



ACTIVITY 3

HUMAN RIGHTS - The rights of human beings in peace and in conflict

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Computer access or print out of the UN Declaration of Human Rights. You may choose the formal declaration or the child friendly version – see links below.
- Large blank papers for group work summaries
- Markers to write the posters

DURATION: 1 ½ - 2 hours

INFORMATION FOR THE TEACHER ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS AND ITS RELATION TO VIOLENT CONFLICT:

Human rights are often violated in an armed conflict. Furthermore, violent conflicts very often emerge in situations of a high degree of violations of human rights. For example when specific groups don't have a voice in decision making, without equal access to health, education and the juridical system, with torture in prisons etc.

This means that ***a way to prevent armed conflicts is to develop human rights.***

Human rights violations are a cause of many violent conflicts, and if human rights are improved after a peace agreement is reached, the risk of new violent conflicts is minimized.

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

STEP 1:

Introduce the activity by explaining the historical context for the creation of the UN Declaration of Human Rights: The aftermath of the Second World War, the deadliest military conflict in history where estimated between 70 and 85 million people lost their lives, involving nearly every country in the world in the war. The Second World War also saw the industrialization of genocide, when 6 million Jews, between 200.000 and 500.000 Romas, as well as disabled and homosexual persons was killed because of an ideology of biological racism.

It was to protect the value of the individual human being and the need for protecting individuals and population groups against assault, that the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights was signed by the member states in 1948.

The rights described in the declaration are fundamental rights, belonging to any individual because of their status as human beings. This implies two basic matters, which are essential when we talk about human rights:

- Human rights are **universal**. They **count for everyone** - every person on earth.
- Human rights are **not dependent on a persons' status**. Be it social, economic, political etc. status. They are **tied to their status as a human being**. Every person is born with human rights.

You can learn more through the library and through these links:

<https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

<https://www.un.org/en/sections/universal-declaration/history-document/index.html>

<https://menneskeret.dk/viden/skoletjenesten/grundskolen/udskoling>

<https://menneskeret.dk/viden/laeringsportalen/film>

STEP 2:

- Distribute copies of the Declaration of Human Rights to the students. If they use computers go through this link: <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>
According to the level of your students, you may choose to distribute this simplified version of United Nations Declaration of Human Rights: <https://www.youthforhumanrights.org/what-are-human-rights/universal-declaration-of-human-rights/articles-1-15.html>
If the students work with the simplified version, let them know it is a simplified version, and make sure that the formal version is present in the class as well.
- It is recommended that one or both copies are put up on the wall in the classroom after work with this subject to activate the learning experience.
- Instruct the students to read the introduction and the different articles of the Declaration of Human Rights. If your class needs it, go through parts of the declaration and specific articles together. You may choose to skip the introduction (the Preamble).
- Optional: If your students find that the declaration is written in a complicated and inaccessible language, you can work with the declaration as a text type. Give the students the task of reformulating the rights in their own version in a clear and understandable language, which cannot be misunderstood. Divide the students in groups of 3-4 and give each group 4-5 articles to work with. They have to produce a text that:
 - o cannot be misunderstood
 - o must be comprehensible and without loopholes
 - o must be read and understood by people across the world
 - o is formulated in a way that most countries possible will sign it.
- Hang up the students' texts in the classroom.

STEP 3:

Divide the students in groups of 2-3. Each group takes notes from their discussions and answers to the questions, and summarizes their most important points and reasons on their poster. The posters will hang the classroom wall afterwards.

Questions for the group-work:

- a) What caught your attention? Were you surprised by any of the articles you read?
- b) What do you think it means that Human Rights are Universal?
- c) Find 3-4 rights that you find especially important. Discuss why you find these rights important.
- d) Research has documented that armed conflicts can be prevented by improving human rights. Which of the rights do you think can especially prevent armed conflicts?

STEP 4:

The results from the group work and reflections can either be presented and discussed in plenum or by every group sitting together with another group, presenting and discussing their thoughts and answers to each other.