of the Country
- Article 14 Right to Asylum in other Countries from Persecution
- Article 15 Right to a Nationality and the Freedom to Change It
- Article 16 Right to Marriage and Family
- Article 17 Right to Own Property
- Article 18 Freedom of Belief and Religion
- Article 19 Freedom of Opinion and Information
- Article 20 Right of Peaceful Assembly and Association
- Article 21 Right to Participate in Government and in Free Elections
- Article 22 Right to Social Security
- Article 23 Right to Desirable Work and to Join Trade Unions
- Article 24 Right to Rest and Leisure
- Article 25 Right to Adequate Living Standard
- Article 26 Right to Education

- Article 27 Right to Participate in the Cultural Life of Community
- Article 28 Right to a Social Order that Articulates this Document
- Article 29 Community Duties Essential to Free and Full Development
- Article 30 Freedom from State or Personal Interference in the above Rights

# The United States Bill of Rights

Articles in Addition to, and Amendment of, the Constitution of the United States of America. proposed by Congress, and ratified by the Legislatures of the Several States pursuant to the Fifth Article of the Original Constitution:

## **Article 1**

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government

## **Article 2**

A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

## **Article 3**

No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

## **Article 4**

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

## **Article 5**

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

## **Article 6**

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

## **Article 7**

In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of

trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise reexamined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

**Article 8**

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

**Article 9**

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

**Article 10**

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.

PROTECTED CLASSES	AREAS OF PROTECTION						
	Employment	Housing	Public Accommodations	Public Service	Education	Credit	Business
Race	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Color	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Creed	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Religion	●	●	●	●	●	●	
National Origin	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Sex	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Marital Status	●	●	●		●	●	
Disability	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Public Assistance	●	●		●	●	●	
Age	●				●		
Sexual Orientation	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Familial Status		●					
Local Human Rights Commission Activity	●						

## Who's Protected and How

### Summary of Protections

**Protected Class:** Race

**Areas of protection:** Employment, Housing, Public Accommodations, Public Service, Education, Credit, Business

**Protected Class:** Color

**Areas of protection:** Employment, Housing, Public Accommodations, Public Service, Education, Credit, Business

**Protected Class:** Creed

**Areas of protection:** Employment, Housing, Public Accommodations, Public Service, Education, Credit

**Protected Class:** Religion

**Areas of protection:** Employment, Housing, Public Accommodations, Public Service,

- Protected Class:** Education, Credit  
**Protected Class:** National Origin  
**Areas of protection:** Employment, Housing, Public Accommodations, Public Service, Education, Credit, Business
- Protected Class:** Sex  
**Areas of protection:** Employment, Housing, Public Accommodations, Public Service, Education, Credit, Business
- Protected Class:** Marital Status  
**Areas of protection:** Employment, Housing, Public Accommodations, Education, Credit
- Protected Class:** Disability  
**Areas of protection:** Employment, Housing, Public Accommodations, Public Service, Education, Credit, Business
- Protected Class:** Public Assistance  
**Areas of protection:** Employment, Housing, Public Service, Education, Credit
- Protected Class:** Age  
**Areas of protection:** Employment, Education
- Protected Class:** Sexual Orientation  
**Areas of protection:** Employment, Housing, Public Accommodations, Public Service, Education, Credit, Business
- Protected Class:** Familial Status  
**Area of protection:** Housing
- Protected Class:** Local Human Rights Commission Activity  
**Area of protection:** Employment

**Other Prohibited Practices**

**Aiding/Abetting and Obstruction** = The Act prohibits a person from aiding in a violation of the Minnesota Human Rights Act, coercing a person to violate the law, obstructing a person's compliance with the Act, or interfering with the Department's performance of its duties.

**Reprisal** = The Act prohibits reprisal or retaliation because a person opposed a practice forbidden by the Minnesota Human Rights Act, filed a charge or participated in a matter brought under the Act; or because a person associated with a person or group of persons who are disabled or of a different race, color, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or national origin.

**[www.humanrights.state.mn.us/rights\\_prochart.html](http://www.humanrights.state.mn.us/rights_prochart.html)**

**Full text of the Minnesota Human Rights Act can be found at:**

<http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/363A/>

## A Human Rights Glossary

***Affirmative Action:*** Action taken by a government or private institution to make up for past discrimination in education, work, or promotion on the basis of gender, race, ethnic origin, religion, or disability.

***Civil and Political Rights:*** The rights of citizens to liberty and equality; sometimes referred to as first generation rights. Civil rights include freedom to worship, to think and express oneself, to vote, to take part in political life, and to have access to information.

***Codification, Codify:*** The process of bringing customary international law to written form.

***Collective Rights:*** The rights of groups to protect their interests and identities.

***Commission on Human Rights:*** Body formed by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the UN to deal with human rights; one of the first and most important international human rights bodies.

***Convention:*** Binding agreement between states; used synonymously with Treaty and Covenant. Conventions are stronger than Declarations because they are legally binding for governments that have signed them. When the UN General Assembly adopts a convention, it creates international norms and standards. Once a convention is adopted by the UN General Assembly, Member States can then Ratify the convention, promising to uphold it. Governments that violate the standards set forth in a convention can then be censured by the UN.

***Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women*** (Women's Convention) (adopted 1979; entered into force 1981): The first legally binding international document prohibiting discrimination against women and obligating governments to take affirmative steps to advance the equality of women.

***Convention on the Rights of the Child*** (Children's Convention) (adopted 1989; entered into force 1990): Convention setting forth a full spectrum of civil, cultural, economic, social, and political rights for children.

***Covenant:*** Binding agreement between states; used synonymously with Convention and Treaty. The major international human rights covenants, both passed in 1966, are the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

***Customary International Law:*** Law that becomes binding on states although it is not written, but rather adhered to out of custom; when enough states have begun to behave as though something is law, it becomes law "by use"; this is one of the main sources of international law.

***Declaration:*** Document stating agreed upon standards but which is not legally binding. UN conferences, like the 1993 UN Conference on Human Rights in Vienna and the 1995 World Conference for Women in Beijing, usually produce two sets of declarations: one written by

government representatives and one by Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs). The UN General Assembly often issues influential but legally Nonbinding declarations.

***Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)***: A UN council of 54 members primarily concerned with population, economic development, human rights, and criminal justice. This high-ranking body receives and issues human rights reports in a variety of circumstances.

***Economic, Social, Cultural Rights***: Rights that concern the production, development, and management of material for the necessities of life. The right to preserve and develop one's cultural identity. Rights that give people social and economic security, sometimes referred to as security-oriented or second generation rights. Examples are the right to food, shelter, and health care.

***Environmental, Cultural, and Developmental Rights***: Sometimes referred to as third generation rights, these rights recognize that people have the right to live in a safe and healthy environment and that groups of people have the right to cultural, political, and economic development.

***Genocide***: The systematic killing of people because of their race or ethnicity.

***Human Rights***: The rights people are entitled to simply because they are human beings, irrespective of their citizenship, nationality, race, ethnicity, language, gender, sexuality, or abilities; human rights become enforceable when they are Codified as Conventions, Covenants, or Treaties, or as they become recognized as Customary International Law.

***Human Rights Community***: A community based on human rights, where respect for the fundamental dignity of each individual is recognized as essential to the functioning and advancement of society. A community that works to uphold each article of the UDHR.

***Inalienable***: Refers to rights that belong to every person and cannot be taken from a person under any circumstances.

***Indigenous Peoples***: People who are original or natural inhabitants of a country. Native Americans, for example, are the indigenous peoples of the United States.

***Indivisible***: Refers to the equal importance of each human rights law. A person cannot be denied a right because someone decides it is "less important" or "nonessential."

***Interdependent***: Refers to the complementary framework of human rights law. For example, your ability to participate in your government is directly affected by your right to express yourself, to get an education, and even to obtain the necessities of life.

***Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs)***: Organizations sponsored by several governments that seek to coordinate their efforts; some are regional (e.g., the Council of Europe, the Organization of African Unity), some are alliances (e.g., the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO); and some are dedicated to a specific purpose (e.g., the UN Centre for Human Rights, and The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO).

***International Bill of Human Rights:*** The combination of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and its optional Protocol, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

***International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR):*** Adopted in 1966, and entered into force in 1976. The ICCPR declares that all people have a broad range of civil and political rights. One of the components of the International Bill of Human Rights.

***International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR):*** Adopted 1966, and entered into force 1976. The ICESCR declares that all people have a broad range of economic, social, and cultural rights. One of the components of the International Bill of Human Rights.

***International Labor Organization (ILO):*** Established in 1919 as part of the Versailles Peace Treaty to improve working conditions and promote social justice; the ILO became a Specialized Agency of the UN in 1946.

***Legal Rights:*** Rights that are laid down in law and can be defended and brought before courts of law.

***Member States:*** Countries that are members of the United Nations.

***Moral Rights:*** Rights that are based on general principles of fairness and justice; they are often but not always based on religious beliefs. People sometimes feel they have a moral right even when they do not have a legal right. For example, during the civil rights movement in the USA, protesters demonstrated against laws forbidding Blacks and Whites to attend the same schools on grounds that these laws violated their moral rights.

***Natural Rights:*** Rights that belong to people simply because they are human beings.

***Nonbinding:*** A document, like a Declaration, that carries no formal legal obligations. It may, however, carry moral obligations or attain the force of law as Customary International Law.

***Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs):*** Organizations formed by people outside of government. NGOs monitor the proceedings of human rights bodies such as the Commission on Human Rights and are the "watchdogs" of the human rights that fall within their mandate. Some are large and international (e.g., the Red Cross, Amnesty International, the Girl Scouts); others may be small and local (e.g., an organization to advocate for people with disabilities in a particular city; a coalition to promote women's rights in one refugee camp). NGOs play a major role in influencing UN policy, and many of them have official consultative status at the UN.

***Political Rights:*** The right of people to participate in the political life of their communities and society. For example, the right to vote for their government or run for office. See Civil and Political Rights.

**Protocol:** A treaty which modifies another treaty (e.g., adding additional procedures or substantive provisions).

**Ratification, Ratify:** Process by which the legislative body of a state confirms a government's action in signing a treaty; formal procedure by which a state becomes bound to a treaty after acceptance.

**Reservation:** The exceptions that States Parties make to a treaty (e.g., provisions that they do not agree to follow). Reservations, however, may not undermine the fundamental meaning of the treaty.

**Self-Determination:** Determination by the people of a territorial unit of their own political future without coercion from powers outside that region.

**Signing, Sign:** In human rights the first step in ratification of a treaty; to sign a Declaration, Convention, or one of the Covenants constitutes a promise to adhere to the principles in the document and to honor its spirit.

**State:** Often synonymous with "country"; a group of people permanently occupying a fixed territory having common laws and government and capable of conducting international affairs.

**States Party(ies):** Those countries that have Ratified a Covenant or a Convention and are thereby bound to conform to its provisions.

**Treaty:** Formal agreement between states that defines and modifies their mutual duties and obligations; used synonymously with Convention and Covenant. When conventions are adopted by the UN General Assembly, they create legally binding international obligations for the Member States who have signed the treaty. When a national government Ratifies a treaty, the articles of that treaty become part of its domestic legal obligations.

**United Nations Charter:** Initial document of the UN setting forth its goals, functions, and responsibilities; adopted in San Francisco in 1945.

**United Nations General Assembly:** One of the principal organs of the UN, consisting representatives of all member states. The General Assembly issues Declarations and adopts Conventions on human rights issues, debates relevant issues, and censures states that violate human rights. The actions of the General Assembly are governed by the United Nations Charter.

**Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR):** Adopted by the general assembly on December 10, 1948. Primary UN document establishing human rights standards and norms. All member states have agreed to uphold the UDHR. Although the declaration was intended to be Nonbinding, through time its various provisions have become so respected by States that it can now be said to be Customary International Law.

Sources: Adapted from Julie Mertus et al., Local Action/Global Change, Ed O'Brien et al, HumanRights for All, and Frank Newman and David Weissbrodt, International Human Rights: Law, Policy, and Process.

## Human Rights Classroom Activities Listed in PreK-adult Sequence

Activity	Grade Level	Topic	Page
<b>INTRODUCTORY TO HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVITIES</b>		<b>*Good for Pre-assessment</b>	
Needs and Wants	PreK-middle	Needs/wants	25
Human being/human rights	K-Adult	Human rights/human needs	28
A Human Rights Tree	K-Adult	Human rights/human needs	33
Human Rights Squares	Elem-Adult	Prior knowledge of human rights and UDHR	34
A New Planet	Middle-adult	Same as above	36
HR in the News	Middle-adult	Current events as they relate to HR	39
HR Around the World and at Home	Middle-adult	Match human rights affirmations and abuses in selected countries with the UDHR	42
Science, Technology, the Environment, and Human Rights	All	Questions to help analyze science, technology, and the environment	46
Comparing Rights Documents	Secondary-adult	Compare UDHR with US Bill of Rights and Minnesota Human Rights Act	50
Getting To Know the Activists Among Us	HS	To learn about the people in their community working for certain causes	53
<b>CLOSURE ACTIVITIES</b>		<b>*Good for evaluative and assessment tools</b>	
Creating a Human Rights Community	Elem-HS	Students set standard for behavior and social order	56
<b>PILOT ACTIVITIES</b>		<b>CREATING THE PILOT VIDEO PROJECT</b>	
Giving Human Rights a Human Face	Elem-adult	Create artistic expression of an article in the UDHR	60

**Above activities are taken from the Human Rights Here and Now and can be found at:  
<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/hereandnow>**

# ACTIVITY 1

## Needs and Wants

### Overview

Participants make cards illustrating things they think they need and want to be healthy and happy. Groups then sort these cards into "wants" and "needs." The whole group discusses what it means when people's basic needs are not met and the relation of basic human needs to human rights.

Time:	30-60 minutes
Materials:	3"x5" cards, old magazines, glue, scissors, art supplies
Setting:	Preschool - Middle school
Links:	Fits well with Activity 2, <i>Human Beings/Human Rights</i>

### Procedure

1. Ask participants, working in pairs or small groups, to create 10-20 cards that illustrate the things they think children need and want to be healthy and happy. They may draw these things on the cards or cut out and paste on pictures from magazines.
2. Each pair or group exchanges cards with another. The group then sorts out the new cards into categories:
  - Which things are NEEDS (e.g., essentials for survival, such as food, health care, shelter)?
  - Which things are WANTS but not NEEDS (e.g., desirable but not necessary for survival, such as toys, education, or voting rights)?
  - Which things are neither?
3. The groups who exchanged cards join together and compare their cards. They then try to reach agreement on categories for all the cards. When they have done so, discuss:
  - Which pile of cards is bigger? Why?
  - If you had to move two cards from the NEEDS pile to the WANTS pile, which two would you choose? How would your life be affected by this change (e.g., if something you feel you really need were no longer available to you?).
4. Ask whole class to combine their cards. Attach them to the wall or blackboard to complete a class list. Discuss:

- Are all human needs included in the NEEDS list? Are there other needs that should be added to the list?
- Are all the wants included? Can the class think of others?

### **5. Discuss:**

- Is it easy to differentiate between wants and needs?
- What happens to someone when his or her wants are not fulfilled?
- What happens to someone when his or her basic needs are not met?
- What happens to a community when many people's basic needs are not met?
- Are there people who don't have their basic needs met in the world? In the USA? In your community? In your school?
- Are there some kinds of people who often don't get their basic needs met?
- Should these needs be met? Why?
- Should some people have their wants satisfied when others don't have their needs met?
- What can be done to meet people's basic needs?
- Whose responsibility is it to meet people's basic needs?
- What actions can you take to help meet the basic needs of others in your community?

### **Going Further**

#### **1. Discuss:**

Are there such things as basic human needs common to everyone everywhere in the world?

- Are these needs always met?
- What influences our wants?
- How are wants influenced by age? Gender? Class? Culture? Ethnicity?
- What is the relationship of human needs to human rights? (See Activity 2, *Human Beings/Human Rights*)

### **Adaptations**

1. Follow up – Keep the cards and reuse them in another subject area. For example, apply the needs and wants categories to a mathematics, current events, or a foreign language lesson.
2. For younger children – Younger children may benefit from seeing concrete examples of children in order to imagine what a specific child's wants and needs might be. Have children look through magazines or pictures and choose a specific child to be an "imaginary friend." Children could imagine characteristics of this friend (e.g., name, age, toys, pleasures, etc.). Children could cut out this picture, mount it on paper, and introduce their new friend. This step might be done before Step 1 in the procedure section.
3. A Geography Activity – If the class is learning about a different locality in geography, they could explore needs and wants of people living in a different environment, especially considering the effects of climate, landscape, and rural or urban setting. They might reconsider the cards they made: what pictures might be changed? What categories?
4. A Literature Activity – Have students make their piles based on the needs and wants of characters in a short story or novel they are reading.

Source: Adapted from Margot Brown, *Our World, Our Rights*, 23-26.

## ACTIVITY 2

### Human Beings/Human Rights

#### Overview

Through brainstorming and discussion, this activity leads participants to define what it means to be human and to relate human rights to human needs.

Time:	1 hour or 3 separate 20-minute activities
Materials:	Blackboard or chart paper, chalk or markers
Setting:	Elementary school - Adult groups
Links:	Introduces the more technical Activity 5, <a href="#"><u>A New Planet</u></a> .

#### Procedure

PART A: What Does It Mean to Be Human? (20 minutes)

1. Write the words "HUMAN" and "RIGHTS" at the top of chart paper or a blackboard. Below the word "human" draw a circle or the outline of a human being.

Ask participants to brainstorm what qualities define a human being and write the words or symbols inside the outline. For example, "intelligence," "sympathy."

2. Next ask participants what they think is needed in order to protect, enhance, and fully develop these qualities of a human being. List their answers outside the circle, and ask participants to explain them. For example, "education," "friendship," "loving family." (Note: Save this list for use in Part B)

3. Discuss:

- What does it mean to be fully human? How is that different from just "being alive" or "surviving"?
- Based on this list, what do people need to live in dignity?
- Are all human beings essentially equal? What is the value of human differences?
- Can any of our "essential" human qualities be taken from us? For example, only human beings can communicate with complex language; are you human if you lose the power of speech?
- What happens when a person or government attempts to deprive someone of something that is necessary to human dignity?

- What would happen if you had to give up one of these human necessities?

4. Explain that everything inside the circle relates to human dignity, the wholeness of being human. Everything written around the outline represents what is necessary to human dignity. Human rights are based on these necessities.

Read these sentences from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and explain that this document sets the standard for how human beings should behave towards one another so that everyone's human dignity is respected:

*...recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of the freedom, justice, and peace in the world...*

Preamble  
Universal Declaration of Human Rights

*All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.*

Article 1  
Universal Declaration of Human Rights

PART B: What Is a Right? (20 minutes)

1. Brainstorm for the many meanings "right" can have (e.g., "correct," "opposite of left," "just.") Consider common expressions like "We're within our rights" or "You have no right to say that." Record these different meanings on the board. What is the meaning of "right" when we speak of a human right?

2. In small groups or all together, brainstorm a definition for human rights and write these possibilities on the board. Try to evolve a definition that everyone can agree upon and write it on a chart sheet by itself.

3. Write on the board this definition of human rights:

*Human rights belong to all people regardless of their sex, race, color, language, national origin, age, class, religion, or political beliefs. They are universal, inalienable, indivisible, and interdependent.*

- What is meant by universality? By inalienable? By indivisible? By interdependent? Ask participants to look up these terms in a dictionary and explain their meaning to the group.

4. Look back at the list of qualities that define a human generated in Part A.

5. Write "SURVIVAL/SUBSISTENCE," "HUMAN DIGNITY," and "CONVENIENCES AND LUXURIES" on another chart or blackboard. Discuss the meaning of these terms.

Consider the chart made in Part A. Place each item listed as necessary to fully develop human qualities under one of these headings. For example, is education necessary to survival? To human dignity? Is education a convenience or a luxury?

6. Discuss:

- Should human rights address only what a human being needs to survive? Why or why not?
- Should human rights also protect those things you classified under "conveniences and luxuries"? Why or why not?
- Some people in the world have only what is necessary to survive while others have luxury and convenience. Is this situation just? Is it a human rights violation?
- Can something be done to equalize the enjoyment of human dignity? Should something be done? If so, how? And by whom?

PART C: What Is a Universal Right? (20 minutes)

1. Read the comments of Eleanor Roosevelt, Chair of the UN commission that drafted the UDHR, on the importance of universal human rights standards:

*Where, after all, do universal rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerned citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.*

Eleanor Roosevelt  
The Great Question, 1958

2. Discuss this passage:

- What do you think Eleanor Roosevelt means by "universal rights"?
- Some people feel that universal values or standards of behavior are impossible. What do you think?

- Why do you think the UN chose the word universal instead of the word international when naming the UDHR?
- Paraphrase the final sentence of the quotation. What does it say about individual responsibility for human rights? What do you think Eleanor Roosevelt means by "concerned citizen action to uphold" rights close to home?

### **Going Further**

1. Introduce the UDHR, explaining that this document was intended to offer all people in all situations the equal justice, opportunity, and dignity of which Eleanor Roosevelt spoke. Then give a brief history of the UDHR.
2. Introduce the concepts of moral, legal, and natural rights. Are human rights necessarily legal rights?
3. Pose the question "What does it mean to be alive?"
  - When does life begin? When does life end?
  - Should the right to be living ever be taken away by the state?
  - Is the right to live a human right?
  - When do human rights begin and end?
4. Discuss the relationship between human dignity, human rights, and the concept of "humane treatment."

### **Adaptations**

For younger children –

1. Ask children sitting in a circle to think of a quality about themselves that they consider a good quality. Using a talking stick or simply speaking in turns, ask each to describe that quality briefly.
  - Note that everyone has good qualities.
  - If children have difficulty generating qualities about themselves, ask "What are some qualities we admire in people?" and write a list of responses on the board. Have each child pick one that is true for her or him.
2. Ask some of these questions:
  - Do you respect in others the quality you like about yourself?

- Do you respect good qualities in others that you do not have?
- Do all human beings deserve respect? Why?
- How do you show respect for others?

3. Ask children if they can remember a time when they felt hurt because someone did not respect them.

- Did someone say something insulting or hurtful to you?
- Why do people sometimes say bad things to each other?
- What is dignity? Is your dignity hurt when others do not respect you? How does it feel to you?

4. Ask the group how human beings differ from other living creatures. Emphasize that human beings communicate with words, not just sounds, and that they decide many things about their lives.

- Use the outline in Part A.

5. Ask "What does it mean if we say that all human beings deserve respect because they all have human dignity?"

6. Explain that after a terrible war, World War II, all the countries of the world agreed in 1948 on a document that said the world would be more peaceful if everyone respected the dignity of every human being. These words are contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

- Read the quotations given in Part A, Step 4.

7. Ask children to think of one example of how life in their community could be more peaceful if people showed greater respect for each other.

8. Have children work in pairs or alone to illustrate one way they could show respect to someone. Share these ideas with the rest of the class.

Sources: Adapted from *The Bells of Freedom* (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Action Professionals Association for the People, 1996) 15-17; Ralph Pettman, (*Teaching for Human Rights: Pre-School and Grades 5-10*) 30; Betty Reardon, *Educating for Human Dignity* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Studies in Human Rights, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995) 25-28; Felice Yeban, ed., *Human Rights Education Pack* (Bangkok: Asian Resource Center for Human Rights, (1995) 67-68.

## ACTIVITY 3

### A Human Rights Tree

#### Overview

Participants work cooperatively to create an image that helps to define human rights and human needs.

Time:	30+ minutes
Materials:	Art supplies, chart paper
Setting:	Elementary school - Adult groups
Links:	A good follow-up or alternative to Activity 2, <i>Human Beings/Human Rights</i>

#### Procedure

1. Ask participants, working in small groups, to draw a tree on large chart paper.
  - Write on the tree (in the form of leaves, fruits, flowers, or branches) those human rights that they think all people need to live in dignity and justice.
  - A human rights tree needs roots to grow and flourish. Give the tree roots and label them with the things that make human rights flourish. For example, a healthy economy, the rule of law, or universal education.
2. When drawings are complete, ask each group to present its tree and explain its reasons for the items they have included.

#### Going Further

1. Match the fruits, leaves, and branches with articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and write the number of the article next to each item.
2. Display these trees in the classroom or in public places.
3. Identify rights concerns that are of particular concern to you and your community.

Source: Amnesty International-Austria

## ACTIVITY 4

### Human Rights Squares

#### Overview

This activity reveals what participants already know about human rights and the issues that are of concern to them. It also stimulates discussion about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and categories of rights.

Time:	15+ minutes
Materials:	Copy of <u>Handout 1, Human Rights Squares</u> Copy of the <u>Universal Declaration of Human Rights</u>
Setting:	Elementary school - Adult groups

#### Procedure

1. Give everyone a copy of Handout 1, Human Rights Squares. Everyone tries to get an answer and a signature from a different person for each square.

Stop after five minutes.

2. Debrief the game:

- Which were the easiest squares to find answers for? The most difficult? Why?
- Which squares had global answers? US answers? Local or community answers?

3. Discuss:

- Can you match any of these squares to articles of the UDHR?
- Which of the squares are related to civil and political rights? To social, economic, and cultural rights?
- What additional squares might you create for this game?

Source: Adapted from David Shiman, *Teaching Human Rights*, (Denver: Center for Teaching International Relations Publications, University of Denver, 1993) 2-3.

## Activity 7 Handout: Human Rights Squares

**Instructions:** Using members of the group as sources of information, get an answer for as many squares as you can and write it in the square. Each answer should come from a different person, who must initial that square for you. Stop when time is called.

A human right	Country where human rights are violated	Document that proclaims human rights	Group in your country that wants to deny rights to others	Country where people are denied rights because of their race or ethnicity
Organization which fights for human rights	Film/Video that is about rights	Singer who sings about rights	Right your parents have/had that you do not	Country where human rights situation has improved recently
Type of human rights violation that most disturbs you	Books about rights	Right sometimes denied to women	Right all children should have	Country where people are denied rights because of their religion
Human right not yet achieved by everyone in this country	People denied right to establish their own nation or homeland	Human right being achieved around the world	Right of yours that is respected	Someone who is a defender of human rights

Source: Adapted from David Shiman, *Teaching Human Rights*, (Denver: Center for Teaching International Relations Publication, U of Denver, 1993) 2-3.

## ACTIVITY 5

### A New Planet

Time: 50 minutes

Materials: Blackboard and chalk, chart paper, and marking pens for each group; copies of the UDHR.

Setting: Middle school - Adult groups

Links: Fits well with Activity 6, Human Rights in the News.

#### Procedure

##### PART A: Human Rights for a New Planet

1. Read the following scenario:

*A small new planet has been discovered that has everything needed to sustain human life. No one has ever lived there. There are no laws, no rules, and no history. You will all be settlers here and in preparation your group has been appointed to draw up the bill of rights for this all-new planet. You do not know what position you will have in this country.*

2. Instruct participants, working in small groups, to do the following:

a. Give this new planet a name.

b. Decide on ten rights that the whole group can agree upon and list them on the blackboard or chart paper.

3. Each group presents its list to the class. As they do so, make a "master list" that includes all the rights the groups mention, combining similar rights.

4. When all the groups have reported their lists, examine the master list:

- Do some of the rights overlap? Can they be combined?
- Is any right listed on only one list? Should it be included or eliminated?

5. Discussion questions:

- Did your ideas about which rights were most important change during the activity?
- How would life be on this planet if some of these rights were excluded?
- Are there any rights you would still like to add to the final list?

- Why is making a list like this useful?

## PART B: Linking Rights to the UDHR

1. When the master list is complete, participants return to their small group and try to match the rights listed with articles of the UDHR. Some rights may include several articles. Others may not be in the UDHR at all. Alternative: To save time, assign each group specific rights from the master list to investigate.

2. As a group finishes, ask a representative to write down the numbers of the articles they have identified next to the right on the master list. You may need to add an extra chart sheet next to the master list.

3. Review each right on the list.

- As participants identify a right with a particular UDHR article, ask that they read the simplified version of the article aloud.
- Resolve any contradictions about which right matches which article.

4. Discuss

- Were some of the rights on the list not included in the UDHR? How can you explain this omission?
- Were some rights in the UDHR not included on the group's list? How can you explain this omission?

## Going Further

1. Personal Preferences – At this point, especially if a natural break occurs, ask participants to mark on the list the three rights that mean the most to them personally. The facilitator can then tally up the marks to see how many each right received. When the group continues, remind participants about the interdependency and indivisibility of rights.

Discuss:

- Why do you think certain rights received so many marks from this group?
- Are there special circumstances in this community or country that make some rights more important than others?

2. Categories of Rights – Explain the distinction between civil/political rights and socioeconomic/cultural rights. Ask participants to determine which rights on their list are civil and political and which are social, economic, and cultural. Did any one kind of right predominate? Why?

## Adaptations

1. A New School – This activity can be adapted to imagine the creation of a totally new school. This version could lead into an examination of the human rights climate of the current school and the creation of a list of "school rights," which would improve the school or classroom environment. These might be written as both rights and responsibilities (e.g., "Everyone has the right to be treated with respect" and "Everyone has the responsibility to treat others with respect"). This analysis of school problems could lead directly to action projects. See Part IV, Taking Action for Human Rights.

2. What If? – To emphasize the universal application of rights, the activity might be varied by assigning some groups specific roles in the society on the new planet (e.g., you are disabled, a member of an ethnic minority, a millionaire) while other groups have no roles. Did having a particular position in society influence ideas about necessary rights? These differences could also be included through discussion or having each participant draw a role, for example, "What if on the new planet you were a disabled person? Would this fact affect your ideas about necessary rights?".

Sources: Adapted from *First Steps*, 96-98; Edward O'Brien et al., *Human Rights for All*, (St. Paul, MN: West, 1996).

*The immediate task of human rights teaching and research should be to prevent or substantially decrease human rights violations by discovering and applying inexpensive, practical, and effective methods of awakening in individuals, groups, peoples, and governments an awareness of the meaning, content, and value of human rights; how human rights are violated; how violations may be prevented or redressed; how human rights may be enhanced; and the will to respect and vindicate human rights. In short, to internalize reverence for human rights*

-Dr. Jos W. Diokno, Chairman  
Phillipine Presidential Committee on Human Rights

## ACTIVITY 6

### Human Rights in the News

#### Overview

This activity uses recent newspapers and news media to develop an awareness of rights issues in everyday life and to show human rights not only as they are violated but also as they are protected and enjoyed.

Time: 30-45 minutes

Materials: Newspaper pages, chart paper, tape or glue, scissors  
Copies of the UDHR, complete or simplified version

Setting: Middle school - Adult groups

Links: An excellent follow-up to Activity 5, [A New Planet](#).  
Combines well with Activity 7, [Human Rights Around the World and at Home](#).

#### Procedure

1. Divide participants into small groups. Each group receives a newspaper or pages from a newspaper, scissors, tape or glue, and a sheet of chart paper.
2. Each group will construct a poster using items from the newspaper grouped under these categories:
  - a. rights being practiced or enjoyed
  - b. rights being denied
  - c. rights being protected
  - d. rights in conflict

Encourage participants to look not only for news stories but also for small features such as announcements and advertisements (e.g., the language of the paper itself illustrates the right to language and culture, advertisements can illustrate the right to private property, reports of social events may illustrate cultural rights, and personal columns can reflect many rights in practice).

3. Once participants have found stories for each category, they should select one story from each category to analyze:
  - a. What specific rights were involved in the story? List them beside the article.

b. Find the article(s) of the UDHR that cover each right and write the article number(s) on the list.

Alternative: All groups contribute to four separate posters, combining the articles they have found to make class posters.

4. Ask a spokesperson from each group to summarize the group's selections.

5. Choose one or two stories from each group's poster and ask the group to explain their analysis of the story in terms of the UDHR:

- What specific rights were involved in several stories?
- What articles of the UDHR were involved?
- Were more stories concerned with political and civil rights or social, economic, and cultural rights? See Part V, A Human Rights Glossary, for definitions. Why do you think one kind of right appeared more often?

6. Discuss:

- What categories of rights stories were easiest to find? Hardest? Why?
- Did some articles of the UDHR come up more often than others? Did others not come up at all? How can you explain this?
- How many articles explicitly mentioned human rights? How many concerned human rights issues but did not use those words? Why do you think human rights were not mentioned?
- Based on these news stories, what seems to be the state of human rights in the world today? In the USA? In your community?
- What are some positive initiatives and actions for the protection and fulfillment of human rights indicated by the stories? Who is taking these actions?

### **Going Further**

1. Keep Searching – Leave the posters hanging for an extended time, during which participants continue to add clippings. Reassess the posters and the concluding discussion.

2. Compare Media Coverage – Ask participants to compare coverage of the

same human rights stories in different newspapers and/or different media (e.g., radio, magazines, TV). What differences can they observe in importance given the story? In emphasis of features

of the story? Are there different versions of a single event? Did any version of the story explicitly mention human rights?

3. Survey Television Coverage – Ask participants to watch a news program on TV and write down the topics covered and the amount of time given to each human rights topic.

Source: Nancy Flowers, Human Rights Educators' Network, Amnesty International USA.

## ACTIVITY 7

### Human Rights Around the World and at Home

#### Overview

Participants match examples of human rights affirmations and abuses in selected countries with articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

Time: 60-90 minutes

Materials: Activity 7 Handout: *Rights Around the World*  
Copies of the UDHR, complete or simplified version.

Setting: Secondary school - Adult groups

Links: Combines well with Activity 6: Human Rights in the News.

#### Procedure

##### PART A: Identifying Rights Issues Around the World

1. Divide participants into small "research groups" and give each member a copy of the UDHR and the Activity 7 Handout: *Rights Around the World*.
2. Assign each research group a different set of 3-6 statements from Activity 7 Handout: *Rights Around the World*. They have 15-20 minutes to find 2 or more articles from the UDHR that apply to each sentence. For example, Statement 12 "Government troops kill advocates for democracy in China during a peaceful demonstration" represents an abuse of Article 3 (right to life) and an affirmation of Article 20 (freedom to assemble). A guided example may be helpful to start the process.
3. Regroup participants: if there are 4 in a group, assign each a number from 1 to 4. Then all the "one's" form a group, all the "two's," etc.
4. Ask the participants in the new group to report to each other on their research group's findings, so that each statement on the handout is covered. Discuss selected statements that they find especially important or interesting.

##### PART B: Identifying Rights Issues at Home

5. Have participants generate a similar list of 10 affirmations and 10 abuses that are specific to their own country and community.
6. Ask participants to return to their original research groups. As in Step 2, participants match the new list of statements with articles of the UDHR.

7. As a whole group, identify those affirmations and abuses that particularly touch their lives.

- Why are these particular statements especially meaningful?
- Are there individuals and groups working to promote and defend the rights people now have?
- Are there groups working in the USA and/or their community to correct human rights abuses?
- Are there actions that participants themselves might want to take? If appropriate, begin developing an action plan.

Source: Patrick Manson, Human Rights Educators' Network, Amnesty International USA.

*I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion.*

-Thomas Jefferson  
Letter to William Charles Jarvis  
September 28, 1820

**Activity 7 Handout:  
Rights Around the World**

1. A person in South Africa registers to vote.
2. The Chinese government punishes a couple for having a second child.
3. The government of Turkey burns down villages of Kurds – an ethnic minority of southeast Turkey – and forces them to move to new towns.
4. A Brazilian child is denied a school education because the family can't afford to pay for books.
5. The Burmese military overthrows a democratically elected government.
6. A criminal in El Salvador is held in jail for months without being charged with any crime.
7. A fourteen-year-old girl in Burma is sold by her impoverished family to a house of prostitution where she must work until she earns enough to repay the money given her parents.
8. Garment workers in Sri Lanka are forced to work long hours in poorly lit shops and to wait months to be paid.
9. A Native American asserts her right to collect eagle feathers for a religious ceremony.
10. People fleeing armed violence in Haiti are refused admission to the US as refugees.
11. A man with a disability is sentenced to death in the US for a crime he committed when he was 14.
12. The government kills advocates for democracy in China during a peaceful demonstration.
13. Women in Afghanistan are not allowed to attend school or hold jobs.
14. During World War II, Japanese-Americans are forced from their homes and held in concentration camps in the US.
15. Students in Germany read in the newspaper about politics in their country and human rights in other countries.
16. During elections the government of Croatia allows only government candidates to appear prominently in the state-run media.

17. Activists in Guatemala start a cooperative to provide food and education for homeless children.
18. Children in Pakistan are forced to work in carpet factories for little pay and long hours; they cannot go to school.
19. The city council removes books from the public library that it considers immoral or unpatriotic.
20. Native peoples of Nicaragua establish a university to maintain their cultural traditions and better the education of their people.
21. Parents in the area of Chernobyl, whose children have birth defects resulting from a nuclear accident, demand information from the Russian government.
22. Students in Europe and North America boycott soccer balls made by child laborers and write letters to Pakistan and India to end this abuse.
23. Native Americans are forced to attend boarding schools where they are forbidden to speak their tribal languages.
24. Workers in Poland demand the right to form a union.
25. A terrorist from Ireland bombs a public restaurant in England.
26. Ethnic Ogoni people in Nigeria protest the mining of oil in their traditional homeland.
27. A woman in Iran is beaten for not covering her face in public, an illegal act.
28. Australian aborigines regain land taken by the government and are allowed to make official their names for traditional landmarks.
29. Palestinians demonstrate for statehood.
30. A teacher insults a student for answering a question incorrectly.
31. In Saudi Arabia the hand of a thief is cut off, a punishment endorsed by religious teachings.
32. Students in the Philippines form clubs to debate current political policies.

Source: Patrick Manson, Human Rights Educators' Network, Amnesty International USA

## ACTIVITY 8

### Science, Technology, the Environment, and Human Rights

#### Overview

The following questions help to analyze technological innovations, scientific discoveries, and environmental crises from a human rights perspective. The technologies might be historical (e.g., development of the cast-metal plow, the compass, the printing press, the cotton gin, dynamite) or current (e.g., space exploration, genetic engineering, electronic communications).

Time:	60-90 minutes
Materials:	none
Setting:	Secondary school - Adult groups

#### Procedure

##### PART A: Questions

##### 1. About a technological advance, historical or contemporary:

- Overall, has this technology had a positive or negative effect on human rights? How?
- In what ways does this technology strengthen human rights? For whom?
- Which groups are strengthened by this technology? Do they share any common features?
- In what ways does this technology weaken human rights? For whom?
- Which groups are weakened by this technology? Do they share any common features?
- Does the effect of this technology differ for different groups of people, based on their class, gender, race, disability, age, or geographic location?
- If this technology weakens human rights, how could its application be changed in order to promote human rights?
- Does this technology create any human rights conflicts (e.g., one person's right to privacy vs. another's right to information)?

##### 2. About scientific knowledge and discoveries generally:

- Which article(s) in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) guarantees members of society the right to benefit from scientific knowledge and discoveries?
- Who has the responsibility to see that this right is enjoyed by all?

- Who has the responsibility to see that this knowledge or discovery does not violate anyone's rights?
- In practice, do all people benefit from scientific progress? Cite examples to support your opinion.

3. Article 19 of the UDHR states "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

- In what ways are these rights important to scientific research?
- What are some reasons that governments might suppress free expression of scientists? In what ways would this suppression affect basic research and its applications?
- What are some reasons that governments might prevent their citizens from having access to scientific information?
- Are there any situations in which a government is justified in suppressing dissemination of scientific information or preventing scientists from speaking freely?

4. Article 27 of the UDHR states that "Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author."

- What do you think "moral interests" means? In what ways can this right be denied scientists?
- Do scientists have rights with respect to controlling the way their research and inventions are applied?
- What are scientists' responsibilities in this area?

5. What roles do science and technology play in guaranteeing the right to a fair and public hearing, set forth in Article 10 of the UDHR?

6. The right to a healthy environment is not explicitly mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, although an international covenant on the environment is in the process of being drafted.

- Can you think of a historical reason why the environment is not mentioned in the UDHR?
- Which of the rights in the UDHR depend on a healthy and safe environment?
- What are the responsibilities of individuals, government, business, and industry in ensuring a clean and safe environment?

- Often poor and minority groups are affected the most by environmentally destructive practices. Why is this the case?
- How do civil and political rights such as the right to vote, access to information, and freedom of expression contribute to environmental rights?
- How do social, economic, and cultural rights such as the right to housing, adequate compensation, and one's cultural identity contribute to environmental rights?

#### PART B: Suggestions for Activities

1. Research the stories of scientists such as Galileo or Andrei Sakharov who have been silenced or persecuted for their work or opinions.
2. Research the stories of environmental activists such as Chico Mendes in Brazil, Ken Saro-Wiwa in Nigeria, Rachel Carson and Cesar Chavez in the United States.
3. Investigate environmental disasters such as the Chernobyl accident in the Soviet Union; the Union Carbide explosion in Bhopal, India; the contamination at Love Canal and the Hanford Nuclear Weapons Facility in the United States.
  - Identify the rights being violated and the groups of people most affected by the disaster.
  - How did individuals, government, business, and industry contribute to the disaster?
  - What responsibilities were not met by these groups, and what are their responsibilities in the aftermath of the disaster?

You can also adapt these questions to apply to development projects and environmental issues in your local community.

4. Find newspaper articles that describe new scientific discoveries, technological advancements, or development projects. Answer the following questions about the articles:
  - In what ways could this discovery or advancement promote human rights? Which specific rights in the UDHR?
  - In what ways might this discovery or advancement be used to deny human rights? Which specific rights?
  - Who is responsible for overseeing the application/distribution/use of this advancement?
  - Are any rights in conflict as a result of this discovery or advancement?
  - What are the environmental implications, if any, of this advancement?

- Is this development likely to benefit all people in society, or will certain groups of people benefit more than others?

5. Research the role of forensic scientists in documenting human rights abuses such as disappearances and torture.

6. Investigate organizations that work to promote human rights as well as science, technology, and the environment (e.g., Physicians for Human Rights, the Science and Human Rights Program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Sierra Club's campaign for human rights and the environment).

Source: Ethan Bleifuss, Earth Science Teacher, Apple Valley High School, Apple Valley, Minnesota; Karen Kraco, Human Rights Educators' Network, Amnesty International USA.

## ACTIVITY 9

### Comparing Rights Documents

#### Overview

This activity asks participants to compare rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) with those present in the US Bill of Rights and Amendments and the Minnesota Human Rights Act (MNHRA). It challenges them to explore reasons for the presence or absence of certain rights and to reflect on the role of government in guaranteeing rights. (Note: Some prior knowledge of the UDHR and Bill of Rights is needed).

Time: 45-90 minutes

Materials: Activity 9 Handout, *Comparing Rights Documents*.  
Copies of the UDHR, complete or simplified version and  
US Bill of Rights and Amendments and the MNHRA

Setting: Secondary school - Adult groups

Links: Activity 5, [A New Planet](#) offers good preparation.

#### Procedure

1. Ask participants to complete Handout 9, *Comparing Rights Documents*. Have participants refer to the UDHR, US Bill of Rights and Amendments and the MNHRA to check their answers.

2. Discuss:

- What did you discover that was a surprise to you?
- Which rights asserted in the UDHR, US Bill of Rights and Amendments and/or the MNHRA do you believe should or should not be universal? Give reasons.
- Do you think the Bill of Rights and Amendments cover more issues than the UDHR? Why or why not?
- Do you think the MNHRA covers the elements of both the UDHR and the US Bill of Rights?
- Did the writers of the Bill of Rights and the writers of the UDHR have different conceptions of what "rights" means? If so, how did their understandings of "rights" differ?
- Do US citizens have any rights besides those included in the Bill of Rights and Amendments, Constitution, and other US law? Explain.

- Should the Bill of Rights and Amendments be more inclusive? Why or why not? What rights, if any, would you add? For example, should Americans be guaranteed the right to food, shelter, education, and health?
- How do you explain why some social, economic, and cultural rights found in the UDHR are not guaranteed by the American documents?
- In your opinion, what should be the limits and responsibilities of government in guaranteeing their citizens certain rights? For example, is hunger or homelessness a government's responsibility?

Source: Adapted from David Shiman, *Teaching Human Rights*, (Denver: Center for Teaching International Relations Publications, University of Denver, 1993) 4-16.

**Activity 9 Handout:  
Comparing Rights Documents**

Directions: For each right listed below, indicate with a check in the appropriate box whether it is included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Column #1) and the US Bill of Rights and Amendments (Column #2) and/or the Minnesota Human Rights Act (MNHRA) (Column #3). Also indicate whether you think that right should be guaranteed by all governments (Column #4)

<b>RIGHT</b>	<b>1 Included in UDHR</b>	<b>2 Included in US Bill of Rights and Amendments</b>	<b>3 Included in Minnesota Human Rights Act</b>	<b>4 Should be Guaranteed by All Governments</b>
1. Free choice of employment				
2. Free press				
3. Free choice of spouse				
4. Adequate shelter				
5. Earn as much as one wants				
6. Trial by jury				
7. Free choice of number of children				
8. Freedom from torture and inhumane treatment				
9. Freedom of religion				
10. Right to own property				
11. Right to travel freely				
12. Right to an education				
13. Right to own arms				
14. Adequate food				
15. Adequate health care				
16. Right to clean air and water				

## ACTIVITY 10

### Getting to Know the Activists Among Us

#### Overview

Students identify people in their community working for human rights, formulate questions to ask them, conduct interviews, and report their findings in class.

Time: Variable

Materials: Copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and/or the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

Setting: High school

#### Procedure

1. Ask students what we mean when we call someone an "activist." Record their responses.
2. Explain that the purpose of this activity is to learn about people in their community working for certain causes, especially those related to human rights, and the types of activities with which they are involved.

3. Write five headings on the board:

Student Activist Organizations

Adult Activist Organizations

Student activists

Faculty and Staff Activists

Adult Activists in the Community

4. Brainstorm the names of local people and organizations that might fit these categories and list them under the five headings. Next to each name write the issue or concern of that person or group. Encourage the class to think broadly (e.g., religious organizations, parent-teacher groups, individuals who have been responsible for mobilizing community projects, local chapters of national organizations).

5. Analyze the list to determine which individuals and groups are working for causes related to human rights. Star these and identify the specific right in the UDHR and/or CRC that they work to advance. Remember to include social, economic, and cultural rights as well as civil rights in your definition of human rights.

6. Assign or have students choose an individual or organization to research, interview, and report on to the class. Clarify how they are to present their research, i.e. written, oral, or some other method. Younger students may feel more comfortable interviewing in pairs.

7. As a class or in small groups, have students construct interview questions. Review and approve the questions before students make the interviews.

See Sample Interview Questions for ideas.

8. Assign each student a time to report back to the class.

### **Going Further**

1. Action to Address Human Rights Issues – Students might identify specific human rights problems in their school or community or in the United States and discuss which types of organizations or individual efforts might provide the best way to address those problems.

2. Action for Human Rights in the News – Students might bring in articles about individual activists or organizations that work for human rights. They can identify the types of human right issues on which the person or organization works and match the issue with specific articles of the UDHR and/or CRC.

3. Address Files – Students may wish to send for information on various human rights organizations. You may wish to set up classroom or library files to use for future reference.

4. A Booklet on Community Activism – Although reporting back orally is the best way to encourage discussion, you may also want students to prepare one-page summaries about the organizations and individuals they researched. These can be included in a booklet distributed to the entire class. This booklet can be used for future homework or class assignments. Give copies as well to the local historical society as a record of social action in the community.

5. Articles on Community Activism – Students could also write articles based on their experiences for school or community newspapers.

### **Helpful Considerations for the Teacher**

- For assistance in compiling a list of local organizations, you may eventually want to direct students to look in the Yellow Pages of the telephone book under "Social Service Organizations," some of which will be appropriate for this activity. Local newspapers might help you discover other individuals or organizations involved in social change. Depending on the time available and how you choose to structure the activity, you may wish to have some students perform a voluntary survey of the faculty and staff at the school to find out the type of activist work they are involved in, which is often not general knowledge.

- **IMPORTANT:** Students should have a classmate or adult accompany them to the interview. You may wish to notify parents of the assignment in advance and secure their permission for students' participation.
- It would also be helpful to review basic telephone courtesy and skills and to give students some guidelines about how to conduct a polite and effective interview. Also set up a structure so that each student is held accountable for sending a thank-you note to the interviewee. You might want to set due dates for the notes and have students hand them to you before mailing.

Source: Pilar Garrido, teacher, Eden Prairie High School, Eden Prairie, Minnesota; Karen Kraco, Human Rights Educators' Network, Amnesty International USA.

### Sample Interview Questions

Ideally students will come up with their own interview questions, but they may need help. Below are some examples to stimulate thinking.

- On what type of social problems do you work? Why do you think they are important?
- Why do you think these problems exist?
- Do you think your work addresses the cause of the problem? If so, how?
- How did you become involved in this type of work? What inspired you to continue working for social change?
- How long have you been involved in this work?
- What are some of the approaches and methods you use in your work?
- What are some of the problems you face in your work?
- Is this volunteer or paid work?
- How much time do you spend?
- What organizations or individuals do you interact with in the school or community?
- What special skills, if any, do you need in this work?
- What do you like best about this work? Least?
- How do you educate the public about this issue?
- What are the sources of your funding to do this work?
- How did the organization get started?
- How many people work for this organization and what do they do? Are they paid or are they volunteers?
- Do you consider yourself an activist? Why or why not?
- What are ways that young people can take effective action for change in the community?
- Do you consider what you do human rights work?
- What role do you think students can play in the type of work your organization does?

## ACTIVITY 11

### Creating a Human Rights Community

#### Overview

Working cooperatively, participants create a list of rights and responsibilities that set a standard of behavior for their community and foster respect and social order.

Time:	1-1/2 hours or 2 class periods
Materials:	Blackboard or chart paper/ chalk or markers Copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
Setting:	Elementary school - High school
Links:	Should be preceded by activities that introduce rights principles and the UDHR (e.g., Activities 1-6).

#### Procedure

1. Explain that everyone wants to live in a community where she or he can enjoy peace and be treated with respect and dignity as an individual. However, the steps necessary to achieve this cherished dream of a community based on human rights require everyone's effort and participation:

Step One: Understanding Human Rights – People need to understand their rights. That is the goal of this book and of all human rights education.

Step Two: Taking Responsibility for Human Rights – This step requires personal commitment. People must understand and accept the responsibilities that go along with human rights: to uphold the principles of the UDHR in their daily lives and to defend those rights for others.

Step Three: Taking Action for Human Rights – The UDHR has established standards for how people and governments should behave. It also provides a framework by which to evaluate how individuals, institutions, and governments are living up to human rights principles. Using these standards people can take action to further human rights, to stop or prevent abuse, or to defend the rights of others in their local community, state, region, country, or anywhere in the world. However, effective action requires effective evaluation and planning:

- Assessing the situation, getting the facts straight, identifying needs
- Applying the human rights framework to the situation in order to understand what specific rights are involved
- Developing and implementing a plan of action

Explain that this activity is intended to help people take that second step towards a human rights community by applying human rights principles to their own lives.

2. Divide participants into groups of 4 or 5. Each group is to draw up a list of around 10 rules for their class or organization that they think are needed for everyone to enjoy their human rights and live together with peace and respect. They should write out their lists on chart paper and hang them up when complete.

3. When everyone has finished, ask a representative from each group to present their ideas. Then ask participants to try to consolidate these ideas into a master list, combining rules that are close in meaning. (The teacher needs to perform this step for elementary school students, asking their approval for combinations; high school students and adults can usually facilitate this for themselves). Urge participants to keep the list short (e.g., about 10 rules). (Note: in a classroom setting, an average lesson period would end at about this point.)

4. Rephrase these rules statements into rights statements (e.g., "People should not steal from others" might be restated as "Everyone has the right to keep and enjoy his or her own property"; "The teacher shouldn't yell at kids" might be "Everyone has the right be treated with respect"). Write out this draft list of rights, leaving space below each statement.

5. Introduce the idea that every right involves a responsibility. Ask participants, working in small groups, to write a responsibility statement for every rights statement on the draft list (e.g., "Everyone has the right to keep and enjoy his or her own property" might have the corresponding responsibility statement "Everyone has the responsibility not to take others' property"; for "Everyone has the right be treated with respect," the responsibility statement might be "Everyone has the responsibility to treat others with respect"). When the small groups report, ask the whole group to select the version of each responsibility statement they like best. Write it in the space left below that rights statement.

6. Once the draft master list of rights and responsibilities has been completed, ask participants to consider the following possible refinements (this step might be done by the whole group or divided among small groups who report back):

- Just as all human rights are indivisible and interdependent, all the rights on this list are equally important. However, some are more general and provide a basis for others. Are these rights listed in the best order?
- The wording of rights needs to be clear and simple. Can the language of these rules be improved?
- What specific human right(s) does each item on this list represent? After each item, write the number(s) of the UDHR article(s) involved.
- Is the list complete? Are the different needs (e.g., needs arising from differences in ability, race, religion, gender, class, etc.) of everyone in this group acknowledged? Look through the UDHR to see if any articles suggest ideas that need to be added to the list.

- Is the list democratic? Has everyone who will follow these standards had a say in their creation?
- What should this list of rights and responsibilities be called?

7. After the list is finalized, ask someone to copy it neatly onto a poster board and place it where everyone can see it. Explain that this list will set the standard for how people in this group will treat each other and that they should refer to it in cases of conflict and disorder in the group.

However, just as human rights are constantly evolving as human needs are identified and addressed, so this list is not final either. Explain that at regular intervals the group will check up on whether they are living up to their standards and that anyone may suggest changes at any time. Some rights and responsibilities might be eliminated because they are unnecessary or amended because they are not adequate. And situations may arise that this list does not cover; the new rights and responsibilities may need to be added.

### **Going Further**

1. Educating the Community about Human Rights – Discuss what the group could do to accomplish Step One: Understanding Human Rights. How can the group make sure everyone in the school or community knows about their rights?

2. Making the School a Human Rights Community – After participants have experienced using the list of rights and responsibilities generated in Part A, including using it to settle disputes or disorder and revising it to meet different situations, consider whether a list of such rights and responsibilities could be created for the whole school community. Before undertaking such an action that affects the whole school, however, teachers should first discuss it with the administration.

Discuss:

- Who is included in the school community? Adults as well as students? Faculty? Administration? Staff (e.g., secretaries, food works, maintenance, bus drivers)?
- What would be the results of having rights and responsibilities defined for the whole school community? Advantages? Disadvantages?
- Strategize how to go about making such a list of (or defining) rights and responsibilities for the whole school community. Who would need to be consulted? Do groups exist who might support this effort (e.g, student council, PTA, student groups, administrative groups)?
- Brainstorm how the whole school community could participate in drawing up a set of rights and responsibilities. Why is it important for everyone to have a say?

- On the basis of these considerations, draft a plan of action that outlines the steps necessary to establish a set of rights and responsibilities for the whole school community.
- If the class is willing and engaged, implement the plan!

3. Rights and Values – Human rights reflect deeply held values. Analyze the completed list of rights and responsibilities for the values it reflects. Discuss and list these values. For example, "Everyone has the right to be treated with respect" might represent a belief in the inherent dignity of every individual.

Source: Nancy Flowers, Human Rights Educators' Network, Amnesty International USA, with ideas drawn from Margot Brown, Amnesty International UK, Ellen Dorsey, Amnesty International USA, and Kristi Rudelius-Palmer, Partners in Human Rights Education

## ACTIVITY 12

### Giving Human Rights a Human Face

#### Overview

Participants produce a creative expression of an article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This activity can be modified to make the resulting creations into a guessing game, a community presentation, or a celebration for December 10, Human Rights Day. Participants could also create posters to serve as reminders for creating a human rights environment or community.

Time:	Variable
Materials:	Copies of the UDHR, complete or simplified version; art supplies
Setting:	Elementary school - Adult groups

#### Procedure

1. Working individually or in small groups, participants select an article of the UDHR that they feel is especially important. They might illustrate a right enjoyed, denied, defended, or all three.

2. Create –

- a skit or mime
- a graphic illustration or mural
- a song, dance, proverb, or game (these might include adaptations of traditional culture)
- a poem or story
- a commercial advertisement
- a flag or a banner

Note: The project should not reveal the number of the article it illustrates.

3. When the projects are complete, ask each team or individual to show their creation. The rest of the participants try to guess which article of the UDHR is illustrated. When it is correctly identified, the person or team that answers correctly reads the full article aloud. These presentations might be structured as a team competition with points to the teams that identify the correct article.

## **Going Further**

1. Display – Post graphic illustrations in a library, children’s museum, or community building or use them to create a calendar or a mural.
2. Present – The skits, mimes, songs, dances, or writings can be presented as a performance for classmates, parents, or other groups in the community.
3. Celebrate – One can celebrate Human Rights Day by planning a December 10th Festival around these materials. Invite your local newspaper, TV stations, and public officials.

## **Adaptations**

1. Posters for Public Places – Create illustrations or posters that remind others that human rights should be part of everyone’s lives. For example, create posters that remind everyone that the workplace or school is a "human rights community." Where special problems exist, these posters could serve as a basis for action. Strategize how to use these posters to ensure that rights are honored and changes take place in your community.

Source: Human Rights Educators’ Network, Amnesty International USA