

Thinking about human rights



🕒 1 hr 30 min

Purpose	To have the group reflect on personal notions of human rights
Materials	Flipchart paper, pens, markers, Post-its, red paper cut into squares, copies of <i>Reference 1 – The Universal Declaration of Human Rights</i> and <i>Reference 2 – Right holders and duty bearers</i>
Rights	All rights of the UDHR
Life skills	Critical thinking

30 min Part A Group work

1. Prepare three flipcharts. On each one draw a man, a woman, a boy and a girl and two youth. Explain to group members that these represent people in the community.
2. Divide the group members into three teams, and give one flipchart to each team.
3. Explain that they are going to reflect on what people in their community need to live well and with dignity.
4. Explain human dignity as follows.
 - *Human dignity affirms that all people deserve to be respected simply because they are human beings. Regardless of age, culture, religion, ethnic origin, colour, sex, sexual orientation/identity, language, ability, social status, civil status or political convictions, all individuals deserve equal respect.*
5. Ask each team to reflect on the question below.

- What does each person in your community need to live well and with dignity?
6. Invite each team to write their answers to the question on post-its and place them on their flipchart. Some needs will apply to all the individuals and other needs may only apply to certain individuals.
 7. Ask each team to share their ideas with the whole group.

30 min **Part B Group discussion**

1. Discuss the definition of human rights below.
 - *Human rights are the rights and freedoms that belong to all people simply because they are human beings. Human rights are based on the principle that every human being is born equal, in dignity and rights. All human rights are equally important and they cannot be taken away under any circumstances.*
2. Invite each team to look at *Reference 1* and find rights that correspond to the needs posted on their flipchart.

For example, if a team posted “education” as a need, they would post *Article 26 – Right to education* beside the original post-it note on the flipcharts.

3. Synthesize the responses, emphasizing that many of the needs are basic human rights, contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

25 min **Part C Individual work**

1. Next draw group members’ attention again to the three flipcharts and explain that in human rights language these people are rights holders.
2. Hand out two red cards to each group member and ask the following question:
 - Who (individuals or groups) has the obligation to respect, protect and fulfill the rights of these individuals?
3. Invite group members to write their answers on the red cards and place them around the flipcharts.
4. Review the responses and explain rights holders and duty bearers, using *Reference 2 – Rights holders and duty bearers*.

15 min Part D Group discussion

Feel...

- What did you think about this activity?
- Do you feel that the group shares a common understanding of human rights?

Think...

- Do you think that human rights are universal? Why or why not?
- Why did we discuss human dignity? How is it related to human rights?
- What prevents the enjoyment of human rights in your community?

Act...

- How can we ensure that everyone in the community can enjoy their rights?

End of activity ■

Reference 1 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Human rights are...

Human rights are the rights and freedoms that belong to all people simply because they are human beings. Human rights are based on the principle that every human being is born equal, in dignity and rights. All human rights are equally important and they cannot be taken away under any circumstances.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), 1948

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is a declaration adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948. The UDHR arose directly from the experience of the Second World War and represents the first global expression of rights to which all human beings are inherently entitled, without distinction of any kind. The UDHR recognizes that the inherent dignity of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, peace and justice in the world. Today, the UDHR is widely recognized as forming part of customary international law. Below is a simplified version of the UDHR. The UDHR consists of a Preamble and 30 articles.

Summary of the Articles of the UDHR	
1. Right to equality	16. Right to marriage and family
2. Freedom from discrimination	17. Right to own property
3. Right to life, liberty, personal security	18. Freedom of belief and religion
4. Freedom from slavery	19. Freedom of opinion and information
5. Freedom from torture and degrading treatment	20. Right of peaceful assembly and association
6. Right to recognition as a person before the law	21. Right to participate in government and free elections
7. Right to equality before the law	22. Right to social security
8. Right to remedy by competent tribunal	23. Right to desirable work and to join trade unions
9. Freedom from arbitrary arrest, exile	24. Right to rest and leisure
10. Right to a fair public hearing	25. Right to adequate living standards
11. Right to be considered innocent until proven guilty	26. Right to education
12. Freedom from interference with privacy, family, home, and correspondence	27. Right to participate in cultural life and community
13. Right to free movement in and out of any country	28. Right to social order assuring human rights
14. Right to asylum in other countries from persecution	29. Community duties essential to free and full development
15. Right to a nationality and freedom to change it	30. Freedom from state and personal interference in the above rights

Reference 2 Rights holders and duty bearers

In human rights language, a **rights holder**:

- Is entitled to rights
- Is entitled to claim rights
- Is entitled to hold the duty bearer accountable
- Has the responsibility to respect the rights of others

Consequently, those who have the obligation to respect, protect, and fulfill the rights of the rights holders are **duty bearers**.

The overall responsibility for meeting human rights obligations rests with the State. This responsibility includes parliaments, ministries, local authorities, judges and justice authorities, police and teachers. All these are legal duty bearers.

Every rights holder has the responsibility to respect the rights of others. Private companies, local leaders, civil society organizations, international organizations, heads of households and parents, and in principle, every individual has the power to affect the lives of rights holders and is a moral duty bearer. The greater the power, the larger the obligation to fulfill and especially to respect and protect the human rights of others.

Source: Equitas. (2014). Integrating HRBA and Equitable Partnerships into Development Programming: Operationalizing the Istanbul Principles. pp.82-83

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