



STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE PARTICIPATION OF MARGINALIZED PEOPLE IN HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION ACTIVITIES



This good practice was developed in partnership with the **Mouvement burkinabè des droits de l’Homme et des peuples (MBDHP)** in **Burkina Faso** in the context of **Advancing Equality through Human Rights Education**. The good practices featured in this series are ‘living practices,’ meaning that they are continuously evolving and adapting.

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Key concepts of inclusion, participation, and accessibility:

A human rights-based approach recognizes that exclusion, marginalization, inequality, and discrimination deprive people of their right to dignity and equality. It also recognizes that equality and participation are universal rights. Inclusion means recognizing that every individual is an integral member of society and can participate meaningfully. Inclusion is the first condition for participation. It is “based on the understanding that individuals and groups are shaped by elements of identity such as race, gender, social class, ability, sexuality, etc. And that these factors influence each other’s experience of inclusion and exclusion” (Institute for Community Engaged Research).

Inclusion is intimately linked to accessibility. Accessibility means having **the necessary conditions** to reduce or eliminate the barriers that hinder the active and effective participation of people who are frequently marginalized (women, young people, people with disabilities, etc.). Thereby, widening the access to human rights education activities (Equitas, 2019).





Conditions that promote inclusion:

Conditions conducive to inclusion result in greater participation of women and those who are usually marginalized in human rights education activities. It is desirable to contribute to the reduction of barriers by establishing conditions which aim to:



Promote access: To enable full participation in human rights education activities, one must ensure full access to the activity. It is essential to put in place measures that allow all people to access the activity safely, independently, and to benefit from the same opportunities and the same quality experience as one another. The conditions must ensure a favorable environment for participation before, during, and after the activity while meeting the specific needs of people and respecting their rights.



Transform attitudes: Attitudinal barriers are the foundation on which discriminatory ideas and behaviors are based. They are often the result of misunderstandings and power dynamics that lead people to judge or accept misconceptions about individuals and groups. It is therefore essential to create a learning environment that constantly challenges ableism, stigmatizations, gender stereotypes and prejudices against marginalized people.



Provide opportunities: Creating positive learning conditions that build self-esteem and values the experiences of women and marginalized people contributes to their empowerment. It is therefore essential to provide opportunities in which the voices of women and people who are usually marginalized are valued, listened to, and heard.



Foster collaboration and the creation of shared experiences: Collaboration and sharing experiences are important learning tools. It is essential to create a participatory and safe environment that promotes exchange and critical reflection while valuing the experiences of all participants.



Have adapted and accessible equipment: The teaching materials and activities offered must not only meet the learning needs of women and marginalized people but also be accessible to them. Accessible material takes into account the barriers to understanding that some people may encounter and aims to remove these barriers so that everyone can access information and participate fully in educational activities.



Examples of measures to promote inclusion:

When planning a human rights education activity, organizers can identify accessibility and inclusion measures for women and people who are usually marginalized by answering the following questions:

- Who usually participates in human rights education activities and who is usually absent or excluded?
- Why are certain groups usually absent or excluded? What can be done to act on these reasons?
- What factors or obstacles could limit the opportunities for women and marginalized people to take part in this human rights education activity (e.g. husband control, family/work responsibilities)?
- What will women and marginalized people need to take part in education and overcome barriers?
- What conditions are necessary during the activity to ensure their inclusion and participation?
- How can we create a learning environment that is safe, inclusive, and accessible for all participants?
- How can the whole activity be made more accessible and adequate for a group of people with very diverse profiles? Particularly in terms of level of formal education and literacy.

Considerations before the human rights education activity:

- **Do an environmental scan** to identify who usually participates and who is absent or excluded from human rights education activities and why.
- **Identify specific barriers to the participation** of women and those targeted by education activities and take the necessary measures to reduce them. Examples:
 - Organize visits to targeted individuals to explain the education activity and the context in which it will take place. In certain circumstances, these meetings might include the husbands or parents of the participants.
 - Offer per diem or compensatory amounts. Women's economic activities are often a real obstacle to their participation, especially if they are already in a precarious situation. A per diem or compensation can offset the loss of income during the training days.
 - Ensure adequate transportation and accommodation. The movement of people to the training site can be a major constraint for everyone, including people with reduced mobility. Organizing tailored transportation and accommodation that takes into account their specific needs will reduce the barriers that limit participation.





- Take into account spoken and written languages. In some situations, women and marginalized people may have a low level of education or literacy or speak the local language and not the common national language (e.g., French or English). In these circumstances, the training methodology must be based more on oral rather than written language and it must allow time for interpretation during the activity or the translation of teaching materials into local languages.
- **Develop appropriate, accessible, and inclusive teaching materials.** Examples:
 - Start from concrete situations and experiences before adding concepts.
 - Include activities that are both playful and reflective.
 - Develop activities that rely more on oral than written. For example, more role-plays and scenarios and fewer definitions or tables to complete.
 - Include one-person-led focus groups rather than working in stand-alone subgroups.
 - Provide for the sharing of new information orally rather than using reference sheets or additional readings.
- Establish a **flexible selection process.** Examples:
 - Have short and easy-to-use application forms.
 - Provide assistance to those who wish to complete the form, either by phone or in person.
 - Count on a local team that knows the environment and the local language well and can accompany the candidates.
- **Establish criteria** that ensures the inclusion of women in activities. Examples:
 - Establish quotas (e.g., 60% women and 40% men).
 - Avoid selection criteria that could *de facto* exclude marginalized people, including women (e.g., a minimum threshold of formal education, owning a computer or smartphone, speaking the common national language, etc.).
 - Be flexible at the time of selection, especially for women and marginalized people whose application form is incomplete or if they have not been able to answer all questions. A personalized follow-up to get the missing information is better than the rejection of the application.
- **Establish a budget** that considers accommodation measures. Examples:
 - Anticipate the cost associated with providing childcare to allow the participation of women with infants or young children.
 - Anticipate the costs associated with the assistance of persons living with disabilities.
 - Anticipate the costs associated with choosing a safe and accessible place for women and people living with disabilities to conduct the education activity.





Considerations during the human rights education activity:

- **Adapt the length of the activity schedule** and the **pace** of content covered. Examples:
 - Have a schedule that corresponds more to the daily habits of the participants than to those of the organizing team. This can mean starting the activity day at 7:30 am instead of 9:00 am and ending at 3:00 pm instead of 5:00 pm.
 - Allow time for interpretation and translation during activities.
- **Ensure the accessibility of places for people with reduced mobility**, provide for the presence of accompanying persons (e.g., childcare provider or caregiver) during the days of activities.
- **Foster the creation of effective and safe group dynamics** for women and those who face marginalization. Examples:
 - Encourage the co-creation of group norms that promote the inclusion and participation of all people.
 - Integrate a trauma-sensitive approach to facilitation.
 - Ensure measures to prevent or respond to sexual violence, harassment, and discrimination are clearly communicated.
- **Adopt inclusive facilitation** and **promote animation techniques that encourage the participation of all people**. For example, the use of dinamicas, i.e., group activities/games, is a good way to learn together that promotes inclusion. This type of activity allows for critical reflection on human rights issues and strategies. Embracing inclusive facilitation can mean being flexible and adapting activities along the way rather than following the planned program to the letter.
- **Adopt inclusive language** and **gender-sensitive terms** in writing and speaking in a manner that does not discriminate against a particular group or gender identity, and that does not perpetuate gender stereotypes and stigma.
- Include **activities that meet the needs of a highly diverse group** and promote the equitable participation of all people. Within the same cohort, there could be highly educated people and people with low schooling or literacy, young and old people, or individuals with differentiated levels of proficiency in common languages.
- **Include resource persons and interpreters** who have experience or familiarity with the local context and languages.





Considerations after the human rights education activity:

- **Adopt the necessary measures to monitor, put into practice, and coach the action plans** developed during the activity to ensure the transfer of learning from all participants in the activity.
- **Carry out a personalized follow-up** with each participant to open a space for comments that would not have been expressed during the activity.
- **Seek feedback and document learnings and good practices.** Ensure that reflection in collaboration with those involved specifically addresses challenges and good practices in accessibility and inclusion.
- **Make all educational materials available** so that participants can draw inspiration and guidance from them to carry out their own accessible and inclusive activities. If follow-up activities are to be carried out by participants, ensure that the tools provided encourage them to plan for inclusion and accessibility aspects.



References

Institute for Community Engaged Research, *Social Inclusion and Equity*, University of British Columbia, <https://icer.ok.ubc.ca/clusters/equity/>, (Web page accessed May 15, 2022; our translation)

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