

Learning Activities about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

*Some ideas to
explore images
Human Rights*

*help you
through a
Lens*



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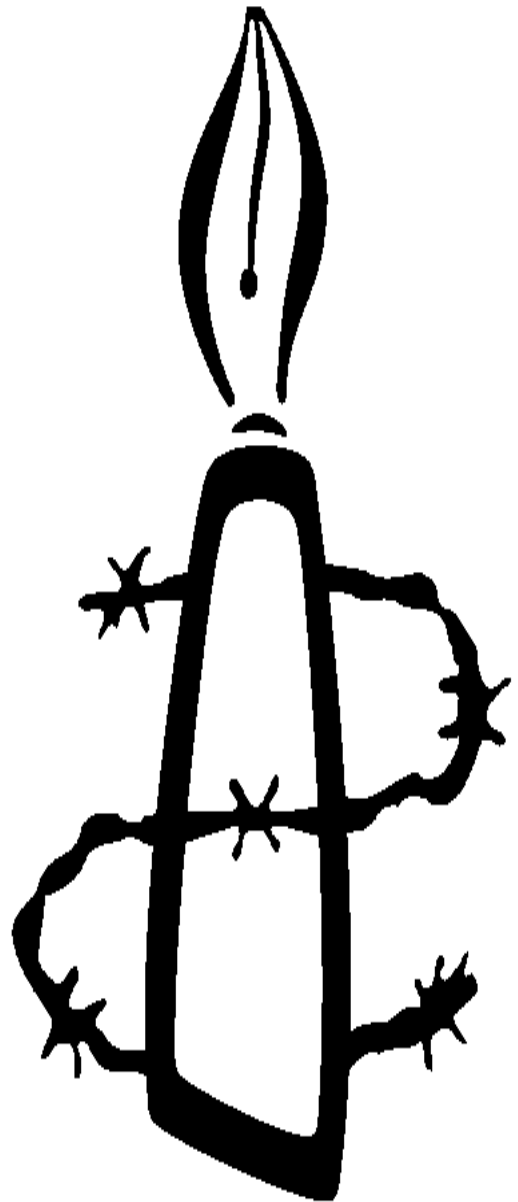
Dear Friends,

As we prepare to unveil the world's best kept secret -- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights -- the Human Rights Education Team at the International Secretariat of Amnesty International has put together some activities which can be used when introducing the Declaration to different audiences.

The best way to learn is by experiencing, by exploring and by using our creativity to grasp concepts, facts and emotions.

The activities below are just examples of ways in which art forms can be used in a classroom or workshop environment to experience, explore and imagine, and therefore, come to understand the text of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

All teaching should be aimed at the individual and the group learning about their own worth and the worth of others. It should also strive to make people active participants in the creation and protection of their own welfare, that of their family, their community, and of people worldwide.



GET UP

SIGN UP

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

We would like to invite you to use these activities with your own materials or with the set of posters Amnesty International has prepared for the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). But these are just a few suggestions -- you might know of other activities which might be more applicable in the context you work in. If you find these ones useful feel free to reproduce this document and distribute it more widely.

We hope you enjoy carrying them out and we wish you success in your efforts to disclose to as many audiences as possible this most precious secret.

Photographs, Pictures and Drawings

Pictures or photographs may appear to be the same to all viewers, but they are actually interpreted by us all in different ways, and they can be extremely effective for showing people how we all see things differently.

Drawing can be used to develop observation and cooperation skills, imagination, feelings of empathy for people in the pictures, or to get to know others. Drawing is useful when teaching human rights because the work of the group can be exhibited to communicate human rights values to other people.

Ideas to help you explore images through a human rights lens:

Tell me and I'll listen

Overview: using pictures, photographs or drawings this activity teaches listening and communication skills. It allows people to see through the eyes of another person and so doing it teaches about the importance of listening and communicating -- two primordial human rights skills.

Materials: Collect pictures, photographs, drawings on different subjects from newspapers, magazines, books... or use the Amnesty International posters for the 50th Anniversary of UDHR.

- Ask the participants to work in pairs. Give everyone one picture and some drawing materials. Tell the participants not to show their picture to their partner.

- One partner describes his or her picture to other partner, who has to try to draw it from the description alone. After fifteen minutes, the pair reverse roles. Because of the time limit, the drawings will be quite simple. The important element is the describing, not the drawing.

- The participants then take it in turns to compare their drawings with the original pictures. Ask them if anything important was left out? What? Why?

or:

It is nice to know you

Overview: Through drawing participants are made to think about what the other is telling them about themselves. Paying attention to what others tell us about themselves is important to avoid conflict and to develop empathy.

Materials: paper and pencils

Ask the participants to work in pairs. One partner draws the other, while at the same time asking them questions about themselves, such as:

- What are your favourite things?

- Where would you like to travel?

- What is your dream?

The drawings should also reflect the things the person is telling the 'painter'.

When all the paintings are finished compare with the posters and discuss if there are similarities or differences and why?

or:

Human rights and art

Overview: By having to think about how to represent a human right the participant has to integrate the concepts expressed in the human rights article s/he has chosen to portray.

Materials: This depends on the art medium you are working with. A copy of the UDHR or the simplified version.

Where participants have a formal art lesson (be it at school or college level), there may be opportunities to create posters or artworks which express a concern for or a commitment to human rights. You could use the posters for

the 50th Anniversary to publicise the competition.

or:

Learning about others

Overview: To learn about others we need to know how to ask questions. To respect the rights of others we need to know about their needs and aspirations.

Materials: pictures of people from around the globe -- you could use the Amnesty posters for the 50th Anniversary of the UDHR or other pictures you have chosen.

Ask participants to work in pairs and give each pair a picture to look at

- Give the group ten minutes to write down any questions they may have about the picture or photo you have given them.
- Ask them to choose the four most important questions -- for example, what strikes them the most in the picture? And then ask them to share them with the rest of the group -- hang the pictures up and write below them the four questions.
- Open for discussion, if many questions remain unanswered you can ask the groups to do some research on their own questions and present their findings at a later time to the whole group.

or for school children

- ask each pair to show their picture and their four most important questions to the neighbouring pair. Give them fifteen minutes to work together to find answers to all of their questions. Ask them to make two lists:

1. questions they can't find an answer to.
2. questions with a possible answer.

- For the questions with a possible answer it is important that they write down WHY they chose this answer. For example, if they think that a child in a picture is from a cold country, what clues were there in the picture which helped them to decide this?

- For the questions without answer help them find an answer or give them a research task for homework to find answers with the help of their family.

- Make a display of all the pictures, questions and answers. Ask the students to look at everyone else's picture, questions and answers, and make further comments where necessary. Leave a space where teachers, parents or other students can also comment and contribute their own ideas about the pictures.

or:

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS

Overview: Using photographs of people from a variety of cultures, this activity raises questions about universality, diversity, and human dignity.

Materials: Copies of the UDHR or the simplified version. A collection of pictures showing people of many different cultures, ages, and backgrounds. Especially recommended are the Amnesty International posters for 50th Anniversary of the UDHR.

Comment: You could choose to do all the different sections suggested below or just those which you find more applicable to your audience.

Part A: You can ask the participants to either work individually or in pairs or in small groups -- how you group them will probably depend on how many people there are in the audience/class. Ask them to choose a picture from your own selection of photographs or from the 50th Anniversary posters. Ask participants to study their photograph and discuss some of the following questions -- choose those questions you find more relevant for the group.

A.1. Questions about Universality

- * Why did you choose this picture?
- * Why do you think the photographer chose this subject?
- * Keeping in mind that the picture serves as a mirror of your own life, what do you think it reflects? Something familiar that you can easily recognize?
- * What do you find in the picture that serves as a window onto another culture or way of living, something that is strange and unfamiliar to you?

* What do you think is going on here, e.g., is it a working environment?

a

religious setting?

* How is the person/people feeling?

* In what ways do you think the person/people in the picture lives a very

different life from you? Has different values? needs? hopes? expectations

of life?

* In what ways do you think the person/people in the picture is like you?

Shares similar values? hopes? needs? expectations?

* Is this a complete picture of the way the person lives? What might be missing?

* Is there any evidence of victimization in this picture? Of privilege? Of discrimination or privilege based on class? gender? ethnicity? age?

* What human rights do you think are most important to the person/people in the picture?

* Are human rights really universal? Do you think the person/people in the

picture wants the same human rights as you do? Do you think the person/people enjoy(s) the same human rights as you? Why or why not?

windows and mirrors ... continues ...

A.2. Questions about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Ask the participants to:

* Make a list of all the human rights you can associate with your

picture. Include both rights being exercised and rights denied or violated.

- * Match the rights you have listed with specific articles of the UDHR. Write the number of the article on your list.
- * Are most of the rights you have identified civil and political or social, economic, and cultural?
- * Shows your picture to the whole group and explain the rights you have identified. Ask for suggestions from other group members of rights they may observe in the picture and that you have not identified.
- * After everyone has shown their picture, look through the UDHR and consider what articles have not been identified in the pictures. Are some articles more difficult to "see" in pictures? In real life?

A.3. Questions about Human Dignity

- * Does this picture express human dignity? How? Does anything in the picture seem to detract from the human dignity of the people in it? How?
- * How would this photograph be different if it were made a century ago? A hundred years from now? How do these differences relate to human rights?
- * Does the picture encourage an appreciation of human dignity? What does human dignity have to do with human rights?
- * Why do you think the photographer chose this subject? Why do artists so often choose the human condition as the subject of their work?

Part B: Grouping the Pictures

Place all the pictures together on the floor or the wall and consider them as a group. Then ask some of the following questions:

- * What common features do all these pictures share?*
- * What do these pictures say about what it is to be human?*
- * If all of these pictures were taken in the same society, what conclusions*

could you draw about the society? Would you say it was a community where people had their human rights respected?

- * How would these photographs be different if conditions changed: e.g., a*

civil war? discovery of oil in the region? achievement of equality for women? strictly enforced laws against child labour? or compulsory education? A liveable minimum wage?

- * Based on this collection of pictures, what statements can you make about*

human dignity? About human rights?

Try to group certain pictures together into categories. These might be based on the content, tone, or human rights involved.

windows and mirrors ... continues ...

Going Further:

1. Write a dialogue between the people in the picture or between a person

in the picture and you.

2. Draw a cartoon depicting a story about the people in this picture.

3. If possible, find out where the picture comes from. Find out about that

country or its culture, including its human rights history.

4. Write a poem or story or create an artistic expression that captures an

idea or feeling raised by this photograph.

The source for this activity is material produced by: the Human Rights Educators' Network, Amnesty International USA

KEYWORDS: UDHR1 / ANNIVERSARIES / AI TECHNIQUES / HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION /