

# PART 14: METHODOLOGIES AND PRAXIS OF HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

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Methodologies here will be presented as they are linked to:

- 1) understanding the international human rights instruments essentially based on the right to know our rights
- 2) curriculum planning
- 3) efforts to promote social empowerment
- 4) responding to the goals of specific user groups
- 5) program and participant evaluation.

While goals reflect long-term programmatic purposes, educational objectives refer to short-term expected learning competencies designed for students and participants. Groups concerned with HRE may pursue many different pedagogical objectives. These include:

- 1) attitude changes

Example: teaching tolerance among political influentials toward Ethiopian tribal groups not well represented in government structures or tolerance toward refugees among British and German “skinheads

- 2) value clarification

Example: critically exploring the negative implications of the common use of manmade language relating to gender references in formal writing as well as in everyday conversation)

- 3) cognitive skills in matters of law, government and society

Example: learning and understanding the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international instruments

- 4) the development of solidarity attitudes

Example: African-American studies programs which engender concern and sympathy for the peoples of Africa and their problems related to food distribution, health and welfare)

- 5) participatory education for empowerment

Example: enabling people to define and meet their own needs

In addition to the diverse goals and objectives specified for HRE, the problem of describing and analyzing various methodologies is compounded because the objectives and the means used to attain them, such as those listed above, will differ in relation to the target group involved: grade school children in primary schools; adults in a literacy program; peasant farmers involved in subsistence agriculture; police and military units; government officials and bureaucrats; health professionals involved in a program of continuing education, etc.

### ***A Recommended Standardized Format for HRE Exercises***

Formatting educational exercises is not a scientific endeavor. It is simply an orderly way of presenting the lesson plan for the facilitators' use. The format employed here has the advantage of being pretested, used and recommended by Betty A. Reardon, a professor of peace and global studies at Columbia Teachers College in New York.

***Overview:*** Here the facilitator/trainer/teacher is alerted to the operative norms and issues linked to the exercise, as well as aspects of "the big picture" as to why the problem presented is significant and may be of interest.

Facilitators should talk to their colleagues about the utility of various exercises and their experiences using them. Sharing suggestions with other facilitators is strongly recommended. Moreover, facilitators should take the initiative to devise various techniques for program evaluation as well as participants' evaluations.

***Objectives:*** The facilitator is told of the desired objectives of the exercise from the point of view of the participants/students and of the desired learning competencies expected for them.

***Procedures:*** The facilitator is given some brief advice on how most effectively to guide the participants so as to achieve the sought for objectives. In every case, whether the exercise is presented for role playing, simulation, debate, or discussion, the facilitator should benefit from techniques suggested here by those with past experience. Of course, the facilitator need not feel dogmatically bound by the suggested procedures.

***Materials:*** The facilitator should know that the exercise will be most successful if used in combination with identified materials, e.g., graphics, documents, posters, a tape recorder or alternative use of a person designated to record discussion, etc. Again, facilitators should use their own creativity, recognizing that

learning is enhanced by appealing to different senses: hearing, sight, talking, touching, etc.

***Sequence:*** Step by step advice is given to the facilitator about what to do, first, second, third, etc.

## ***"A UDHR LEARNING EXERCISE FOR BEGINNERS"***

It is important to link basic human needs with human rights in order for the concept of human rights to gain acceptance and understanding. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) should initially be introduced in accessible language.

***Human rights education in most countries is strictly in accordance with national and international law. Indeed, it is our duty to educate people about their rights before the law so that they will be able to act as responsible citizens.***

***Objectives:*** The participant should gain an understanding that:

1. Basic human needs are universal.
2. Every identifiable human need is connected to a human right according the UDHR.
3. The UDHR represents a "hoped for world" supplying the goals as the basis for judging our own society.
4. Our society, like others, comes up short by international standards where needs are not met and where human rights are violated.

### ***Procedures:***

Introduce the subject of this exercise and use the expectation setting method Use an icebreaker method, such as the wordwheel to get started. The first activity in this introductory session should take about ten minutes, the other steps twenty minutes or more. Two sessions may be needed if the group is ready to go beyond step 5.

### ***Sequence:***

**Step 1.** Ask the participants to help you make a list of all the basic needs that are inherent in being a human being. This step can build on a discussion of how human beings are distinguished by their characteristics from various animals and other living things.

**Step 2.** Use the buzz group method or break up participants into groups, one for each need, reporting back whether they think the one need on which they focused is, in fact, met in our society. Characterize our society as to whether it allows individuals to meet their needs, use their potentialities and helps them develop their qualities as human beings?

**Step 3.** Ask each group to envision and characterize the goals of a society which they think will allow them to use and meet their basic needs and to develop their potentialities as human beings.

**Step 4.** Ask each group to report back its discussion through a few words. Listening to these presentations, the facilitator should construct a chart divided into three columns: (1) characteristic basic needs of a human being; (2) characteristics of the present society and whether the identified needs are met for most people; and, (3) characteristics of the desired goals for society

**Step 5.** Constructing a new column (4), the facilitator shows the different human rights needed to enjoy, to protect and to enhance one's dignity. Explain that for every basic need there is a corresponding human right, introduced in Step 1. Draw upon the relevant human right by using the Article number and simplified version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights identified in the appendix for this exercise.

**Step 6.** Open a discussion about column 2, where human rights violations may be identified, and column 3, which gives a glimpse of what lies ahead if and when human rights are finally respected, protected and promoted. Ask members of each group previously formed to look at needs, and what could be done in our society to meet basic human needs and protect human rights?

### ***The Right to Know Our Rights***

#### **Educational Fora and Formats**

If we have a right to know our rights, then we must start by learning about applicable international norms. Some distinctions are in order regarding the format and locus of education, whether formal, non-formal, or informal.

*The idea of human rights has wings. It has found its way around the globe. Human rights, including the right to education and the right of the people to know their rights, are implanted in international standards around the world.*

**Formal education** refers to the normally three-tier structure of primary, secondary and tertiary education.

**Non-formal education** is any organized, systematic educational activity carried on outside the formal system to offer selected types of learning to particular subgroups in the population, adults as well as children.

**Informal education** may or may not be organized, and is usually unsystematic education, having its impact on the lifelong processes by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences and exposure.

Broadly speaking, government is responsible for formal education, NGOs for non-formal education, and the media for informal education.

***The lack of curricular momentum due to a mind-set in the service of the status quo and conventional thinking within the administrative bureaucracy often forms an obstacle to human rights educators***

#### ***A Closer look at Formal Education***

In this part we will try to explore the concept of curriculum. For this, it is necessary to point out that there is not one sole definition of Curriculum. In specialized literature we find diverse notions, among which we can mention those that understand curriculum to mean the following:

1. the series of knowledge that is learned in the classroom
2. the plan that drives the teaching and learning process
3. a document designed for planning instruction
4. the sum of learning experiences

From our perspective, a curriculum is more than a written document, it is more than a study plan with objectives, courses and a sequence of activities. In our view a curriculum is an educational project through which one chooses the body of knowledge that should be conveyed in the school. This selection invokes the decision of what and how to teach within a specified time and space.

## **knowledge values attitude learning experience ability**

The curriculum determines the type of formation acquired by the students. It also determines how this formation will take place, where, for how long, and who will be involved.

- what will be taught and learned,
- how will it be taught and learned,
- in what context will the learning and teaching take place,
- in what period of time,
- who will be responsible for this process, and
- what role will the different establishments within the school play.

The dilemmas mentioned below constitute only a sample of the contradictory situations found daily in the classroom. It is suggested that you come up with other problems that take place in your medium and that you analyze them drawing from situations that you have experienced. Lastly, think about the impact that these have on the personality of the students and establish a link between the dilemmas presented and human rights.

### **a) The attitude of the teacher towards the student**

Authority	Democracy
Discrimination	Acknowledgment of everyone's rights
Intolerance	Respect
Lack of knowledge of students' opinions	Acknowledgment of the need for student participation in learning
Perception of students as being homogeneous	Recognition of individual differences

### **b) Relationship between students**

Competition	Collaboration
Individualism	Solidarity
Frustration over individual failures	Satisfaction over group success
Feelings of rejection by one's peers	Feelings of acceptance by fellow students

### **c) Schooling Environment**

Student permanently judged	Student valued for talents and recognition of limitations
Women are discriminated in the tasks and responsibilities that are assigned to them	Women and men assume responsibilities that correspond with their interests
The student must always be the subject of decisions that are made for him/her	The student participates and makes decisions regarding himself/herself and his/her education

Thinking about the explicit and hidden curriculum gives rise to a series of issues that should be debated in the study of the problematic curriculum. These issues revolve around the fact that one of the fundamental tasks of a teacher is to reflect, analyze and debate with his/her teaching colleagues about the points mentioned below. **To carry out the debate it is suggested that you:**

1. Form three teams

- o each team should think about the question that is given to them
- o arrive at conclusions and name a representative to report them to the group during the plenary.

2. Choose an individual to:

- o a) chair the plenary
- o b) orient the debate
- o c) synthesize the fundamental ideas
- o d) guide discussion in a way that not only responds to each group's questions, but takes into account the issues arising in the hidden and explicit curricula mentioned earlier.

### ***A Closer Look at Non-Formal Education***

Non-formal education is used outside the school system by NGOs around the world to assist people to develop knowledge and skills and to help them meet their basic needs. Such programs often have empowerment as their primary goal, but it may be blended with other objectives. Among these ancillary purposes are those whereby NGOs attempt to:

- ***Enhance knowledge*** about human rights, e.g., knowledge about the range of constitutionally protected human rights as well as present-day declarations, conventions and covenants.
- Enable people to ***develop critical understanding*** of their life situation, e.g., questioning the barriers and structures which prevent the full enjoyment of their rights and freedoms.
- Help in the process of ***value clarification***, as thinking people reflect on such values as fairness, equality, and justice.
- Bring about ***attitudinal changes***, e.g., teaching tolerance among and between members of different ethnic and national groups.
- Promote ***attitudes of solidarity***, e.g., helping people recognize the struggles of others both at home and abroad as our fellow human beings seek to meet their needs and respond to violations of human rights.
- Effect ***behavioral change***, bringing about action that reflects people's respect for one another, e.g., men behaving in non abusive ways toward women, government officials behaving respectfully toward citizens by honoring everyone's human rights, etc.
- When all or various combinations of these objectives have been met, the achievement complements and helps to promote the most important general goal of non-formal human rights education. That is ***empowerment*** which is often the priority goal for NGOs concerned with community organizing and grassroots programs of self-help.

*Non-formal human rights education for empowerment does not treat students simply as receptacles to be filled with useful ideas and information, as if knowledge is an object to be received rather than a continuous process of inquiry and critical reflection.*

### **Some Guidelines for Facilitators/Teachers**

Hereafter, we will often refer to teachers as **facilitators** (and those who teach them as trainers) and students as **participants**. This terminology helps to emphasize that HRE requires a participative and dialogic approach.

- ❑ Be very clear on your role
- ❑ Get people to introduce themselves and try to make them feel relaxed
- ❑ Explain the subject matter and scope of the program and solicit the opinion of participants regarding their expectations.
- ❑ Introduce the subject of each exercise and solicit participants' expectations. Assume the participants are looking for a response to pressing problems, so the subject matter should be explicitly interconnected to local community needs.
- ❑ Elicit the related experience of the participants on the subject of each exercise
- ❑ Explain approximately how much time you have and allocate sufficient time for discussion. See if everyone understands.
- ❑ Introduce ideas and questions. Do not enforce your views. Be sure to give participants plenty of opportunities to talk of their own experiences.
- ❑ Your eyes, ears and voice are important. Maintain eye contact with participants. Be aware of your own voice --try not to talk too much or too loudly, but be sure everyone can hear you and other participants.
- ❑ Be aware of how you approach people in the group, for example, not picking on the same people all the time and asking them what they think.
- ❑ Do not get into arguments or allow them to develop. At the same time you should allow and encourage different opinions.
- ❑ Do not allow people to interrupt each other.
- ❑ Be firm with dominant people and say that they should allow others a chance to speak.
- ❑ Give people time to think and to explain what they mean.
- ❑ Explain and summarize briefly when necessary, for example, with difficult words or concepts.
- ❑ Check whether people have understood the discussion before going on to the next topic, and allow for any further questions

## Some Definitions Helpful for Various Methodologies

In exercises and examples of methods presented in this essay, some terms are used which will be new to the facilitators, trainers and participants.

**Brainstorm:** *quickly coming up with ideas or proposals without, at first, defending them or prioritizing them. Then open up discussion on ideas or proposals*

**Buzz groups:** *each participant turns to her/his neighbor (left and right) on a one-on-one basis for a short discussion*

**Case-study:** *a brief input on a scenario or description of how a problem, for example, one that has arisen in the past, was dealt with and responded to by people. It can be historical or hypothetical, but should be related to the actual experiences of participants*

**Debate:** *participants take up different or opposing sides on a problem and argue for a response or remedy different from that on the other side*

**Drama:** *a prepared play in which those involved have practiced their parts in advance*

**Expectations:** *participants say what they hope to get out of an exercise or program*

**Facilitator:** *the group leader who is clear on the exercise to be followed, the questions to ask, and the objectives of the exercise*

**Floating:** *when participants break up into small groups for discussion, the facilitator and volunteers move around (float) in a quiet way from group to group checking if everyone is clear on the questions and reminding people how much time they have left*

**Go-arounds:** *all participants get a chance to speak without interruption, one at a time, for example, going around the entire group and missing no one*

**Icebreakers:** *an activity, usually at the beginning of a session, to get people to loosen up and relax, for example, by shaking hands and introducing themselves to others*

**Participant:** *those in the learning group who are necessarily involved in the activity of an exercise and who are treated by the facilitator and other participants as equals, not passive students absorbing knowledge*

**Inputs:** *a planned talk by the facilitator or someone else, usually of short duration*

**Roleplay:** *participants become "part of the action" by pretending to act a particular role, e.g., that of a police officer or of a human rights victim, but the role is not practiced beforehand*

**Reporting back:** *when participants have broken up into small groups, one person should report back to the larger group the results of the small group discussion or the decision of the small group deliberations*

**Speaking from Experience:** *one of the participants talks about his or her experience of the issue or problem you are discussing*

**Talking Circle:** *all participants arrange chairs or otherwise sit in a circle so they can see each participant face to face*

**Word wheels:** *people stand in 2 circles of equal numbers, so that each person in the inside circle faces someone in the outside circle, e.g., to introduce themselves. The wheel can rotate (left or right) so that each person has addressed each other person in the group on a one-on-one basis.*



## ***SAMPLE METHODS***

Many techniques are possible depending on the instructor's goals and objectives and the need to guide participants with a pre-tested template. Some creative examples of HRE methods follow which can be used in diverse educational formats:

### **Discussion Method:**

- (1) Divide participants up into two equal groups. Have the groups sit opposite the others.
- (2) Ask each group to take up one side of a discussion, for example one group will argue that having access to clean tap water is a human right and the other group argues it may be a desirable policy but not a human right. The participants have no choice which group they go into, thus they may have to argue a position with which they do not agree.
- (3) Give each group time to prepare their arguments. Each person in the group must prepare one argument to support their side. This is because, when the time comes to discuss the issue with the other side, each person in the group will have only one chance to talk.
- (4) When the teams are ready, the two sides come together in the big group on opposite sides of the room and the discussion starts. Each side gets a chance to give one argument, starting with the team in favor of water access as a human right. Then, you carry on giving each team a chance to talk until everyone has had a chance to speak.
- (5) When this is finished, say to people that they now may cross over to the other side if they want to support that side. Thus they finally go to the side they actually agree with. Or a third group may form of those who are undecided.
- (6) End up by asking the people who changed sides to say what arguments made them change their position and also say what else they learned from the exercise.

### **Listening Method:**

- (1) Divide people into small groups, for example of 2 or 4.
- (2) Ask each group to take sides on a particular issue with an equal number on each side. For example, A has to argue that women's human rights require that acts of domestic violence by a husband should be treated as a crime and a matter for police intervention, and B argues that such action is a private matter and should not be reported to the police.
- (3) One person from side A briefly gives the first argument for a public remedy for women's rights.
- (4) Someone from side B initially must summarize very briefly A's argument, and then present the first argument from side B.
- (5) Side A summarizes this point before giving their next argument. The exercise continues in the same way until the time is up and people finally reflect on their heartfelt conclusions and how the listening method affected them.

### **Problem-solving Method:**

- (1) Divide the participants into two or more groups, each given the same problem, for example preparing recommendations to make to their provincial representative about dealing with problems of local radio not broadcasting in the language of a minority group.
- (2) Give each group plenty of time to work out their approach.
- (3) Report back the approaches.
- (4) Open a general discussion about which approach was more consistent with the human rights of minorities.

## Roleplay Method:

- (1) With such an emotional roleplay, the facilitator must clearly explain what will happen before you start, and ask people for their cooperation.
- (2) The roleplay should be done slowly. If it is too rushed and everyone talks at the same time, people get confused and will not learn a lot from the roleplay.
- (3) After the acting out the problem, turn over discussion to everyone, to assess whether they think there are human rights issues involved.
- (4) Ask the group how they would like the problem to be dealt with, taking identified human rights into account.

## Use of Community Resource Persons

- (1) Instructors should identify people trained or expert in the field discussed, e.g., judges, police-persons, clergy, prison officials, etc.
- (2) People who are victims of power can also be used and can usually be identified by NGOs or members of religious communities, women's and youth groups.
- (3) The resource person can co-teach with the instructor and this is valuable because as experts in their field they are more likely to be listened to than the instructors.
- (4) A useful method is to ask participants to roleplay somebody interviewing the resource person in his or her role, e.g., an innocent by-stander "roughed up" by a "swat team" (highly militarized drug enforcement officers in the United States) during a radio interview.

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