

EIGHT IDEAS FOR PRODUCING EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS THAT PROMOTE THE INCLUSION OF MARGINALIZED PEOPLE IN HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

This best practice was developed in partnership with the Mouvement Burkinabè des Droits de l'Homme et des Peuples (MBDHP) as part of the Advancing Equality through Human Rights Education (AEHRE) program. This practice is the third in a series of “living practices” that aims to promote the participation of women and other marginalized groups in human rights education activities.

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This best practice describes some strategies associated with the production of educational materials for use in human rights education activities with a highly diverse group of learners that includes people who are often marginalized, notably women, people with low levels of schooling, people with disabilities; the elderly, young people, etc.

Target audience(s)

This best practice advises educators and practitioners in human rights and popular education on the development of inclusive and accessible training materials.



Context and issues

In Burkina Faso, as in many similar contexts, opportunities for marginalized groups of people to participate in their communities are often limited by socio-cultural factors that subordinate women to men (prejudice, stereotypes, social norms, dominant patriarchy), as well as by personal factors (lack of self-confidence, poor education, economic dependence). As a result, human rights educators need to use educational strategies and methodologies adapted to the needs of these groups.

Because participation is essential to social transformation, the AEHRE project team strives to create educational materials that contribute favorably to greater participation by women and people who are usually marginalized in the human rights education activities it organizes. These activities are mainly aimed at increasing the capacity to carry out community mobilization actions, enhancing women's leadership, promoting greater collaboration between women's and human rights organizations, and increasing engagement with decision-makers. Ensuring the participation of women and of the most marginalized is essential to their empowerment.

Description of the best practice

In order to promote the participation and inclusion of marginalized people in training sessions, this best practice proposes a few measures to guide the design of training materials to ensure the inclusion and participation of all learners.

1 Create materials and activities based on the spoken rather than the written word.

Low level of schooling and illiteracy are frequent barriers to participation during human rights education activities, including training workshops, especially when the material contains instructions, questions or information sheets that need to be read and understood by the participants. Emphasizing the spoken rather than the written word ensures that everyone has equal access to shared knowledge. This practice also avoids the creation of an unequal power relationship and dependency between the less educated and the more literate within the same group. This approach requires a sustained commitment from the facilitation team throughout the training session, as well as the preparation of materials and content communication strategies adapted to the learners. For example, avoid preparing activities that require individuals to read instructions or questions and respond in writing. Instead, create sub-groups in which the facilitators or organizers can act as moderators and take notes for the group.

2 Use clear language that avoids jargon

As jargon refers to words that insiders or professionals use to communicate with each other, these words are not always accessible and can be difficult for others to understand. If the use of jargon is unavoidable, a simple and accessible explanation must be provided. For example, the notion of gender equality may seem like jargon to the uninitiated. Adding a simple explanation makes the concept more accessible: "Gender equality is the idea that all people, whether they are women, men or identify themselves as something other than men or women, should have the same rights, responsibilities and opportunities". Clearly, a simplified explanation ignores the complexity of the concept, and additional explanations will need to be added, but it has the advantage of situating the subject for everyone.

3 Incorporate images or pictograms to help orient participants visually

People who have difficulty reading will find reading long documents particularly difficult or even impossible. The inclusion of images can give participants a good idea of what a text is about, or serve as a memory aid. Pictograms can be used to describe steps or instructions for carrying out an activity. Images and pictograms should be culturally appropriate and easy for learners to interpret.

4 Use materials or prepare activities that are accessible to everyone and promote an inclusive environment.

In addition to the usual elements that make a document accessible (e.g. alternative text for images, use of colors, typography, hierarchy of information, legibility), the educational activities it contains must be achievable by everyone and be culturally sensitive. Activities that cannot be carried out or adapted for everyone should be discarded.

5 Use participatory and varied educational techniques.

Different ways of learning require different types of educational activities. Variety in the techniques and activities used in a training workshop greatly enhances learning for all.

6 Include dinamicas.

Dinamicas are small, often playful, dynamic and participative activities lasting from 15 to 30 minutes which can be used to introduce or conclude a longer activity. These reflective activities are useful for helping learners to immediately situate more complex subjects that will be explored in greater detail in a longer activity.

7 Plan training days or times of reasonable length that reflect local practices.

Training workshops may not last more than a few hours at a time, or be held on successive days. To encourage the participation and inclusion of marginalized people, as designers of training materials, it's up to you to adapt your practice and the activities you propose to local realities, rather than asking participants to adapt to your practice and reality. For example, a training program that would normally require workshop days ending at 5:00 p.m. will have to be reviewed and adapted so as not to exceed 15:00 p.m.

8 Have materials that support inclusive and active facilitation.

The role of the facilitation team is key to ensuring the inclusion and participation of marginalized people in a learning context. Creating a learning environment that promotes openness, patience, mutual respect, collaboration, responsibility and safety is essential. Training materials and facilitation practices must contribute to or support this learning environment.

Best practice criteria

Relevant

The AEHRE project in Burkina Faso focuses on women's participation in decision-making as an essential element of gender equality. This best practice proposes a strategy for adapting training materials to meet the needs of marginalized people, including women, to ensure their participation in educational activities.

Participatory

The proposed measures are designed to accentuate the conditions for participation and inclusion. They were identified and put into practice by the project partners responsible for creating the curriculum and by the participants involved in human rights education activities. The strategies that make up this best practice were developed and implemented following evaluations of the activities and recommendations from participants and facilitators.

Effectiveness

The practice is effective since it ensures the real and effective participation of people who would otherwise be excluded from such activities. It enables a greater number of women and marginalized people to participate and benefit from the appropriate support they need.

Adaptability

This practice has been in common use in the AEHRE project in Burkina Faso, and can be adapted to any context. The Equitas project team in Haiti, which sought to include people with profiles similar to those in Burkina Faso, used some or all of the recommended measures to ensure the inclusion, accessibility and participation of people who are often marginalized.

Innovation

Although some elements of this practice are not new, the measures proposed form a whole that is innovative. They have made it possible to carry out activities with highly diverse groups, including highly educated people and people with little education or limited literacy, people with disabilities, seniors and young people, members of grassroots groups and duty bearers, and so on.

Lessons learned from this practice

This best practice requires flexibility and prioritization in its application. It is also a “living” practice, meaning that experience gained from its use will generate new measures that will contribute to its improvement.

