

The soup of life

– human rights gallery 60 min



EXPLORING HUMAN RIGHTS

REFLECT AND SHARE

PLENARY EXERCISE

About the exercise

TARGET AUDIENCE

This exercise is aimed at groups with very little (if any) prior knowledge of human rights, for example grassroots-level groups, faith communities and civil society organisations new to human rights issues. Not suitable for formal or academic training settings.

PURPOSE

To help participants discover how human rights relate to their daily lives, reflecting needs they themselves identify, rather than being foreign or distant.

DESCRIPTION

This exercise uses the imagery of ingredients in a pot of soup to help participants explore the needs that they (and all human beings) have. Using pre-prepared 'human needs cards' and their own ideas, participants choose the ingredients that need to be included in the 'soup of life' in order for their lives to be dignified. Participants then walk around the room matching the 'human needs cards' they have chosen to human rights posters that illustrate the human rights recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



Instructions

RESOURCES AND ADVANCE PREPARATION

- A traditional soup cooking pot or big saucepan, with a label saying 'soup of life' stuck on the side.
- The '[human needs cards](#)', printed out and cut up.
- The 30 '[human rights gallery](#)' posters printed out and stuck up around the walls. If necessary, edit the posters first, replacing the English text with a translation into the participants' language. Read the posters and think about if any of the rights described are violated in your context. Thinking this through in advance will help you lead the conversation.
- A few pens.

Find the cards and posters at:

www.forb-learning.org/exercises/soup-of-life&human-rights-gallery.

This exercise is available in multiple languages as part of Session 1 of the Local Changemakers Course. www.forb-learning.org/changemakers-languages

HOW TO INTRODUCE THE EXERCISE 4 MIN

Put the soup pot in the middle of the room and spread the 'human needs cards' out on the floor around the pot along with a few pens. Ask everyone to stand in a circle around the cards.

Explain the following:

- Life is a bit like a pot of soup with lots of ingredients in it – just like soup, life needs lots of different ingredients to give it a great flavour.
- Some ingredients in life, like (mention a culturally relevant luxury item), make life taste even better. But there are other ingredients, like a home, food or healthcare, that we really need. If those ingredients are missing life is bad, and we suffer physically, psychologically, socially or spiritually. We lose our dignity.
- In this exercise, we are going to think about what the essential ingredients in our lives are. We are going to cook the soup of life – more particularly a dignified life!
- Each of the cards on the floor around the soup pot represents something that might be important for a dignified life. There are also some blank cards, so that we can write or draw our own ideas of what we need for a dignified life.

HOW TO RUN THE EXERCISE 55 MIN

• **MAKE THE SOUP** (10 MIN)

Tell the group that they have 2 minutes to look at the cards and think about which ones are most important to them. Then, going around the ring, ask each person to pick up one card that represents something that they think is important for a dignified life, say one sentence (only) about why it is important and then put the card in the cooking pot.

Keep going around the ring until people feel that there are no cards left that are important to them. They can also pick up a blank card, say what it is and add it to the pot. People should not comment on each other's choices at this time.

TIP! Be strict on timekeeping here – you need to save time for the discussion that follows!

• **DISCUSSION** (20 MIN)

Once all the cards that people want to add have been added to the pot, tell the group that we have now made our 'soup of life'. Ask them to discuss the following questions:

- Are any of the ingredients we added non-essential for a dignified life?
- Did we leave any of the ingredients (cards) out and leave them on the ground. Why?
- What impact does it have on us when 'essential ingredients' are missing in our lives? Share thoughts.
- If a group in another part of the world did this exercise, do you think they would have very different needs or are some human needs universal – so basic that all human beings share them?

Conclude the discussion by saying that human beings all over the world have much in common simply because we are human and share the same needs.

• **GALLERY WALK** (15 MIN)

Ask participants if they have heard of human rights. Tell the participants that the posters on the walls introduce the human rights that every man, woman and child on earth has, according to international human rights agreements that almost all the governments of the world have signed up to.

Take all the 'human needs cards' from the previous exercise and hand them out to participants. Take a 'gallery walk' around the room visiting each poster. As you come to each poster, read out the poster text, ask if anyone has a 'human needs card' that relates to that human right and ask anyone who says yes to say what that need is. (Matching posters and cards have the same icon on them, so this should be easy!). Move on immediately to the next poster without discussion - you need to match two posters per minute!

Don't worry if no one suggests a card for a particular poster, keep going round the posters and when you come to the end match up any remaining cards people haven't mentioned, using the icons as a guide.

• **DISCUSSION** (10 MIN)

After you have read out all the posters and matched them to the needs cards, discuss:

- Do these rights reflect the needs you have for dignity in your life – in other words are they relevant to our lives?
- Which of the rights are respected and protected in our country/ community and which are not? If the group finds this hard, mention some human rights you know of that are denied in law or in practice.

TIP! If you are able to have a longer session, you could add discussion time to this exercise.

HOW TO CONCLUDE THE EXERCISE 1 MIN

Conclude the discussion by saying that this exercise has helped us to explore the needs we have, what human rights are and how our needs relate to human rights. We can perhaps sum up the message of the exercise by saying that human rights are closely related to the human needs that we and all human beings have and to the kind of society we want to live in.

Follow this exercise with a knowledge input on human rights. Develop your own or use the ready-made presentation designed to follow this exercise from Session 1 of the Local Changemakers Course on 'Human needs – human rights – human responsibilities'. All Local Changemakers Course resources are available in several languages at www.forb-learning.org/changemakers-languages.

Find the **PRESENTATION SCRIPT** [here](#) and accompanying **POWERPOINT** [here](#).



ALTERNATIVE METHODOLOGY

If you are short on time, shorten the gallery walk by asking each person to take the human needs card that they chose from the soup pot and then stand next to a human rights poster that relates to their need. When participants have done this, you can move straight to the discussion questions. (The point that human rights are based on human needs will still be made, but participants will have less opportunity to familiarise themselves with all of their rights.)

Source

The Local Changemakers Course, FORB Learning Platform www.forb-learning.org/changemakers