



# THE FLIPPED CLASSROOM MODEL FOR FACILITATING ONLINE HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION



This good practice was developed by Equitas in the context of **Global Rights Connection, an online participatory training program for human rights defenders**. The good practices featured in this series are ‘living practices,’ meaning that they are continuously evolving and adapting.

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Opportunities for group learning are central to a participatory approach to human rights education activities. However, simply replicating group activities in an online space is not always feasible for organizers or participants.

A *flipped classroom* is an innovative pedagogical model where the learning of subject matter content is done by learners **asynchronously**, meaning on their own (i.e., through videos, readings, or online activities), as well as **synchronously**, during classroom time where learners participate in discussions with one another, share experiences and perspectives, and apply learning to real-life situations with other learners and educators. The flipped learning model helps adapt parts of the learning process embedded in human rights education activities from the group space to individual learning spaces and enables participants to work through some of the content in their own time.

## The three main components of a flipped classroom model are:

- 1 Participants (i.e., learners) are provided with videos and/or readings presenting theoretical content related to human rights, to review at their own pace within a given time frame. I.e., they learn asynchronously to other learners. *For example, on a weekly basis,*





*Global Rights Connection participants were asked to view 3–5-minute videos on topics such as defining a participatory approach to human rights education, a human rights-based approach, gender equality, human rights education program evaluation, among others.*

- 2 Participants also engage in online activities to test what they have learned and receive immediate feedback through quizzes and other interactive activities.** Like the videos and readings, online activities are accessible to participants to complete at their own pace within a given time frame (i.e., asynchronously). *In the case of Global Rights Connection, participants were required to complete interactive micro-courses online via an open-source learning platform, Moodle, that encouraged understanding and application of theories through engagement with case-studies and quizzes.*
- 3 Participants meet in small groups with an experienced human rights education facilitator once a week for several hours.** The facilitator leads the group in discussions that support the sharing of experiences and perspectives, and opportunities to put learning into practice. *For the duration of the 10-week Global Rights Connection program, participants were divided into groups of around 10 human rights defenders and educators each, representing different regions and thematic areas of expertise. With their fellow group members, they participated in weekly discussions on Zoom with an experienced human rights education facilitator to unpack core concepts, share different experiences of human rights, and strategize on how to put learning into action within their respective communities.*

## Key considerations when designing and developing online human rights education activities using the flipped classroom model:



**Define learning objectives** and develop what can be learned individually and asynchronously from other learners and what should be done synchronously as a group, led by a facilitator.



In human rights education, it is important to learn **about human rights** (e.g., definitions of core concepts such as gender equality, the main features of United Nations international human rights mechanisms). Additionally, **through human rights** (e.g., in a learning environment that is inclusive and participatory), and **for human rights** (e.g., opportunities for applying learning into action to promote and protect human rights). Global Rights Connection prioritized learning about human rights in the individual asynchronous learning spaces. The group dynamic in the synchronous sessions, with expert facilitators, were used to model education through human rights and for human rights.





**Finding the right balance between individual asynchrony and group synchrony** is paramount in the application of the flipped classroom. In the case of Global Rights Connection – a 10-week course – approximately 6-10 hours per week were prescribed for asynchronous learning during which participants built their knowledge on theoretical content of human rights education. In proportion to this, 2.5 hours were allocated per week for the synchronous sessions, during which participants had the opportunity to ask questions, share their personal experiences related to the topic, and learn from one another.



**Create robust digital security systems within the program and for participants.** The safety and security of participating human rights defenders is a key consideration in the design and delivery of Equitas' activities. The Global Rights Connection team conducted extensive research and worked with a cyber security consultant to identify appropriate digital security measures to reinforce security of participating human rights defenders. These included the provision of digital security training for Equitas staff, facilitators, and participants; the use of the instant messaging application, Signal, as opposed to WhatsApp due to higher user privacy; and the option of using assigned numeric codes rather than real names as usernames in Zoom meetings.



**Identify facilitators who are knowledgeable about human rights issues, experienced in adult education methodologies, and have excellent feedback and evaluation skills.** It is important that facilitators are able to manage the challenges of working with participants from diverse cultures and backgrounds, are willing to learn from their participants, are flexible and adaptable, and are committed to the program objectives.



**Integrate systematic and intentional opportunities for monitoring, evaluation, and feedback in order to adapt and address learner needs during the program.** For example, it is important to monitor participants' completion of scheduled activities (e.g., online courses and review of videos and readings) and to provide encouragement and support if they fall behind schedule. Weekly group discussions with facilitators are another opportunity for monitoring and evaluation. Each facilitator was tasked with articulating the content in a way that best resonated with the participants in their designated group and establishing a meeting format that allowed for greater freedom of discussion on various topics. With no rigid limits to the discussion of each topic each week, facilitators had the opportunity to tailor the content to the specific issues of their group members. This allowed participants to be exposed to different realities, which allowed for a social analysis of different contexts.