

Children and FORB – rights and responsibilities 1 h 20 min



RECOGNISING AND ANALYSING VIOLATIONS

ROLE-PLAY GROUP EXERCISE

About the exercise

TARGET AUDIENCE

Any type of audience. Particularly relevant to faith communities and the leadership/staff of faith-based organisations, and anyone working with children's rights, schools and education. Requires participants to have a good understanding of freedom of religion or belief (FORB), as this exercise explores complex elements of the right.

PURPOSE

To help participants develop their analytical and problem-solving skills on the rights of parents and children and of faith-based institutions in relation to FORB.

DESCRIPTION

A problem-solving role-play exercise based on a fictional scenario, in which participants work together to recommend a course of action.

NOTE

This exercise works well as a follow-up to 'Dimensions of FORB' on page 57, for use with the 7-min FORB Learning Platform 'Film 6. Rights for parents and children'. Find the film at www.forb-learning.org/films/films-on-forb.



FILMS ON FORB

Instructions

RESOURCES

- One copy per participant of the scenario [handout](#) 'Children and FORB – rights and responsibilities'.
- Flipchart sheet/PowerPoint slide displaying the buzz group questions.

Find the scenario handout at www.forb-learning.org/exercises/children-and-forb-handout.

HOW TO INTRODUCE THE EXERCISE 8 MIN

Explain that the group is going to take part in a role-play discussion exercise. Distribute a copy of the scenario handout to each participant and read it aloud:

"Five years ago, a faith-based organisation from a religious minority tradition was established. The minority is vulnerable to discrimination, harassment and at times violence, but there is legislation guaranteeing their right to freedom of religion or belief. These legal rights include the right to run charitable organisations and faith-based schools.

Amongst other things, the organisation runs a shelter for street children in the local town and a school in a rural area where there are no other educational providers of any quality. A few of the children in the shelter are orphans, but most have run away from difficult home circumstances. The shelter makes efforts to rehabilitate families where possible, although this is difficult. These institutions serve the whole community. The children in their care are aged between 3 and 16.

Following a local authority inspection, it has come to public attention that both the shelter and the school require children from the majority tradition to participate in daily prayer and confessional religious education according to the minority tradition. The organisation is being accused of aggressively evangelising/ converting vulnerable majority children. Anger is growing and there is a risk of violence towards the wider minority community.”

Explain that the participants should now imagine that they have recently been appointed to the board of this faith-based organisation. The management have turned to the board for advice on what to do, as the situation could quickly escalate. The board has been asked to provide two concrete recommendations that the management can take forward.

Ask participants to spend a minute or two thinking silently and getting into their role.

HOW TO RUN THE EXERCISE 1 H 10 MIN

- **BUZZ GROUPS** (30 MIN)

Ask participants to get into threes with people sitting next to them and distribute flipchart sheets and pens to each group. To help them come up with two concrete recommendations for the management, they should first discuss the following questions:

- Whose freedom of religion or belief is at risk of being violated?
- Should the school and the shelter change their policies? What are the arguments for and against?

After 15 minutes ask the groups to move on to developing two recommendations to present to the management and to write them up on the flipchart sheet. Each group should also appoint a spokesperson to present and explain their recommendations.

- **PLENARY DISCUSSION** (40 MIN)

Invite each group spokesperson to present and explain their two recommendations to the plenary (3 min/group). If necessary, ask questions to clarify the reasoning behind the recommendations. Give each group a round of applause and stick their recommendations to the wall.

Lead the plenary discussion with the following questions:

- Which set of recommendations do you think best respects the freedom of religion or belief of the children and parents concerned and the identity of the school? Why?
- What role do dynamics of power play in your judgement of that?
- How did you find this exercise? Was it easy or difficult?
- Have any similar problems taken place in your context? What happened? How were they resolved?
- What thoughts or reflections do you take with you from the exercise?

HOW TO CONCLUDE THE EXERCISE 2 MIN

Congratulate the participants on all their ideas and thank them for their active participation.

Source

Rachel Fleming, adapted from the FORB Learning Platform's online training of the trainers' course www.forb-learning.org/courses/tot