



The clifftop 1 h 5 min

EXPLORING HUMAN RIGHTS

DRAW AND DISCUSS

GROUP EXERCISE

About the exercise

TARGET AUDIENCE

Any audience willing to engage in participatory learning processes. Can be used in both informal and more formal trainings at any level.

PURPOSE

- To help participants link human rights with human responsibilities.
- To enable participants to reflect on the role of legal and moral duty bearers, and how different actors within civil society (including religious actors) can complement each other in protecting and promoting human rights.

DESCRIPTION

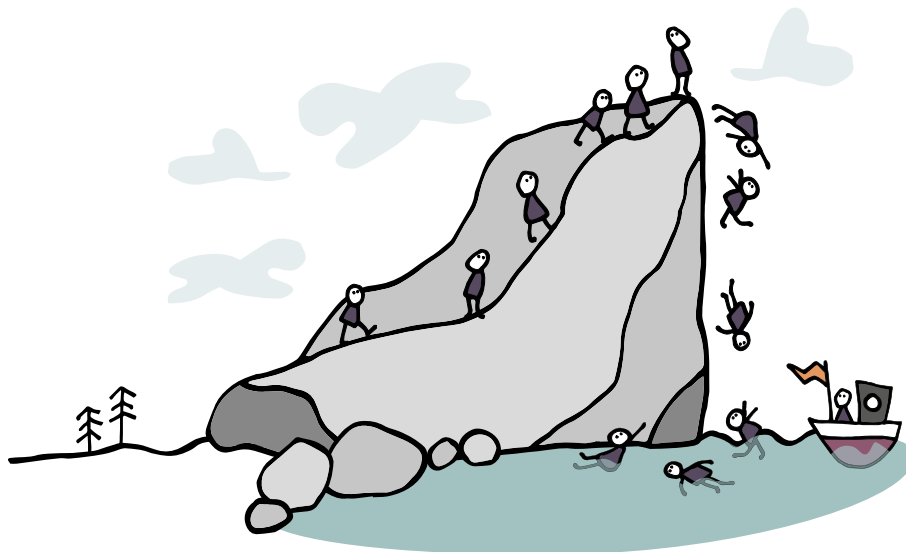
An intriguing and thought-provoking problem-solving exercise that combines groupwork and plenary discussion with a knowledge input on legal and moral duty bearers. The exercise helps participants think about the many different actors that can contribute to making human rights a reality. This exercise follows on very well from the [‘Paradise island’](#) exercise on page 32, but you can run it without connecting the two. It forms a good precursor to context analysis and action planning exercises.



Instructions

RESOURCES AND ADVANCE PREPARATION

- Flipchart sheets and marker pens for each group.
- One simple pre-prepared drawing of a clifftop on flipchart paper for each group.



HOW TO INTRODUCE THE EXERCISE 5 MIN

Explain that the group is now going to do a fun exercise that helps us explore who is responsible for making human rights a reality.

Read out the story of the clifftop:

Imagine you live in a diverse community (e.g., your paradise island) and all has been well and happy. But suddenly people start disappearing. It seems that people are falling off a cliff into the sea.

Rumours have started circulating about why this is happening, and people are afraid.

Is the path by the cliff just slippery, or are people being pushed off the cliff? And why is it that all the people who have disappeared come from the largest religious group? What has happened to the people who have fallen off – are they alive and clinging to the rocks at the bottom or are they dead? Fear and tensions are rising in the community.

The question is: what could and should be done and by whom in this situation? Who can help?

TIP! If you have strong drawing skills, why not illustrate the story as you tell it?

HOW TO RUN THE EXERCISE 55 MIN

Divide the participants into four groups of 4-8 people. Give each group one of the pre-prepared flipchart sheets as well as markers.

- **GROUP DISCUSSION** (15 MIN)

Ask each group to discuss what measures should be taken:

- to find out what the problem is.
- to prevent people from falling off the clifftop.
- to take care of the people who have fallen (dead or alive).
- to deal with any guilty parties.
- And who should be responsible for taking what measures?

Tell the groups to draw or write what should be done by who on the flipchart and ask them to appoint a spokesperson who will present a summary of their findings back to the plenary.

- **PRESENTATIONS, COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION** (40 MIN)

Each group spokesperson presents a summary of their findings to the plenary (5 min per group).

After all groups have presented, spend 10 minutes drawing out the common themes related to legal and moral duty bearers. Highlight the many different actors that can play a role in solving the 'clifftop problem', making the following points:

- According to international human rights law, any State that signs and ratifies a human rights treaty has a legal duty to respect, protect and promote the rights laid out in that treaty. States and those working on behalf of the State (State actors) are legal duty bearers, responsible for securing the human rights of the people living in their territories – the rights holders. So, the local authority or public health services have an important role to play.
- However, when we reflect on the purpose of human rights – to protect human dignity and protect people from the abuse of power – then it is quite evident that States alone can't make human rights happen.
- All kinds of different people and organisations have power and influence over people's lives – employers, parents and religious leaders, for example. With that power comes a moral duty to respect and protect human rights in the exercise of power. These are moral duty bearers.

TIP! If the discussion is slow to start, ask questions – giving different ideas to different groups. What could the town council, religious leaders, the school, the radio station, local fishermen or health care services do?

- In addition, many groups can play a role in holding the state and other powerholders to account and in building a ‘culture of human rights’ – for example, civil society organisations, religious leaders and the media. Creating a culture of human rights (in which human rights are respected as normal and right) is especially important where the State is weak or doesn't respect rights.

Allow 10 minutes for questions from participants and dialogue.

HOW TO CONCLUDE THE EXERCISE 5 MIN

Thank the participants for their questions and reflections and conclude by saying something along the following lines:

Human rights are, to a great extent, about human relationships. It is in the small, ordinary spaces of daily life that people's rights are realised. In school, the workplace, the marketplace and in the faith community. Building a culture of human rights is not just about laws and government, it also needs to be built from the bottom up in the everyday roles we play in life.

Source

SMC Faith in Development with inspiration from Ed Brown www.smc.global/en

“I love how ‘The clifftop’ exercise reveals to participants how the whole of society is responsible for creating a culture of human rights. It can be a turning point for trainees in their understanding of and commitment to human rights.”

RACHEL FLEMING, INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS TRAINER, UK

“The thing I like about the cliff top exercise is how it helps participants engage, interact and talk about real life, serious issues, yet in fun, practical and inspiring ways.”

FRED NYABERA, INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS TRAINER, KENYA