



# Article 18 pronoun swap 30 min

FORB AND GENDER

REFLECT AND SHARE

BUZZ GROUP EXERCISE

## About the exercise

### TARGET AUDIENCE

Thought provoking for any audience from the grassroots to decisionmakers, faith leaders and academics.

### PURPOSE

To help participants explore their attitudes towards the right to freedom of religion or belief (FORB) and gender equality.

### DESCRIPTION

A good opening exercise for a session on FORB and gender. In this exercise, a 'feminine' version of Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) is read out by the facilitator and then discussed in buzz groups.



## Instructions

### RESOURCES

- One [handout](#) of the 'feminized' version of Article 18 of the ICCPR for each participant.

Find the handout at [www.forb-learning.org/exercises/pronoun-swap-handout](http://www.forb-learning.org/exercises/pronoun-swap-handout).

### HOW TO INTRODUCE THE EXERCISE 2 MIN

Distribute one copy of the handout to each participant. Explain that the session is going to focus on FORB and gender and will begin with an exercise to refresh our memories about what FORB means.

Read out the revised Article 18 in full:

*"According to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 18:*

- *Every woman shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of her choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest her religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.*
- *No woman shall be subject to coercion which would impair her freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of her choice.*
- *Freedom to manifest her religion or belief may be subject only to such limitations as prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals, or the fundamental freedom and rights of others.*
- *The state parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of mothers and, when applicable, female legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions."*

**HOW TO RUN THE EXERCISE** 25 MIN• **BUZZ GROUPS** (15 MIN)

Ask participants to get into threes with people sitting next to them and discuss:

- When reading or listening to this version, how do you feel? Why?
- Do you think that women and men have the same experience of having the right to FORB in practice? Why or why not?

• **QUICK PLENARY DISCUSSION** (10 MIN)

Invite two or three participants to briefly share their reflections.

**HOW TO CONCLUDE THE EXERCISE** 3 MIN

Thank the participants for sharing their reflections. Make the following points:

- The point of reformulating article 18 is not to argue that women have, or should have, different rights to men. The point is that they have the SAME rights.
- FORB means that any woman, just like any man, has the right to think for herself, to believe whatever she believes, and to live her life on the basis of what she herself believes, even if that involves breaking social or religious norms.
- Like every man, every woman has the right to be free from discrimination on the basis of her religion or belief. She also has the right to be protected against coercion in matters of religion and belief.
- We are going to look more closely at these issues in the rest of this session.

**Source**

FORB Learning Platform online course 'FORB and gender equality – enemies or allies?'  
[www.forb-learning.org/courses/forb-and-gender](http://www.forb-learning.org/courses/forb-and-gender)

“The ‘Article 18: pronoun swap’ exercise is so simple, but it really helps participants to recognise freedom of religion or belief not just as a right for men or religious groups, but for everyone, and to identify gendered stereotypes about religion and culture. I’ve used it in very diverse cultural contexts and it wasn’t as controversial as I first thought.”

**KRISTINA PATRING, INTERNATIONAL FORB TRAINER, SWEDEN**



'Different dangers'