

# Mosquito Methods

– Human  
Rights



"In CISV individuals and their perspectives meet. Within these meetings, we create peace education. With concrete methods and a starting point in the challenges within society we encourage people to be active citizens, locally as well as globally. Based on the UN Declaration on human rights and democratic principles CISV Sweden is a non-profit, politically and religiously independent organisation, open to everyone. CISV Sweden is a collaborative organisation for and a union of the local CISV chapters within Sweden."

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## The People Behind This Book

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# **Mosquito Methods – Human Rights**

## Four Books on How to Create a Positive Change

In 2009 CISV Sweden released Mosquito Tactics - A Book About Peace Education. The title was inspired by the famous quote “If you think you are too small to have an impact, try going to bed with a mosquito in the room” and addressed CISV Sweden’s view on peace and peace education. As CISV Sweden is trying to create active global citizens through experiential learning and peace education the next step will be a set of four method books; Mosquito Methods.

Each of the four books in the Mosquito Methods series address one of CISV’s peace education content areas:

**Diversity** – Explores the identity of the individual and asks us to consider ourselves within our own and the wider community.

**Conflict and Resolution** – Helps us to understand how conflicts can arise deliberately or otherwise and what can be done to help bring a peaceful resolution.

**Sustainable Development** – Looks for integrated ways to promote economic and social well-being, while protecting the environment through the responsible use of natural resources.

**Human Rights** – Considers how human rights affect every aspect of our lives and how violations can lie at the root of problems such as poverty, violence and lawlessness.

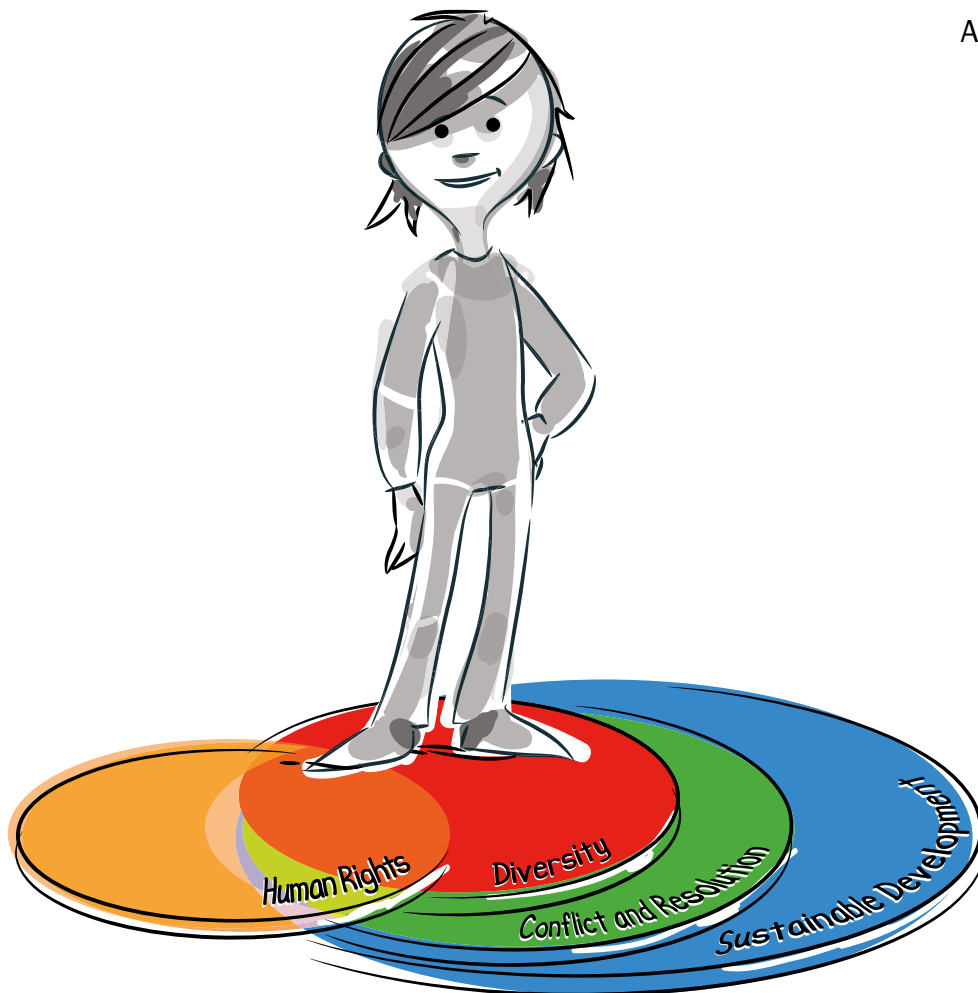
Each book includes information about how CISV works with experiential learning and an introduction to the content area. After the basic introduction each book is divided into chapters about different topics within the content area. Every chapter will also include an example of an activity that lets participants of different ages explore the theme through experiential learning.

Finally we want to send a big thank you to the ones who have contributed to the project, and the ones who are reading this book. It is our hope that Mosquito

Methods will be useful and that we all together can create projects to increase cultural understanding, for human rights, for good education for everyone, for peaceful solutions to all conflicts, for equality and diversity and against racism, discrimination, poverty and pollution.

/ The Mosquito Methods Team;

Anna Kristiansson  
Bodil Nordin  
Anton Ruus  
My Starbrink



## Peace - What Is It?

### *Peace Education - To Develop Yourself and Others*

Peace includes freedom, justice, democracy, and a world where everyone can enjoy their human rights. The main idea of peace education is that you will learn about people whose life differs from yours, which will help you find ways to resolve conflicts. It is an ongoing learning experience and you will gain more knowledge as you meet new people and learn from these meetings. These experiences also transform our attitudes and we gain skills that we can apply and develop over time. In this way peace education offers opportunities for individuals to develop themselves and simultaneously help others to do the same.

### *More Than the Opposite of War*

Even though war and peace are often described as opposites, there is much more to peace than simply the absence of war. Even if we are not in open conflict we can still have negative peace, and whilst negative peace is much preferred to war, it leaves much to be wished for. Discrimination, racism, poverty and other forms of so-called structural violence are still a part of everyday life even though we are “at peace”. This book however, along with its predecessor *Mosquito Tactics*, refers to peace as in positive peace; a society where no one is held back from fulfilling their dreams by the norms and social rules of their surroundings. Positive peace is the absence of discrimination and inequality, but not of conflicts. A conflict is not automatically negative, it all comes down to how we decide to handle it. Conflicts offer us the chance to learn from one another and grow as a group while discussing and finding solutions. As to this day, there is no place on earth where there is a positive peace.

It is important to remember that we are all part of a society, and that we all have an impact on other people’s opportunities. We have an individual, as well as a shared, responsibility for each other. Some acts of discriminating behaviour are more obvious than others. Some are constantly brought up, like those related to gender and ethnicity, whilst others, like those related to age and functionality, are not discussed as frequently. Many of these subtle forms of discriminating behav-



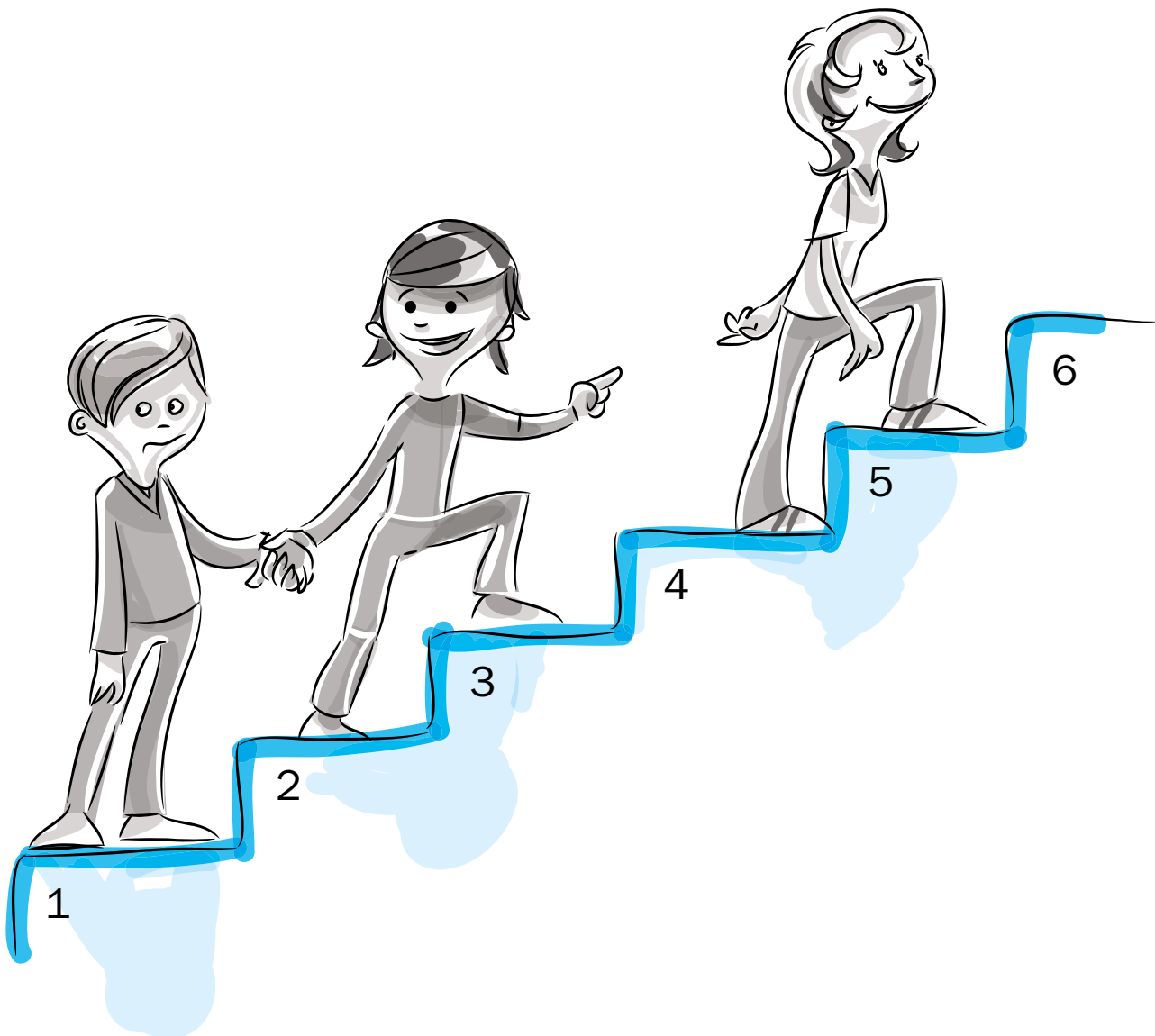
ours are deeply linked with the norms we follow, things we do but rarely reflect on. Meeting new people, especially those whose norms differ from our own, helps us become aware of our own prejudices and routine behaviours, enabling us to challenge and change them. With a deeper understanding of other people and the lives they live, it becomes easier for us all to cooperate. It is important, both on a local and global level, to learn how to handle conflicts that may arise when people with different values meet.

## **Four Pieces of Peace**

To achieve peace there are a number of things that we as active global citizens need to tackle. CISV is built on top of four pillars, our four areas of peace education. We believe that peace cannot be achieved unless we work with a broad spectrum of issues. The four pillars are Diversity, Conflict and Resolution, Sustainable Development and Human Rights.

## **Learning by Doing**

Before a group starts working together, it is important for the individuals to get to know each other and feel safe. Otherwise it will be difficult to discuss and come up with ideas, since the people in the group will not feel comfortable enough to express their opinions. These pages present a number of steps you might want to consider when working with a group. Think about the social development of any group as a staircase. In order to reach the top step, where everyone feels comfortable taking part in group activities, you first need to climb the lower steps.



In CISV, we have broken it down to the following six steps:

### **1. Names**

Name games make it easier for the participants to start talking to each other. To be able to call someone by their name enhances communication, and by learning people's names you show them respect. This helps your participants to feel more comfortable in the situation.

### **2. Communication**

To be able to discuss and express opinions, it is important that the participants can communicate in a way that suits everyone. It is important to learn in what ways your participants are comfortable communicating to avoid misunderstandings. This should be achieved before moving on to the next step. For example, some people need to talk while they're thinking, while others need to sit quiet and reflect before talking.

### **3. Cooperation**

This step is about cooperating with the other group members. Little by little, the participants will feel more comfortable with each other and partaking in group activities, which is important when it comes to speaking your mind and experiencing peace education.

### **4. Team building**

At this point, participants will have to start depending on others to do their part, whilst still managing their own, to reach a common goal.

### **5. Trust**

In order for the group to be able to discuss more serious and personal issues they need to trust one another. It is therefore important to focus on building trust at this stage.

### **6. Role Play**

This kind of activity requires that the group members have developed a deep bond, and not all groups reach this stage. The participants get to play roles that, for instance, can reflect the situation of different people in society. This way the participants learn to discuss and to express their opinions and thoughts. Make sure you plan your time so there is room for discussion after the role play has ended.



## **Do, Reflect, Generalise and Apply**

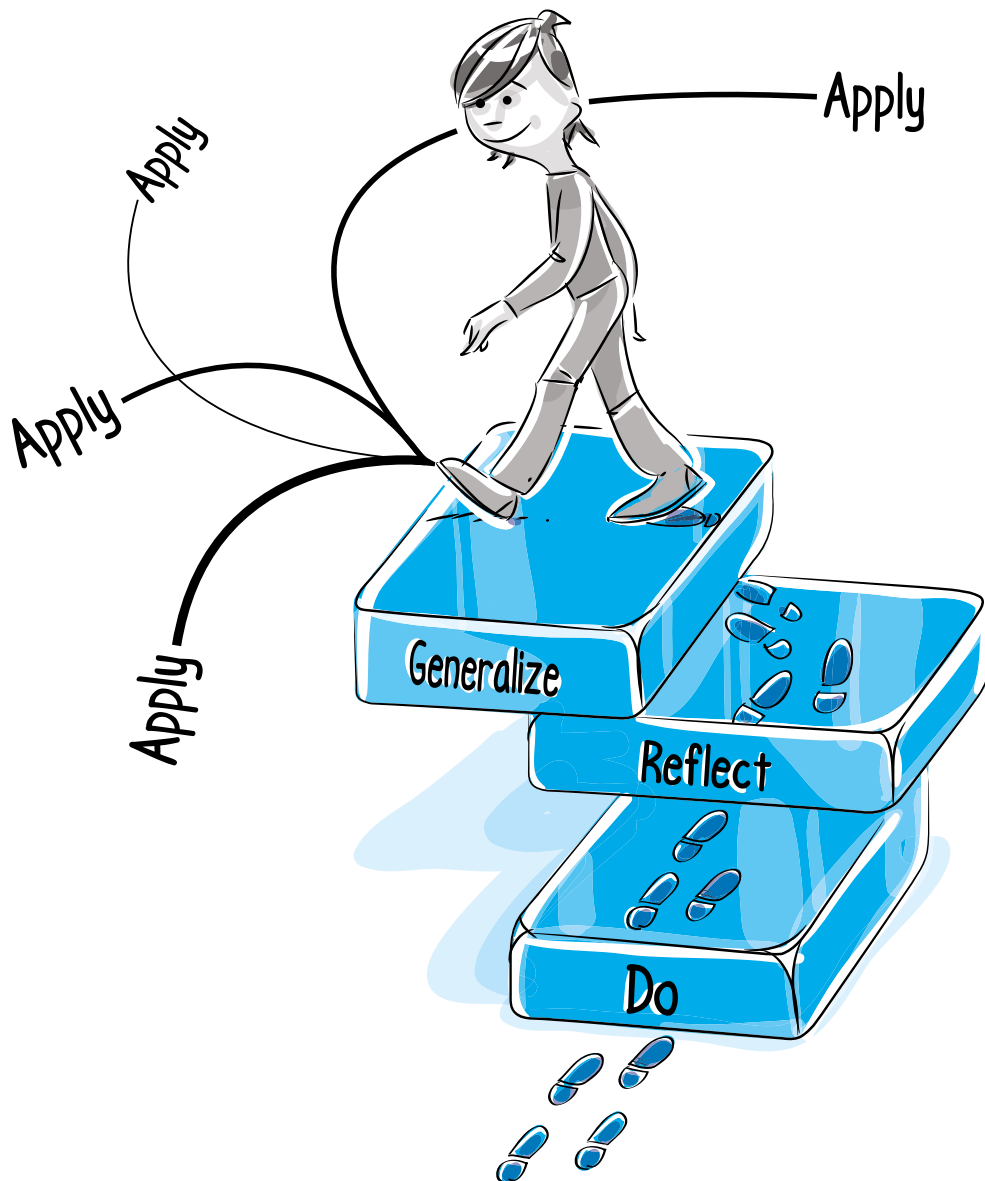
Learning by doing, or experiential learning, is a method of learning through experience rather than reading books or attending lectures. It involves putting ourselves into new, often prearranged, situations. After an experience, we discuss certain topics or how a problem could be solved. It is a good way of getting people with different backgrounds to meet and develop an understanding of each other.

The participants must be given the opportunity to reflect on our new experiences in a constructive way. Through this kind of learning, experiences give us new knowledge that we bring to future situations. In the end, we will have improved our ability to manage new, unexpected or difficult situations.

It is valuable to meet new people, and to experience new things. At the same time, we need to have the opportunity to reflect on what we have learned. Something that happens can be understood in many different ways, depending on our background. If we are given the opportunity to discuss and talk about our reactions, we will probably react differently the next time we are in a similar situation.

The process of experiential learning involves moving from partaking in an event to reflection, putting our experiences in a larger context, and then using the new attitudes, skills and knowledge in future contexts accordingly.

In order to understand the concept of experiential learning you can look at the model on the next page. Following this process a participant goes from participating in an activity (do) to gain new knowledge to use in everyday life (apply). To be able to generalise, to put the activity in a context and see the bigger picture, time for reflection must be provided. Letting participants discuss questions in small groups will help them to reflect on what they have just done and why they acted in the ways they did.



## Discovering Human Rights

When speaking of Human Rights, we often mean the 30 articles of the United Nations Universal Declaration of the Human Rights accepted back in 1948. The idea that all humans are equals might not be controversial today, yet there is not a single place in the world where these 30 articles are fully satisfied.

To be aware of our current Human Rights is a start, but since the first declaration was signed more have been added. As our societies change and develop new questions are raised about who and what deserves to be covered by international conventions. Only through constantly questioning and evaluating what minimum we all deserve can we keep our Human Rights relevant and sufficient. Since 1948 another nine declarations have been accepted by the UN's General Assembly, the latest addition covering sexuality and gender identity rights, addressing issues that would not have been raised had it not been for people actively questioning the Human Rights' coverage.

In this book we will dive into very different aspects of Human Rights, with personal stories shared on differing topics. We have split the book into four chapters, progressing from Discovering Human Rights to Human Rights on a Personal, Local and lastly International level. Through the four activities at the end of each chapter we hope to spark a discussion leading to a deeper understanding of Human Rights and in what ways they still present a global challenge for us all.

### **Where Do Human Rights Come From, And Why Do We Need Them?** **– a personal reflection by Linde Lindkvist**

Scholars of human rights history have devoted much energy to determine where human rights come from. As is typically the case, the more we research into a topic, the more we tend to disagree. Some claim that the ideas we now think of when we speak of human rights—for instance, that all human beings are equal and entitled to respect and protection—are as old as mankind itself. Some see human rights mainly as products of the American and French revolutions of the







18th century. Others locate the birth of human rights to December 10, 1948, when the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. And others still are eager to point out that it was not until the mid 1970s that human rights became a global language, spoken by a wide range of grassroots movements and government actors alike.

To my mind, one of the most interesting things about the history of human rights is that in each epoch, different rights have stood high on the agenda of policy makers and activists. During the 18th century revolutions, the most central rights were arguably the right of the people to rule themselves and the rights of citizens not to be exposed to unlawful trials or suffer from cruel or unusual punishments. In the mid twentieth century, many leading champions of human rights instead focused on the economic and social welfare of citizens. The Universal Declaration of 1948 contains several articles that speak of the right to equal pay for equal work, and the right to protection against unemployment. In the 1960s, in an era where many former colonies were gaining political independence, it was instead common to hold that the first human right was the right of peoples to be free from foreign rule and interventions. And if you would walk into one of the numerous debates on human rights in the United Nations of 2015, you would have to be prepared to discuss a whole range of different issues, from the financial crisis and climate change to the limits of the freedom of speech online.

For some, this flexibility in the language of human rights is unfortunate. They would rather want us to find a short list of some essential human rights (such as the right to life and the right to personal liberty) that can stand across the ages. For others, and I am one of them, this flexibility is what makes human rights relevant. It is because the language can be used to address ever-new questions and challenges that it still worth clinging onto. But the fact that we do not know for sure what human rights are also means that we have to take a great deal of responsibility ourselves if and when we decide to speak the language. We cannot, in other words, rest assured knowing that we are in favour of human rights. If we are, we must be prepared to answer two more essential questions: What human rights? And for whom?

## Portrait: Emma Watson



Although she is probably most famous for her part as Hermione Granger in the Harry Potter film series, Emma Watson has lately also become noted for her women's rights work. She is, as of July 2014, a UN Women Goodwill Ambassador.

The video of Watson's speech at the UN headquarters in New York in September 2014, where she helped to launch the campaign HeForShe, has been seen by millions. HeForShe is a UN

Women campaign, which aims to engage men and boys as gender equality advocates. Seeing that gender inequality affects all people, the campaign asks men and boys to take action against inequalities faced by women and girls. Just three days after the launch of the campaign, more than 100 000 men had joined the campaign, including US President Barack Obama, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and actor Matt Damon.

## Activity on Discovering Human Rights

This activity lets participants get to know the articles of the Declaration of Human Rights, and to discuss which they think are more important than others.

### **Requirements:**

- **Materials:** Printed copies of the Declaration of Human Rights, pens
- **Time:** 60 minutes

### **Do:**

Divide the participants into groups of about 5 and hand each group a copy of the Declaration of Human Rights. Then ask each group to choose which ten articles are the most important ones. When the groups are finished, ask them to choose which five articles are most important and then to rank them according to importance. Let each group tell the others which five articles they chose.

### **Reflect:**

Let the participants discuss the following questions.

- How did you feel during the activity?
- How did you choose which ones were most important?
- Did you all agree?
- Was it hard to separate the articles?

### **Generalise and Apply:**

- Are all rights equally important?
- Which rights are hardest to ensure?
- Are there any countries where all rights are respected?
- Who's responsibility is it that the human rights are respected?



## **The United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

This is a simplified version of the original 30 articles of the human rights. Feel free to use the original version if you so wish.

1. Everyone is born free and equal in dignity and with rights.
2. You should never be discriminated against for any reason. Rights belong to all people, whatever our differences.
3. Everyone has the rights to life, liberty and security.
4. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude.
5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
6. You have the right to be treated as a person in the eyes of the law.
7. You have the right to be treated by the law in the same way as everyone else. Everyone has a right to protection against violations of their human rights.
8. If your rights under law are violated, you have the right to see justice done in a court or tribunal.
9. No one shall be subject to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.
10. You have the right to a fair and public trial by an independent and impartial tribunal.
11. Everyone is to be presumed innocent until proven guilty in a fair trial. No one should be charged with a criminal offence for an act that wasn't an offence at the time the act was done.
12. No one has the right to intrude in your private life or interfere with your home and family without good reason. No one has the right to attack your good name without reason.
13. You have the right to freedom of movement within your country. Everyone has the right to leave a country and to return home.
14. You have the right to seek and to enjoy asylum from persecution in other countries. You may not invoke this right if fleeing just laws in your own country.

15. You have the right to a nationality.
16. You have the right to marry and to raise a family. Men and women have the same rights when they are married and when they are separated.
17. You have the right to own property and it cannot randomly be taken away from you.
18. You have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and to peacefully express those beliefs in teaching, practice and worship.
19. You have the right to freedom of opinion and expression.
20. You have the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
21. You have the right to take part in the government of your country.
22. As a member of society, you have a right to social security.
23. You have the right to work, to good working conditions, to equal pay for equal work and to form and join unions.
24. You have the right to rest and leisure.
25. You have the right to a decent life, including enough food, clothing, housing, medical care and social services.
26. You have the right to an education.
27. No one may stop you from participating in the cultural life of your community.
28. You have the right to live in the kind of world where your rights and freedoms are respected.
29. We all have a responsibility to the people around us and should protect their rights and freedoms.
30. There is nothing in this declaration that justifies any person or country taking away the rights to which we are all entitled.











## **Human Rights on a Personal Level**

In the following chapter we will focus on what role the human rights play for each of us as individuals, on a personal level. We will try to raise questions concerning one's right to oneself, whether it is your right to your own body, language, heritage or future. We also want to shed some light on how failure to meet these rights can fundamentally affect how your life and personality develop, which is investigated in the activity.

### **Our Everyday Rights**

Human rights apply to everyone, everywhere, every day. Still, the UN declaration on the human rights can be difficult to connect to our own lives. When we think of human rights we seldom think of the society we live in ourselves, but of conflicts and issues that take place far away. But it is possible that you passed a human rights violation on your way to school or work today. You might even know of violations of the human rights in your neighbourhood without even realising it. Or maybe your own rights are being violated, or the ones of someone close to you. The human rights are not remote or vague; they are basically what every human needs in order to live a good life.

If you were to write down all the things that you yourself would need in order to live a life where you have the possibility to think about things beyond survival, what would they be? What makes a day a good day? You need to feel well, not be hungry, have a job that pays you enough to care for you and your family and have a home to go to when you are done at work. You need to feel like you have power over your own life, and that others listen to you. But in order to have a good day you also need to be happy, respected by others, eat food that you like, have fun, and have time to relax. It would of course be impossible to make sure that everyone is happy every day, but everyone should be able to live a life where their basic needs are fulfilled. Then they can start to think about what makes them happy, and not just what keeps them alive.

That is what the human rights are for - to ensure that the basic needs of every human being are being fulfilled. They are meant to free us from discrimination, oppression and injustice, and to make us feel safe and respected. Take some time to read through the 30 articles of the human rights, and reflect over their meaning in your own life and society. What can you do to promote human rights in your everyday life? It can simply be to stand up to bullies or people that does not treat others as equals. There are only so much that can be regulated by law, the rest is up to ourselves to ensure.

Making the human rights a reality for everyone does not only help people survive the day, but also gives every citizen of the world a better chance to be happy.

## **The Right to Yourself**

No one can prevent you from practicing your religion, speaking your language, going to school or expressing your opinion. No one can use you or hurt you. No one can treat you differently because of your sexuality, gender, identity or heritage. The right to oneself is ultimate, and just like any other right you have the right to seek legal justice if it is violated. We often accept far too much discrimination before we decide to do something about it. Racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination are so common that we get used to hearing things that are really violations of the human rights. Remember that if someone says something that makes you or someone else feel uncomfortable it is not okay, never mind if it was meant as a joke.

These rights also apply to the web. Racist and sexist comments are being posted online every minute, and we get so used to it that we do not even react to them at times. This normalisation of discriminating behaviour is dangerous, and there are things we can all do to stop it. Report statuses, pictures and comments that express racism or sexism on social medias. If there are comments on your own page or pictures that are offensive, delete them! Be a slacktivist! It can be scary to throw yourself into a discussion where people express offensive opinions, but you can always at least 'like' the comments of the people that stand up against them. Countries have different laws against discrimination,

but they should almost always apply regardless of where discrimination occurs - at work, on the bus or online. Therefore, you can also report offensive online content to the police.

It is important not to accept discrimination just because it is common or that there are other cases which are worse. All of us have the responsibility to respect the human rights, and also to stand up for people that are subject to violation of them.



## Portrait: Malala Yousafzai



Malala Yousafzai is a Pakistani girl born in 1997 who became famous for her struggle for gender equality in Pakistan. At age 12 she started blogging under a pseudonym for the British news corporation BBC, where she described her daily life and criticised the local Taliban rulers who prevented her and other girls from attending school. BBC decided to film a documentary about her and the situation in north-eastern Pakistan.

This and other media coverage led to her real identity being revealed. In 2012 a gunman stopped a bus she was travelling with and fired three shots at Malala, with one hitting her in her face and neck. The following days her condition was critical, but as she began to heal she was

eventually moved to England where a expert team assisted her in her recovery.

The assassination attempt sparked a worldwide debate on women's rights and the heroism of this young human rights defender and she was awarded several prizes and titles. The campaign "I am Malala" launched by the UN with the goal to have a children in the world in school by 2015 led to the ratification of Pakistan's first Right to Education Bill.

Malala has continued her political career meeting up with some of the worlds most influential persons and attending UN meetings, speaking on the behalf of children in general and girls in particular across the world.

## Activity on Human Rights on a Personal Level

This activity lets the participants explore how different backgrounds and experiences of a people can affect their possibilities in life. Feel free to come up with more roles and statements.

### Requirements:

- **Materials:** Written descriptions of the different roles
- **Time:** 60 minutes

### Do:

Hand out one role to each person and ask them to read it quietly. To help the participants picture their role better, ask questions about their characters. They do not need to remember all questions or tell anyone their answers. The questions are only asked to help them create a full picture of their role.

### Questions:

How was your childhood?

Did your parents work? With what?

Where do you live today?

What do you do during the days?

Where do you hang out with your friends?

What makes you happy?

What are you afraid of?

Now ask the participants to stand on a line next to each other. You will read a number of statements and if their role agrees they will take a step forward. Feel free to come up with more statements. After all the statements are read ask the participants to sit down on the floor where they are and ask them to read their roles out loud. Then discuss the following questions in large or small groups.



### **Reflect:**

- How did it feel to take a step forward/ stand still?
- For those who took many steps forward: when did they notice that they were moving faster than the others?
- What are the differences between your role and your life?
- What values did you assign to your character based on the information given? Gender? Skin colour? Sexuality?

### **Generalise/Apply:**

- What can you do to work towards equality?
- What role did your prejudices play when you moved forward/ stood still?
- Why do we usually assume that a person is white, male and heterosexual if nothing else is mentioned?

### **Roles:**

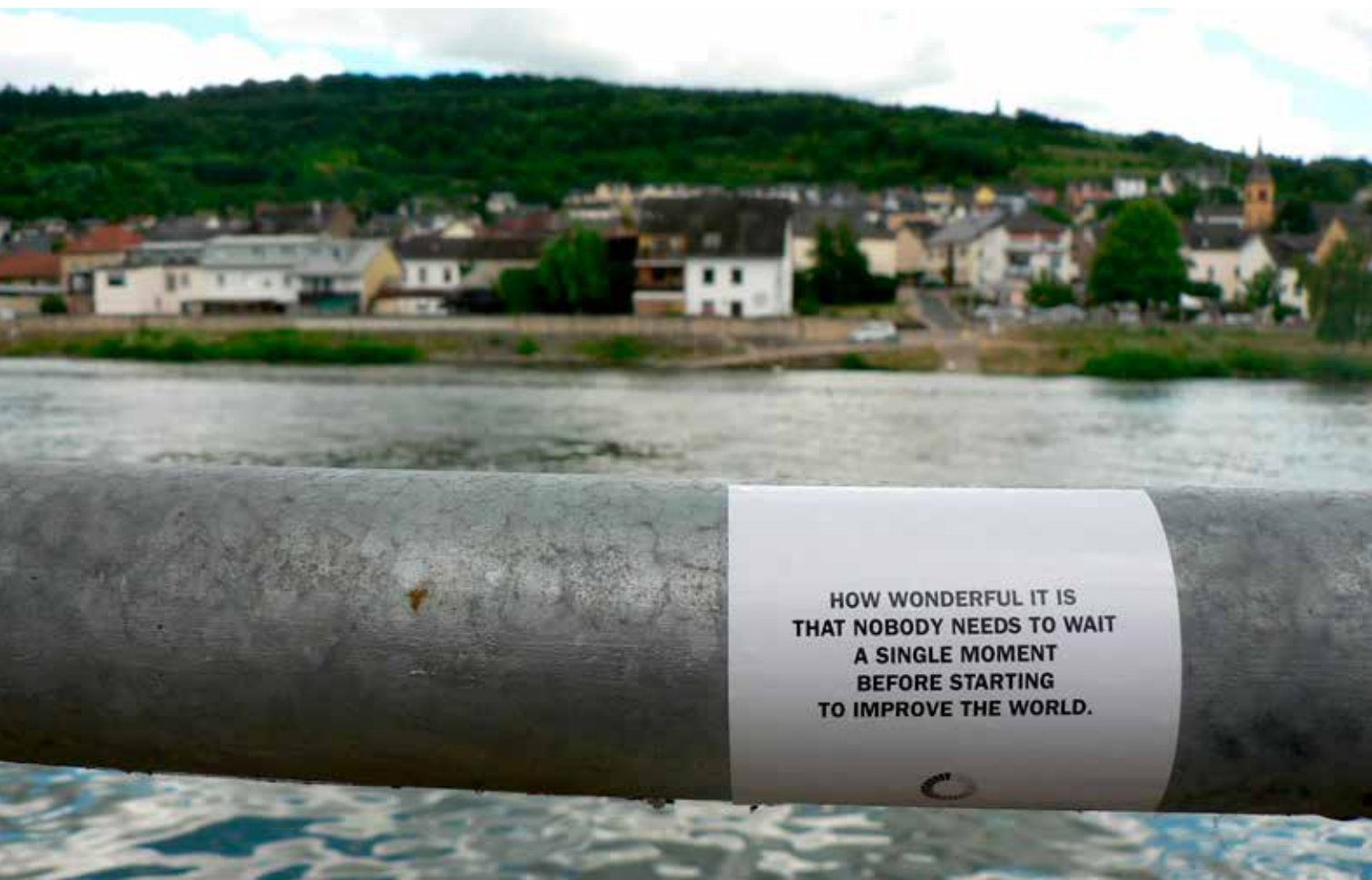
University student, child of a CEO of a large company	You live in the suburbs and your parents are alcoholics
Homosexual and president of the student council	Child of a Chinese immigrant who owns a restaurant
Refugee living in Germany	17 years old, homeless and addicted to heroine
Disabled and politically active	Model with an eating disorder

### **Statements:**

Your parents help you with your homework and encourage you  
You have no economical issues  
You have internet at home  
You have your own room  
You feel that your culture is respected where you live  
You feel that people take your opinions seriously  
You are not afraid to be stopped by the police  
You know where to turn for help if you need it  
You have never felt discriminated because of your origin  
You can see a doctor if you get sick  
You have a holiday once a year



You can bring friends home after school  
You have a positive view on the future  
You can choose your profession after school  
Your religious holidays are national holidays  
You are not worried about your future  
You can buy new clothes every third month  
You can date anyone you want to  
You are not afraid to walk home alone at night  
You have never felt discriminated because of your gender









## Human Rights on a Local Level

What can, or rather should we expect from our local community? How can a local community ensure a better future for the inhabitants? Quite a few things mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights fall under these categorisations; right to education or employment, access to culture or the right to freedom of association and assembly are all a concern to and a directly connected to the local community. The following texts will raise to different stories of where the local community has been unable to ensure their inhabitants rights.

### **A Companion for Peace - a Personal Reflection by Birgitta Rubenson**

*“Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”*  
(The Declaration of Human Rights, art. 2)

Ismaïl and Jasminik come running up the hill from the school on their way to the military check-point and home. “Jalla, jalla” Ismaïl calls “tal al beiti”. Quickly come with us home.

Together we walk up to the soldiers. I give them my passport for a check and the children show their schoolbags and ID-cards. We continue to the conveyor-belt, where they put their bags and I my companion-jacket. We walk through the metal-detector, take our things and I receive my passport back. Now we are through and out on the other side of the wall separating Israel from the occupied West-Bank. My colleague is awaiting the other schoolchildren, but Ismaïl and Jasminik are in a hurry to get home. The call to me to hurry up and we walk up the road between the military camp on one side and the Israeli settlement on the other. When we cross the road into the settlement where the children were careful to check that I was not too close to the gate, Jasminik jumps up on the low railing and with the support of Ismaïl she balances happily homewards.

I slow down a bit to check that the others are coming, but I can't see them. The children hurry on and after about 15 minutes along the road with heavy traffic – small cars, trucks and military vehicles in a continuous flow – we come to a small plot with dusty olive trees. The children jump over a small ditch and run in among the trees and I follow them. We reach a small gathering of ramshackle dwellings made of corrugated iron sheets, parts of old cars and black heavy tent blankets which together make up the village and the homes of the children. Jasminik stops at an old truck cab she uses as her room for studying to leave her schoolbag. Ismaïl pulls me with him home.

Ismaïl, who practised his English all the way with the questions: “What is your name?” and “From where do you come?” introduces me to his mother, grandmother and some older and younger siblings. Soon the father, an uncle, some aunts and cousins also turn up and the small home becomes crowded. We communicate on broken Arabic and English, with many smiles and gestures. Soon sweet tea is served and then also a simple lunch soup on onions, rice and spices with a tasty fresh bread.

As Seefer, the name of the small village, is in a seam-zone, which means it is located on the Israeli side of the wall, but still on Palestinian land. Instead of following the Green Line, the border drawn at the end of the fighting after the 1967 war, which constitutes the border between Israel and the occupied West-Bank the fence here makes a clear bend to include the military camp and the settlement built on Palestinian land, on the Israeli side. This means that the small village of As Seefer ended up in the seam zone, in a kind of vacuum. There are 25 people living in the village, four families owning the land since generations. They have no rights in Israel and have to renew their permits every three months to be able to live in their village. They have to have permits to pass the check-point to go shopping, visit friends and relatives, or go to the clinic. For the children in the seam zone it means having to pass the military check point with the heavily armed soldiers twice every day, that they can never bring friends with them home or stay after school and play with friends.



After the visit to As Seefer I thought about the situation of the families, who had even lost their right to have human rights as they ended up living in an area without access to services neither in the West Bank nor in Israel, but under constant control and supervision of the Israeli army.

### **To Realise Your Own Privileges - *a Personal Reflection by Elin Wahlström***

I am Elin, a 25-year old linguist from Sweden. At the moment, I am in the middle of a 1-year course in development studies, a co-operation between a community college in Sweden, the NGO Africa Groups of Sweden and SIDA. As a part of this course, me and my classmate Julia are spending five months in a small-town in the south of Zimbabwe – Gwanda.

Here in Gwanda, we are working as interns at an organisation called ENMT (Edward Ndlovu Memorial Trust). The organisation runs a library in the midst of Gwanda Town, and their main objective is to contribute to the development of Gwanda district and Zimbabwe through the provision of knowledge and information. Apart from the regular services you would expect from a library, the Edward Ndlovu Memorial Library also orchestrate study circles in the rural areas targeted toward self-sufficiency, as well as having a book box program involving 27 primary schools in Gwanda district, and reading activities with the children who come to the library every day. The book box program and the children activities is the part that we will mostly be dealing with during our time here.

Every day around lunch, and then again at about two o'clock, a hoard of children come rushing into the library to do their homework, borrow a book from the library or just sit down and flip through some books for the fun of it. Some days we get to hold group sessions with the children, where we usually read a story and then have some kind of activity, like drawing something we've just read about, or holding a spelling competition. Other days we just sit down with some of the children and let them read to us, to hopefully be a part of them developing their reading skills.

I look at these children, and I am amazed of how eager they are to learn, and how fast they catch on to things. The spelling competition mentioned above was even held on their own initiative... I think about myself in primary school, and about most of my classmates. How





often did we run to the library to dive into a good book? Okay, maybe I did, but I was definitely the odd one out, and I would never wish for a spelling competition. I talk to my family on Skype one day and my little brother is so mad he is crying about the fact that he has to do his homework before he can play a game on his iPad.

And I do not blame him. It is difficult to see how much is given to you for free when it is the only reality you have ever experienced. Especially when you are so young.

But even when you become older it is hard.

Like Julia and me and the water. We do not always have water in the house we live in here. Sometimes we are without it for a week or more. And we complain about it. Of course we do, coming from a reality where we essentially take clean tap water for granted. Then we remind ourselves of the people who always live here; the women who struggle to carry their water home in large buckets every day, if they can get hold of it. We still complain sometimes, but it is definitely easier to see it is as a luxury and really celebrate it when it's there than it might have been before.

Or like the other intern at the library, who was scared that the police was going to beat him up wanting to know about something his friend did. If you can't even trust the authorities, the ones who are supposed to protect you and keep your community a safe place, who then can you trust? "The police here are so corrupt," another local told us, "that if you don't want to get caught for smoking weed, you should smoke with the police."

There are too many people being denied too many of their human rights on a daily basis, and who does something actively to reach a change?  
Too few.



And I do not blame us. It is difficult to understand someone else's reality, when the only one you have ever experienced is your own. That is why I believe that the provision of information – uncorrupted information – is so important. The interaction between different realities and cultures, if not physical then at least through stories and information, is vital to an increased understanding of the world, and how all of our lives are interconnected. It might also be the catalyst for a greater longing for change, even in the people whose change would have to be for someone else's benefit.

Because, eye to eye, who would deny these children their basic human rights, and just as much chance as anyone else to be whatever they desire?

Really.

## Portrait: Jason “Timbuktu” Diakité



Jason Diakité is a Swedish artist who is better known as Timbuktu. He grew up in the south of Sweden and is today one of the best known and loved hip hop artists in Sweden. He is a talented text writer and has also hosted radio-shows and been awarded a Nordic language award.

Apart from being a popular musician he is also a very political musician. His father was a human rights lawyer and Timbuktu works for human rights. His texts are highly political social critiques and he does not shy away from

any subjects. The texts are not always popular among the critiqued politicians and at one point politicians refused to attend a prize ceremony because of one line in a song.

He does not only make an impact through his thought provoking texts but is also active as a UN goodwill ambassador. He engages in many different charities and, being the word magician that he is, he also gives lectures on music and how it can influence people.

## Activity on Human Rights on a Local Level

This activity lets participants from different parts of the world discuss human rights in their society, and then present local issues to the other participants. Hopefully, it will also result in a few human right projects!

### **Requirements:**

- **Materials:** Paper, pens and printed copies of the declaration of the human rights
- **Time:** 90 minutes

### **Do:**

Let the participants divide into groups based on where they come from. This can be either to split into delegations if there are such, or to form groups for different regions of the world. Then give each group pens, paper and a copy of the declaration of the human rights and let them discuss in what ways the human rights are being violated where they come from. Give the groups some time to discuss, and then ask them to choose one human rights issue from their society and come up with a project that targets that issue. The project can be small or big, but has to be possible for the group to execute when they get back home.

When the groups are finished, or when the set time is up, let each group present their local human rights issue and their project.

### **Reflect:**

Mix the groups up and form new ones of about 5-7 people. let them discuss:

- Was it hard for your group to find an issue to work with? Why?
- Was the issue easy or hard to address? Why?
- What differences were there between the different issues and projects? Did groups from the same parts of the world address similar issues?

**Generalise/Apply:**

- Are there any places in the world where the human rights are not violated in any way?
- Whose responsibility is it to make sure the human right are being followed?
- How can we address human rights issues in our everyday lives?

Before you end the activity, encourage the groups to put their projects in action!









## Human Rights on an International Level

In this chapter the first text presents some criticism that has been uttered towards Human Rights. We hope that it may increase our understanding of global Human Rights issues, yet not acceptance of them. The second text will bring up the subject of International Humanitarian Law; another system of rules that predates the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights. The text gives an international and historical perspective of the development of what we want to include as Human Rights, a question that is pondered additionally in the activity at the end of the chapter.

### Universalism vs Cultural Relativism: Can There Be Global Human Rights?

For hundreds of years, humanity has attempted to create and enforce rules that would bring justice and equality to the world. When the United Nations' Universal Declaration of the Human Rights was created after the Second World War, the idea was that we as humans share some basic needs indifferent of our cultural differences. Therefore, all humans should be protected through international laws and conventions from having these basic needs violated.

While everyone might agree that it is a beautiful thought and a valid intention, the possibility to create universal rights that can be applied to every culture of the world has been questioned. That the Human Rights have been moulded by Western values is a more-or-less accepted fact, constantly putting the individual and her rights towards the government or group. This *individualism* is a big reason why some people discard the Universalist idea of having common rights across cultures. Cultural Relativism on the other hand say that in many societies, the group's well-being is more important than the individuals'. This can result in our individualistic human rights being set aside when the group's best interest goes against the individuals' rights.

A good example of this would be the debate on "Asian values" that took place in

the 1990ies. According to this idea, there were some values that affected the way Southeast Asian societies were organised, which did not comply with the Human Rights. These included an alleged predisposition towards single-party authoritarian governments and collectivism (as opposed to individualism). When in 1993 the world gathered at the International Conference on Human Rights in Vienna to discuss Human Rights, the Cultural Relativist side was manifested by China, Indonesia and Singapore among other countries, leading to the final document acknowledging regional, cultural and historical backgrounds as valid reasons to temper with Human Rights.

However, these cultural clashes are not a thing of history and the debate between Universalists and Cultural Relativists continue, manifesting itself in questions often concerning freedom of expression versus respect for each other's values. There are obviously no easy answers to these questions. It feels only natural that some find the Human Rights very reasonable, but that should not come as a surprise, as they are based on cultural values of the society where some was raised. Considering there were only 56 voting countries in the United Nations when the declaration was presented, it is not hard to discern colonial hierarchies, with the values of the Western countries being "forced" upon the world.

What one must remember when discussing this topic is the very foundation and reason behind Human Rights; we are all human and share the same basic needs. Food, security, love, rest and many others, and the intention has always been to ensure these rights for all mankind, without letting your place of birth dictate whether you are entitled to democracy, education and equality. To accept these differences to guide the implementation of Human Rights is therefore directly opposed to the idea of all humans being equal, the very foundation of Human Rights. Criticism has been voiced towards the Cultural Relativist stance that it is too often used as an excuse to abuse and neglect the population of a nation. It is also mainly defended by those whose rights are being respected who have the rights - often by men as opposed to women, whose rights are being violated.



As previously stated there are no easy solutions to the problems presented, but the road to finding a common ground is through discovering and understanding not only others, but also the values that we see as “ours” and take for granted. If we don’t understand why we think as we do, how could we expect others to do so? When this understanding has been reached we can start to question what should be covered by international conventions. Are the rights written 70 years ago still relevant? It is vital that we all discuss these questions in order to make the world more equal and just.

## Portrait: Raoul Wallenberg



Raoul Wallenberg is a Swedish businessman and diplomat who saved tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews from the Nazi concentration camps during World War II.

Raoul Wallenberg was born in Stockholm in 1912 and studied languages, economics and later architecture in the United States. He was a well travelled and a person who came to have many different contacts both business and diplomacy. One of his business partners was the Hungarian Jew Koloman Lauer whose origin made it difficult to travel around in Europe during the war. Therefore Wallenberg made several trips to Hungary. In that way he came in close contact with the situation of the Jews in Europe during that time.

In July 1944, when he was 31 years old he decided to take part in a rescue operation for the remaining Jewish population in Budapest. The commission was

given by the US War Refugee Board and the Swedish government.

On location in Budapest he used diplomatic channels to negotiate shelters for Jews and he also issued special Swedish protective passports. The purpose with the passports was to place the holder under Swedish protection. However, he did not only work diplomatically but also very risky in order to save as many lives as possible. If the Jews under his protection were captured he did not hesitate to go after and demand for them to be released. He quickly became a known name in Budapest and of course an annoyance to the people and organisations that had a different attitude to the Jews. When the military forces of the Soviet Union invaded Budapest in January 1945, Raoul Wallenberg was arrested and taken to Moscow. He never returned to Sweden, and despite many active efforts the world still have no clarity about the fate of Raoul Wallenberg.

## International Humanitarian Law

During the war in Solferino in 1850 a Swiss businessman came to the battlefield. He was shocked at what he saw, especially how sick and wounded soldiers were left untreated. He decided that when he came back to Switzerland he would:

- a) Start an organisation that should care for the sick and injured during armed conflict
- b) Formulate rules to protect the sick and injured as well as health care personnel.

He was a man with a clear goal and worked hard to achieve it. In accordance with his vision the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was created as a Swiss private organisation. Today the Red Cross is a global and respected organisation with responsibility for health and wellbeing in countries in conflict and the International Humanitarian Law are rules that protect both sick and injured soldiers, prisoners of war and civilians affected by conflict. The rules are gathered in the four Geneva Conventions that all countries in the world have agreed to.

They include:

- a) the care and protection of sick and injured soldiers (Conventions 1 and 2);
- b) the situation, treatment and protection of prisoners of war (Convention 3);
- c) the situation, treatment and protection of the civilian population (Convention 4).

Their symbols: the red cross, the red crescent and the red crystal are signs that the area and the persons wearing them are protected by the rules and should not be attacked.



The International Committee of the Red Cross is neutral and apolitical and always works to help soldiers and civilians on both sides in a conflict. Their medical facilities, ambulances and health personnel should be given access to all who need care. Their staff always has the right to visit prisoners of war, they can help with contacts between the prisoners and their families and negotiate with the army, if people are mistreated. For many prisoners of war they are the only contacts they have except for the enemy army.

The international humanitarian law has strict rules about what a country can do in an area it occupies. An occupying power should respect the culture and social life of the people under occupation, it should guarantee their health and education and is not allowed to move its own people into occupied land.

Today there is also a Federation of national Red Cross/Red Crescent organisations who help each other with material and personnel when needed. They work nationally and internationally with emergency and disaster care, as well as with health and development work.

The International Humanitarian Law also includes regulations about what types of weapons are accepted. It forbids weapons of mass-destruction such as nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, as well as the use of person-mines.

## Activity on Human Rights on an International Level

This activity examines the different universal conventions of human rights, and why they were created. It also lets the participants discuss the need for the protection of rights for specific groups.

### Requirements:

- **Materials:** Pens and paper
- **Time:** 60 - 90 min

### Do:

Tell the participants that after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was created, ten more followed. These conventions were created to ensure rights of specific groups of people. Go through all ten conventions, when they were signed and what they cover. This requires some research and preparation, and the use of visual presentation might help participants to remember what you say better. Feel free to use a projector, whiteboard or flipchart for writing down the conventions or drawing a timeline.

**1948:** Universal Convention on Human Rights

**1965:** International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

**1966:** International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

**1966:** International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

**1979:** Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

**1984:** Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

**1989:** Convention on the Rights of the Child

**1990:** International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

**1990:** International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

**2007:** Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities



Tell the participants that human rights are not everlasting, but can be outdated. In the future there might be a need to create new conventions. Divide the participants into groups of 4-5 people and tell the groups that their task is to come up with a convention that might be needed in the future. Depending on the age of the participants you can either ask them to come up with a convention which is needed right now, or one which will be needed in the distant future where the world is completely different. This will affect the type of discussion and how imaginative the conventions will be. If the participants are having a hard time coming up with something, you can tell them that the new conventions might be about rights for robots, elderly, online rights or other things. Give the groups 20 - 30 minutes to complete the task, and provide them with pens and papers so that they can write down their ideas. To help with the process, ask the groups to consider the following questions:

- Why does this group need extra protection? / Why does this matter need to be regulated?
- What articles should the convention include?
- How can you make sure that your convention is relevant and applicable to all nations?

Give each group two minutes to present their convention, explaining the need for it and what articles it includes to the other groups.

### **Reflect:**

Mix the groups up and then discuss the following questions:

- What was hard about the activity? What was easy?
- Did you encounter any possible articles where you as a group did not agree? Why?
- Would it have been easier to create an regional convention instead of an international one?









**Generalise/Apply:**

- How do think the countries of the world are able to agree on convention? Is it a simple process?
- Do you think the topic you chose will be addressed by an international convention in the future?
- Why do you think there are additional conventions for certain groups?
- Should certain groups have more specific rights than others?









# Notes

Here are a few blank pages for your own notes and ideas.  
Get creative, take action!













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