

ENVIRONMENT & HUMAN RIGHTS

3.1

INTRODUCTION

The 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment declared that “man’s environment, the natural and the man-made, are essential to his well-being and to the enjoyment of basic human rights – even the right to life itself.” Already at this time, individuals recognized the importance of a clean and healthy environment and its intricate links to human health, livelihood and well-being.

Often when we think of environmental issues we think of the importance of recycling, whether our physical environment is litter-free, and whether there are polluted rivers or areas that need to be cleaned. True, these are important environmental issues, but linking the environment and human rights goes much deeper.

Having a healthy and clean environment is necessary to fulfill people’s human rights to life, health, water, food, work, culture, development, information and participation. For example, when the environment is damaged by development projects that destroy land for farming and growing food, people go hungry or become ill and their human rights to food, health and an adequate standard of living are violated. When a government fails to involve local communities in a decision about building a dam, the communities’ rights to participation and information are being violated.

Human beings and the environment that surrounds them, including the land, waterways, air, plants and animals, are all fundamentally bound together on this planet. In order to truly promote human rights and the well-being of all individuals, it is necessary to include environmental issues under the human rights umbrella.

OVERVIEW

LESSON ON THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR)

Choose one of the three lessons included in Part I of this manual to introduce learners to the broad concept of human rights and the UDHR.

**INTRODUCTORY LESSON****ENVIRONMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

This is an introductory lesson to familiarize learners with the links between human rights and the environment with a case study on the oil industry in Nigeria.

**HUMAN RIGHTS SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECTS**

This section includes two human rights service-learning projects that you can choose from. Each one explores a different aspect of the relationship between human rights and the environment. Both use in-class HRE lessons, service activities, and reflection exercises:

**PROJECT 1****PLANTING FOR PEOPLE**

This project explores the link between the environment, the use of land for farming and people's access to food.

LESSON: Land and the Right to Food

PROJECT OPTION 1: *Growing a Garden*

Learners plant a garden and donate the food that is grown to a soup kitchen or shelter.

PROJECT OPTION 2: *Volunteering at a Farm or Nature Center*

Learners volunteer at a nearby farm or nature center and hold a food drive.

**PROJECT 2****ERADICATING POLLUTION**

This project explores the effect of pollution on local waterways and the role of communities in protecting their environment.

LESSON: How Does Pollution Affect People's Rights?

PROJECT: *A Human Rights Rating for Local Waterways*

Learners test and observe the health of a local waterway and present information to government officials and businesses to advocate for clean waterways.

ENVIRONMENT

LESSON

3.1

Human Rights Consequences of Oil Development

OBJECTIVES

- To introduce learners to the link between human rights and the environment; and
- For learners to begin thinking about service projects in their community.

MATERIALS

Copies of **Handout #1** and the **UDHR**, blackboard or flip chart and markers.

TIME ALLOTMENT

90 minutes

PROCEDURES

1. At the beginning of class distribute an article or case study to your learners that addresses human rights and environmental issues and have them read it. The case study can be international or domestic. **Handout #1** provides one case study that you can use about violations of the rights of the Ogoni people in Nigeria associated with oil development.¹⁰
2. Ask learners about their reaction to the case study. Ask learners to list the different ways that the environment was threatened and the different ways that people's lives or well-being were threatened. Have two learners write the answers on the blackboard or flip chart.
3. Distribute copies of the **UDHR** to learners. Ask them to look at the lists on the blackboard or flip charts, and to identify which Articles in the UDHR have been violated.

Point out to learners that a healthy and clean environment is linked to many different human rights issues. Be sure to highlight the key human rights links.

Information for Teachers: Key Links between Human Rights and the Environment

A healthy environment is needed to guarantee peoples' human rights to health, food and an adequate standard of living. Human rights are violated when: water for drinking, bathing and cooking is polluted, contaminated or carries diseases; when a child or adult develops asthma from air pollution; when children go hungry because farm land can no longer be tilled because the land is too contaminated to plant in.

Irresponsible economic development by governments and corporations leads to environmental destruction and human rights violations: oil spills effect livestock, the soil, and surrounding waters; factories release pollutants into the air that contaminate rain waters and affect the climate; development projects wipe out forests, killing species of animals and undermining the livelihood of local communities.

In order to protect the environment and human rights, people's rights to access information and to participate in making decisions that affect the environment must be guaranteed. The rights to free speech and freedom of assembly must also be protected for environmental defenders so they can speak out without fear of persecution.

Source: The Human Right to a Safe and Healthy Environment. *Description of Human Rights Issues.* People's Movement for Human Rights Education. www.pdhre.org/rights/environment.html.

¹⁰ This handout contains a modified excerpt from a petition to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights submitted by the Social and Economic Rights Action Center (SERAC), Nigeria and the Center for Economic and Social Rights, New York. March 1996.

LESSON

3.1

ENVIRONMENT

REFLECTION

4. In groups or as a whole class, identify the ways that the environment has or has not been protected in your own community, town, or state, and how it has affected people's human rights. Ask learners how the treatment of the environment in their community is similar to or different from what they read about in the case study.

1. What are some of the needs in your community concerning the environment and what could you do as a class to help address those needs through service-learning?

2. Recycling to preserve future resources for fuel and development is one example of how action can be taken to protect human rights and the environment (the teacher can substitute recycling with a different environmental issue). Write an essay in which you explore and examine the way that your community is or is not engaging in this practice, and what can be done to improve the practice.



Planting For People

OBJECTIVES

- To have learners make the link between access to land for farming and people's human right to access nutritional foods;
- To have learners learn more about their immediate physical environment and emphasize the necessity of healthy soil to grow food;
- To have learners learn about the hungry and about food insecurities in their community and to take action to help meet the community's needs; and
- To have learners apply research skills for gathering information, and organizational skills to plan and carry out a joint activity.

CURRICULUM LINK

This project can be taught in conjunction with a Science class or Social Studies class.

HR LESSON

Land and the Right to Food

TIME ALLOTMENT

45 minutes

PROCEDURES

Learners will look at the critical link for many people between the amount of food available for them to live off of and the land available to till.

1. Ask learners to brainstorm all of the different types of food that they eat. Have two people record answers on a blackboard or flip chart.
2. Ask the learners how they access the food they eat. Do they buy it? Grow it? Where does the money come from to buy the food? What if they didn't have a grocery store or convenience store within 60 miles? What if they didn't have access to a store at all, what would they do for food? There are people who don't have access to buy their food like many of us do, they in fact rely on the land around them to grow it.
3. Discuss with learners the human right to safe and nutritious food and the different ways that access to food can be guaranteed.

Information for Teachers: How do people access food?

There are different ways that people's access to the food they need to live can be guaranteed. One way is by ensuring that people have access to jobs and other resources, including government services, for money to buy food. This is how most people in the United States access food.

A second way is by ensuring that people have access to land to grow their own food. There has to be enough land to grow food for all the people who need it, there has to be safe water to irrigate the land, and the soil itself has to have enough nutrients and has to be protected from pollution and development.

What happens when people cannot access adequate food?

When people cannot access food, they can suffer from:

Hunger, which means that people are unable to consume enough food to meet their bodies' daily needs, leading over long periods of time to starvation;

Malnutrition, which means that people do not consume enough nutrients and they become vulnerable to sickness and disease; and

ENVIRONMENT

PROJECT 1

3.1

Food insecurity, which means that people do not have physical and economic access to adequate amounts of food at all times.

These are all violations of people's human right to food.

Source: Study Guide on Food and Water. *Human Rights Education Associates (HREA), 2003.*
www.hrea.org/learn/guides/food.html.

4. Ask learners what it would be like if they had to rely on land to grow their food. What would it be like if something happened to that land and you could no longer access food? What prevents people in our community from accessing food? Why?
5. Have learners explore the degree to which the three effects listed above – *hunger, malnutrition, and food insecurity* – are evident in their community. They can do this by talking about their own experiences, interviewing others in the community, and by doing research via the internet, local newspapers, and local organizations. Discuss with learners how they can try to address problems of access to food in their community and whether there are ways that they can use land to do it.

PROJECT

Planting For People

OVERVIEW

There are two different ways this project can work out depending on access to land. If the participants have access to a plot of land they can use for planting, have them grow a garden over the course of the semester. If you do not have access to land for a garden, learners can volunteer at a nearby farm or nature center.

OPTION A

Growing a Garden

MATERIALS

Information on growing a garden, vegetable seeds, access to a plot of land to be gardened, gardening tools.

PROCEDURES

1. You should arrange for learners to meet with staff at an organization in the community that helps to address people's access to food, like a food pantry, community center, kitchen or shelter. Talk to them about the project to grow a garden and about how to donate the food. You should also talk to them about the root causes of why people don't have access to food and what can be done in the community to address the problem in the long-term.
2. Next, learners identify a space at the school or in the community to grow the garden. Learners research the necessary information to grow a successful garden, including the environmental conditions needed to grow different types of safe and nutritious foods (nutrients in the soil, water, climate, etc.). Based on their research, learners decide what food to grow and research the specific conditions they will need in their garden.
3. Learners decide who is responsible for each action necessary in growing a garden, including when and who will plant seeds, weed and water the garden, and harvest the food.
4. Once the food is harvested, if learners donate the food to a kitchen or shelter, it may be possible to arrange for the learners to assist in the preparation or serving of a meal made with their donation.

OPTION B

Volunteering at a Farm or Nature Center

(Optimal for a Science Class)

PROCEDURES

1. Locate a farm or nature center in your area that invites participants to assist in farming the land. Volunteering at the farm will most likely take place during one or more all day field trips. Often times nature centers or farms will invite people in to learn about resources and the soil for the first half of the day, and farm the land for the second part of the day. If you are linking this lesson to a science class, and think it is beneficial for participants to learn about the soil and elements, this is a good option.
2. Prior to volunteering, have learners develop a list of questions related to the environment and the right to food that they must find answers to throughout the day at the farm or nature center. Questions can include: What are the environmental conditions required to grow safe and nutritious food? What are the key minerals and elements needed in the soil? What types of food does this farm grow? How does the local environment affect this farm or nature center? Where does the food grown at this farm go?
3. After volunteering at the farm or nature center, have learners share their answers with one another. Discuss the impact of the environment and the availability of local land on the farm. Discuss how the farm contributes to people's access to food.
4. You can choose to connect this activity to a semester-long project related to a community need. Prior to going to a farm, learners may wish to get pledges for every hour they plan to work at the farm from family, local businesses or other members of the community to raise money. The money can be used to buy fresh produce from the farm to donate to a local shelter or soup kitchen that learners choose. If possible, you may wish to organize more than one trip to the farm. Alternatively, after going to a farm or nature center, learners could organize a food drive targeting specific types of nutritious food that they learned about and donate the food to a local shelter or kitchen.

ACTIVITY

At the end of either project option, ask learners to think about how they were able to help people in their community gain access to food or what they learned about access to food. What ideas do they have for improving people's access to food in the long-run? How are the barriers for people to access food in their community similar to or different from the barriers in communities that rely on land to grow their food? (You can refer back to the case study in the opening lesson.) If possible, have a guest speaker from the community agency that learners worked with come to class to talk about how learners could get involved in long-term solutions to improving access to food.

REFLECTION

Be sure to conduct a reflection activity and to hold a celebration with your learners. A list of possible options for reflection can be found in **Part 2.0** of this manual.

ENVIRONMENT

PROJECT 2

3.1

Eradicating Pollution

OBJECTIVES

- To have learners look at the connection between polluted lakes, rivers, or streams in their community and the human rights to clean water and health;
- To have learners participate in public affairs;
- To have learners take action towards cleaning up polluted waterways in their area;
- To use scientific methods to test and analyze water and observe waterways; and
- To develop letter writing and advocacy skills.

CURRICULUM LINK

This project can be taught in a Science class, English class, Civics class or Social Studies class.

HR LESSON

How Does Pollution Effect People's Rights?

MATERIALS

Access to research information, i.e. computers with internet or a library

TIME ALLOTMENT

45 minutes

PROCEDURES

Learners will look at the implications of polluted waterways for local communities. This lesson requires that learners do some research prior to class.

1. Instruct learners to find an article or story on a polluted waterway and bring a copy of it to class or your scheduled meeting time. Encourage them to find an article that addresses some of the implications and effects of the pollution on the surrounding area. The story can be on any area of the world. Allow two to three days for participants to find their articles or stories.
2. As the facilitator you will need to find 1-2 similar global stories and 1-2 local stories (see **APPENDIX B** under *Find Out More About The Environment*). In the event that participants all find local stories you will use the information you find to introduce the link between the local and global areas.
3. Begin this lesson with a discussion about the articles participants have found. Ask learners to volunteer to present their individual articles. Discuss the implications of the pollution. Ask them to think about what the effects of the pollution are on the land and water, as well as for the people living in that area. Ask them how a story demonstrating negative effects in another part of the world may eventually affect them.
4. Discuss with learners the human right to clean water and ask them to identify how the right to water is protected or violated in the articles discussed. Ask learners to think back to the case study about the Ogoni people in Nigeria and to discuss similar ways that pollution affected people's lives and livelihoods. To facilitate this discussion, be sure to highlight with learners key aspects of the human right to water.

Information for Teachers: The Right to Water

The right to water is closely related to the rights to life, health, food, work and an adequate standard of living. People need access to clean and safe water to drink, to bathe and to cook their food. In many parts of the world, people need clean water for their farmland and livestock so that they can grow food and raise animals to live. Communities in rural areas and major cities all need water to maintain public sanitation systems.

When local waterways and sources of drinking water are polluted or contaminated with disease, people's rights to life, to health and their livelihoods are threatened. The pollution of lakes, rivers and waterways can affect entire ecosystems that harm the environment and human beings. For example, polluted rivers, lakes and oceans can affect species of fish that farming communities rely on for food and for making a living.

Source: Right to Water Fact Sheet #2: Why a Human Right? Center for Economic and Social Rights. <http://cesr.org/healthyenvironment>.

5. After you have finished discussing the articles and how they affect the right to water, ask learners to brainstorm a list of all the local waterways. Have someone make a list of the responses on a flipchart or blackboard. Ask learners to think about how it affects them if these waterways are polluted. Ask learners: Who is currently responsible for keeping these waterways clean. Who should be responsible? Is the government responsible? Local businesses? Community members?

PROJECT

A Human Rights Rating for Local Waterways

MATERIALS

Access to a waterway, a water pollution testing kit, contact information for local and state representatives, contact information for production companies alongside local waterways, paper and pens

PROCEDURES

Learners are going to select one of the local waterways to test for pollution.

1. Ask learners to create a checklist for what makes a human rights-friendly and environmentally safe waterway. The checklist can include criteria for clean water (including PH levels, etc.) for plant and animal life, for community access and use of the waterway, and whether the waterway has an effect on the health and/or livelihood of the surrounding community.
2. Instruct participants on how to use a water testing kit. Arrange to take them to the waterway to collect samples of the water to test. Depending on whether you are carrying out this project in a Science class, this part of the project can be adjusted to use a more or less rigorous experimental method. During the visit, you may also wish to have the learners observe the surroundings of the waterway. (Is there garbage or other debris along the banks of the waterway, are there businesses nearby that may be exposing the waterway to pollution?)
3. If you choose to, you can also have learners do additional research about the waterway. They can search for articles in local newspapers about the waterway, and interview family, friends and other community members about their connection to the waterway.
4. Analyze the results of the test and the learner's research and have them fill out their human rights checklists.
5. Have learners brainstorm which government representatives, local companies along the waterway (if applicable) and community leaders should receive letters about the learners' research on the waterways. Organize the letter writing among the class and have learners include their test results and the results of their human rights checklists in their letters. If the findings were positive, the letters should commend officials and community members for their work in keeping the waters clean. If the test results are not acceptable, the letters should ask them to do something specific to help clean up the waterway and decrease pollution.

REFLECTION

6. At the end of the project, have learners reflect on the process of gathering information about a human rights issue that affects their community and writing to their representatives about it. Ask learners if they felt they were able to gather enough information to back up the message they wanted to send to their representatives. Do they feel like their voices will be heard? If possible, you could show learners a video of a youth-organized environmental campaign or you can invite a youth organizer to talk about his or her experiences. Ask learners about their reactions to the video or speaker and if it affected their feelings about the project at the waterway. Finally, ask learners to think about how they can continue to protect the waterways in their community.

Be sure to conduct a reflection activity and to hold a celebration with your learners. A list of possible options for reflection can be found in **Part 2.0** of this manual.

Find Out More

Amnesty International Just Earth Program:

www.aiusa.org

Earth Rights International:

www.earthrights.org

Global Witness:

www.globalwitness.org

Human Rights Education Associates: Guide on Food and Water:

www.hrea.org/learn/guides/

Sierra Club:

www.sierraclub.org

United Nations Environment Program (UNEP):

www.unep.org

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights: Environment:

www.ohchr.org/english/issues/environment

POVERTY & HUMAN RIGHTS

3.2

INTRODUCTION

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees that “everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself/herself and of his/her family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his/her control.” When people live in poverty and lack the money to buy food and clothing, live in safe and adequate housing, and access both preventive and emergency medical care, their human rights are being violated.

Living in poverty also affects many other human rights. Children in poverty are less likely to receive a quality education and poor communities are more likely to be affected by pollution and environmental destruction. People in poverty often face discrimination and lack the power and resources to participate in shaping decisions that affect their own lives. People must take action to address poverty in their community and to pressure their government to meet its responsibilities for guaranteeing each person’s basic human rights.

In 1999, the World Bank estimated that 2.8 billion people worldwide lived on less than \$2 a day, and that 1.2 billion people lived in extreme poverty on less than \$1 a day. While the vast majority of those people live in developing countries, poverty exists in the United States and other developed countries as well. Benchmarks for poverty are different in each country and are determined by the cost of living and resources in that society.

In the United States the Census Bureau defines a family of four with an income of \$18,660 as one that lives in poverty, although many would argue that this figure is too low and that families earning more than that still face conditions of poverty. In the United States, 17.6% of children under the age of 18 live in poverty and 45 million people lack health insurance. 3.8 million households experience hunger and 3.5 million people face homelessness at some point during the year.

Sources:

World Development Report 2000/2001. World Bank; Poverty Thresholds 2003. U.S. Census Bureau; Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2003. US Census Bureau. August 2004; How Many People Experience Homelessness? Fact Sheet #2. National Coalition for the Homeless. September 2002; and Food Security in the United States: Conditions and Trends. US Department of Agriculture. October 2003.

STATISTICS

OVERVIEW

LESSON ON THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR)

Choose one of the three lessons included in Part I of this manual to introduce learners to the broad concept of human rights and the UDHR.

**INTRODUCTORY LESSON POVERTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

This is an introductory lesson to familiarize learners with the link between poverty and human rights and the conditions of poverty faced by many people in the United States and other countries.

**HUMAN RIGHTS SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECTS**

This section includes two human rights service-learning projects that you can choose from. One focuses on the right to housing and one focuses on the right to freedom of expression. Both use in-class HRE lessons, service activities, and reflection exercises:

**PROJECT 1 RIGHT TO HOUSING**

This project explores the conditions that are needed to provide people with adequate housing.

LESSON: Right to Housing

PROJECT OPTION 1: *Helping the Homeless*

Learners volunteer with a homeless shelter and help meet a need among the homeless.

PROJECT OPTION 2: *Building Homes*

Learners help with the construction of affordable homes in their community.

**PROJECT 2 FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND ASSEMBLY**

This project explores how poverty impacts people's right to freedom of speech and assembly, while engaging learners in exercising those rights to fight poverty.

LESSON: Freedom of Speech and Assembly

PROJECT OPTION 1: *Speaking Out Against Poverty*

Learners speak out against poverty in their community.

PROJECT OPTION 2: *Exercising the Right to Assemble Through Service-Learning*

Learners implement a service-learning project of their choice.

Poverty in the U.S. and Bolivia

OBJECTIVES

- To introduce learners to the connection between poverty and violations of human rights, including economic and social as well as civil and political rights.

MATERIALS

Copies of the **UDHR, Handout #2**, flip charts and markers or blackboard and chalk.

TIME ALLOTMENT

90 minutes

PROCEDURES

1. Ask the class to brainstorm a list of the basic conditions that people need to live healthy lives. Then ask learners to identify which things on that list they have access to in their lives. Which things on that list do they not have access to? Which things require money or other resources to access? Next, ask learners to discuss what the word poverty means. What does it mean for someone to live in poverty? What conditions do people face in poverty? What contributes to poverty in our community?
2. Distribute **Handout #2** to learners describing conditions of poverty in the United States and in Bolivia. Ask learners to read the case studies and then distribute copies of the **UDHR**. Together as a class, ask learners to list on the blackboard or flip chart the human rights violations related to poverty in the United States. Then ask learners to list the human rights violations related to poverty in Bolivia.¹¹

Tips For Teachers – Be sure that learners are aware of violations of the rights to adequate housing, food, healthcare, education and other economic and social rights related to poverty, as well as discrimination and mistreatment that people in poverty might face, and barriers to free speech and participation in government.

3. Now ask learners to compare the two lists and the two case studies and to discuss ways that poverty in the United States and in the developing country is similar and ways that it is different. What role do the overall resources available in each country play? If it will cost money to work toward ending poverty, what can countries with varying levels of resources do?

Information for Teachers: Costs of Negative and Positive Human Rights

In human rights there are both negative and positive rights. Negative rights protect people from government actions that would violate their rights. For example, the right to free speech prohibits the government from interfering with people's right to express themselves.

Positive rights require governments to take action to enable people to fulfill their rights. For example, in order to guarantee people's right to health, governments must take action to ensure that there are health care professionals to meet the health needs of the population, even when people cannot pay for private care.

Positive rights, in particular, can cost money for governments to fulfill. Countries with varying levels of resources face different problems when they try to meet the needs of their population. The costs associated with fulfilling positive rights are often cited by governments as the reason why violations are occurring. But cost does not let governments off the hook. Resources available within society must be prioritized and the international community can often assist where resources are unavailable.

¹¹ The information for this handout was gathered from multiple sources (see citations included in the handout).

POVERTY

Countries that have more resources than others, like the United States, must also continue to do more and more to guarantee the rights of all the people within their borders. As countries accumulate more resources, they are held to a higher standard for progressively implementing human rights protections.

Source: Circle of Rights: Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Activism: A Training Manual, Asian Forum for International Human Rights and Development and Institute of International Education, 2000. Section IV (Defining Rights and Obligations).

4. Point out to learners that while poverty can take different forms and have different specific effects in different countries, poverty is always a human rights violation and governments always have the responsibility to meet people's human rights and to work to end poverty.

REFLECTION

1. In groups or as a whole class, ask learners to discuss problems of poverty that exist in their community. How can some of the needs in your community concerning poverty be addressed through service-learning?
2. People living in poverty often face discrimination and lack the power and resources to participate in shaping decisions that affect their own lives. Write an essay highlighting where this is evident in your community.

Right to Housing

OBJECTIVES

- To have learners gain knowledge about the human right to adequate (decent and affordable) housing;
- To have participants take action to meet the needs of the homeless and people who need adequate and affordable housing in their community;
- To improve learners' research and analytical skills, their ability to document information and draw conclusions, and their writing skills; and
- To have learners develop a greater understanding of homelessness.

CURRICULUM LINK

This project can be taught in conjunction with a Social Studies class.

HR LESSON

The Right to Housing

MATERIALS

Handouts #3 and #4.

TIME ALLOTMENT

90 minutes

PROCEDURES

1. Ask learners to think of words they associate with "home."¹² What makes a home? Write their responses on a blackboard or flipchart. Encourage learners to think of both the physical and emotional characteristics of a home. Good examples are: shelter, belonging, family, privacy, comfortable, safety, warmth, friendly.
2. Point out that a home is clearly more than just shelter, but a place of belonging, a place of comfort, and so forth. To be without a home would mean not only being vulnerable to bad weather, but not having a place where you can enjoy all the benefits of what makes a home. (Refer to the list developed at the outset of the lesson.) Ask learners to think of how a home affects people's health, their ability to have a job, and their ability to get an education. Has your home ever been exposed to pollution? Are there good jobs available near where you live? Is public transportation accessible? Do you have a place in your home where you can study and concentrate? Do you feel safe in your home?
3. Based on their discussion, ask learners to brainstorm a list of what they think the human rights standards should be for adequate housing. Present Article 25 of the UDHR that guarantees the right to housing. Ask learners to compare and discuss their list with Article 25.

Information for Teachers: The Right to Adequate (Decent and Affordable) Housing

Article 25 of the UDHR guarantees the right to adequate housing. Adequate housing must be safe and sanitary and have adequate space for the people living there. Housing must have access to safe drinking water, cooking facilities, and heat.

Housing must be accessible to everyone and it must be affordable, so that people will not have to give up other basic needs to pay for housing. Housing must be located where people can access jobs, healthcare, schools and other services. Finally, people must have some degree of protection from forced eviction and harassment.

Source: General Comment 4: The right to adequate housing. UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.: www1.umn.edu/humanrts/gencomm/epcomm4.htm

¹² Parts of this lesson were adapted from the lesson plan Exploring the Relationship Between Poverty and Human Rights, developed by Human Rights Education Associates (HREA), 2003.

4. Distribute copies of the case study included in **Handout #3**.¹³ Ask learners to identify in what ways the right to adequate housing has been violated in the case study. Then ask learners to discuss ways that the right to housing is violated in their community. Have you seen or experienced homelessness in your community? Is it difficult to afford rent payments? Is it hard to find affordable housing? What happens if you can't afford housing?

PROJECT

Right To Housing

OVERVIEW

There are two different options for this project. In the first option, learners volunteer at a homeless shelter and help meet the needs of the homeless in their community. In the second option, learners help build or renovate homes in their community to provide people with adequate housing.

OPTION A

Helping the Homeless

PROCEDURES

1. Identify a homeless shelter or advocacy center in your local community for individuals or families. Arrange for learners to have a meeting with an administrator from the shelter or advocacy center and with one or more people currently or formerly facing homelessness. Ask learners to develop a list of questions to ask about what conditions people face when homeless, about what challenges the shelter or center faces in serving the homeless population, and what can be done to reduce homelessness in your community. In preparation for the meeting, you should ask learners to consider the structural forces that lead to homelessness. Share with learners **Handout #4**.
2. During the meeting, learners should also identify potential projects they could do with the shelter or advocacy center to address homelessness in their community. For example, is there a local campaign that students can work on to advocate for more affordable housing or provide families with rent assistance to help combat homelessness? Does the local shelter need more volunteers on a regular basis, or help with clothing drives throughout the year? If prejudice is a major problem facing the homeless, learners could arrange an informational session at their school and invite learners, parents and others in the community to attend and learn more about homelessness.
3. Based on the meeting, learners should develop their project. If it involves working with an advocacy center or shelter, learners should participate in developing guidelines for the partnership. Learners will need to decide what kind of activities they would like to take part in, how to divide up tasks among the learners, and how much time they would like to spend at the shelter or advocacy center. Volunteer activities can take place one or more times after school, over the weekend or during the school day. It will be important to set up an orientation session with the community partner before the project begins.

¹³ This handout contains a modified excerpt from Housing Rights in Brazil: Gross Inequalities and Inconsistencies. Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions. 2003.

OPTION B

Building Homes

PROCEDURES

1. Identify the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity or a similar organization that helps to build or renovate homes or apartments to provide affordable and adequate housing. Arrange for learners to participate in one or more building projects. This type of volunteer work typically lasts for most or all of the day so you will likely have to arrange one or more trips for learners.
2. In addition to the volunteer activity, have learners conduct research to gather information about the need and availability for affordable and adequate housing in their community. Ask learners to answer the following questions. Why are organizations like Habitat for Humanity needed to help build homes for people? Who is responsible for ensuring that people have adequate housing? Learners should research information from the public housing authorities in their community, as well as resources from housing advocates about conditions in public housing.
3. Work with learners to develop a follow-up activity that they can do to help address the lack of adequate housing in their community. For example, learners can contact a local housing advocacy organization and help them recruit people to show up at a rally, write letters or sign a petition to support their campaign. Alternatively, learners can work to recruit other members of the school community or the broader community to organize volunteer days similar to their project to work with Habitat for Humanity or a similar organization.

REFLECTION

Be sure to conduct a reflection activity and to hold a celebration with your learners. A list of possible options for reflection can be found in **Part 2.0** of this manual.

POVERTY

PROJECT 2

3.2

Freedom of Speech and Assembly

OBJECTIVES

- To familiarize learners with the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and how they are impacted by poverty;
- To engage learners in exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly while advocating against conditions of poverty;
- To strengthen learners' public speaking, writing and communication skills and to develop skills for working as a group; and
- To improve skills for researching, formulating and presenting an argument.

CURRICULUM LINK

This project can be taught in conjunction with Social Studies, English, Art or Drama classes.

HR LESSON

Freedom of Speech and Assembly

TIME ALLOTMENT

45 minutes

MATERIALS

Copies of the **UDHR**, the **US Bill of Rights**, blackboard and chalk or flipcharts and markers.

PROCEDURES

1. Ask learners the following questions to start a discussion:
 - a. What is freedom of speech?
 - b. What is freedom of assembly?
 - c. Identify examples of when you have practiced your rights to freedom of assembly or freedom of speech.
 - d. What role does artistic expression play in the freedom of speech and assembly?
2. Ask learners to turn to Articles 18, 19 & 20 of the **UDHR** and the First Amendment to the **Constitution**. Make sure that learners are aware of the key elements of the rights to freedom of expression.

Information for Teachers: The Right to Freedom of Expression

The right to freedom of expression includes freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of association, assembly, and petition. The Supreme Court has written that the freedom of expression is "the indispensable condition of nearly every other form of freedom".

The Supreme Court has recognized a few exceptions to First Amendment protection:

- words that inflict injury or incite a breach of the peace are not protected;
- defamatory falsehoods about public officials are not protected; and
- legally "obscene" material is not protected.

Examples of violations of the right to freedom of expression:

After telling a rally of workers to realize they were "fit for something better than slavery and cannon fodder", Labor leader Eugene V. Debs was sentenced to 10 years in prison under the Espionage Act.

After trying to read the text of the First Amendment at a union rally, author Upton Sinclair was arrested in 1923.

Source: ACLU Briefing Paper: Number 10: Freedom of Expression. *American Civil Liberties Union*

3. Continue the discussion with the following questions: Why is it important to have freedom of speech and assembly? What would happen if we did not have these rights?

4. Now ask learners: Are there groups of people in the United States who have barriers to exercising their rights to freedom of speech and assembly? Have you ever been denied your right to free speech?
5. Then ask learners to consider how living in poverty impacts your ability to speak out about the issues that affect your life and to influence the political process. For example, are people in poverty more vulnerable to being arrested or harassed if they exercise free speech? Without funding to help get your message across, will politicians pay attention? What other resources besides money do people have to get their message across?
6. Now ask learners to think of examples of how the right to freedom of speech and assembly can be used to combat conditions of poverty. Labor unions, for example, are a mechanism for freedom of association and assembly that have been used for decades to fight against low wages and work practices that contribute to poverty. The teacher may want to identify an article or story about how protests, labor organizing and other forms of free speech have been used historically or in the present to combat conditions associated with poverty.
7. If time allows, you can also ask learners whether they think there are ever any circumstances when the rights to freedom of expression and assembly should be curtailed. Should censorship ever apply to groups or individuals who are promoting negative thoughts about other groups?

PROJECT

Freedom of Speech and Assembly

OVERVIEW

There are two different options for this project. In the first option, learners will exercise their right to free speech to speak out against poverty using whatever means of speech they choose – speaking at a town hall meeting, writing Op-eds, etc. An art or drama class can emphasize the use of artistic forms of speech including painting, sculpture, public murals, plays, informational skits and song. In the second option learners can assemble in partnership with a community group to fight conditions of poverty, or choose any service-learning project described in this manual (or one that they create on their own) to exercise their right to assembly through a group service project.

OPTION A

Speaking Out Against Poverty

PROCEDURES

Learners will exercise their right to freedom of speech by speaking out on an important human rights issue related to poverty.

1. To begin this project you must decide which cause or issue you are going to speak out in support of. An issue described in this curriculum may be used or another issue that is related to poverty. Examples include: homelessness, healthcare, education, violence against women, etc. Learners should reach out to a community leader, advocate or organization that works around the issue they have chosen in order to learn more about what rights are at stake and to collaborate on their project.
2. Once the issue is selected the learners will need to select the audience that they want to hear their message. For example, you can ask learners, should we direct our message to the public because the community needs to know more about this issue, or are policy makers the best audience?
3. At this point the learners will need to decide what they want their audience to hear. They will need to do research on the issue/group they have decided to speak about and narrow down that information

POVERTY

PROJECT 2

3.2

to the critical information the audience needs to know. You may want to invite a representative of an organization that works on this issue to speak with learners and contribute to the processing of developing their message.

4. Next, you will need to decide how you are going to practice your freedom of speech. Ask learners what method of delivery they will use. Will they hold a debate, a town hall forum, deliver a stump speech in the community, write Op-eds to the paper, take out an advertisement in the school paper, organize informational tables at a community event, etc.? Learners can be creative and incorporate art or acting skits into their delivery.
5. Implement the project. After you have finished the project discuss with the learners what the outcomes were, who was affected, and how they felt when expressing their beliefs and opinions?

OPTION B

Exercising the Right to Assemble through Service-Learning

OVERVIEW

During all service projects while learners are working to guarantee the rights of people in their community they are practicing their right to assemble. For this project there are two options. Learners can decide to assemble around an issue related to poverty. Or they can take this opportunity to engage in any service project they really want to do. By taking action through service-learning, they will exercise their right to assemble.

PROCEDURES

1. The first choice, assembling around an issue related to poverty, will operate just like the project above on freedom of speech. First, learners should identify an organization in your community to work with around your issue. Important questions that need to be considered before this project is selected and implemented include: Why do you want to assemble around this issue? What do you hope to accomplish? If you select a group to assemble with or on behalf of, work with that group or a representative of the group to make sure their voice is heard and that you are addressing issues of importance to them.
2. Next, learners will need to answer a series of questions:
 - a. Why are you assembling – to raise awareness, get media attention, or make a statement?
 - b. Who will the audience be? Are you targeting the public or policy-makers?
 - c. How and where are you going to assemble? Will you hold a rally or demonstration in a public space? Will you call a meeting to speak to your target audience? What is the best time of day and location to reach the most people from your target audience?
3. Implement your project. After you have gathered together and held your assembly discuss with the learners what the outcomes were, who was affected, and why it was beneficial to work in groups?
4. The second choice for this project gives you the flexibility to carry out any service project in this manual or elsewhere that you didn't get to, but really feel passionate about doing. Perhaps there was one issue that was covered that struck a chord with every student and you would have liked more time to spend on it. Or perhaps there was an issue that is not covered in this manual that you would have liked to address. For this project you can engage in protecting any right you would like while at the same time practicing the right to assemble as a group. As you prepare for the project, and after you have implemented the project, discuss with the learners why it is important to practice the right to assemble in ways as simple as doing a project, and what would happen if that right was taken away.

REFLECTION

Be sure to conduct a reflection activity and to hold a celebration with your learners. A list of possible options for reflection can be found in **Part 2.0** of this manual.

Find Out More

GENERAL

Center for Economic and Social Rights:
www.cesr.org

National Economic and Social Rights Initiative:
www.nesri.org

PovNet:
www.povnet.org

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: Poverty:
www.ohchr.org/english/issues/poverty/index.htm

U.S. Network for Global Economic Justice:
www.50years.org

HR & HOUSING

Center for Economic Justice:
www.econjustice.net/

Habitat International Coalition:
www.hic-mena.org/home.htm

Human Rights Education Associates: Guide on Housing:
www.hrea.org/learn/guides/

Kensington Welfare Rights Union:
www.kwru.org/

National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty:
www.nlchp.org

National Low Income Housing Coalition:
www.nlihc.org/advocates/housingasright.htm

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: Housing:
www.ohchr.org/english/issues/housing/index.htm

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

American Civil Liberties Unions:
www.aclu.org/freespeech

Amnesty International:
www.amnestyusa.org/prisoners_of_conscience/index.html

Human Rights Education Associates: Guide on Freedom of Expression:
www.hrea.org/learn/guides/

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) – Special Themes – Eradication of Poverty – Freedom of Expression and Participation:
www.unesco.org

DISCRIMINATION & HUMAN RIGHTS

3.3

INTRODUCTION

The Human Rights Committee of the United Nations defines discrimination in the following way: “The term ‘discrimination’ ...should be understood to imply any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference which is based on any ground such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, and which has the purpose of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by all persons, on an equal footing, of all rights and freedoms.”

Regrettably, discrimination is extremely common in the United States and around the world. Discrimination can inhibit the enjoyment of a wide range of human rights. For example, immigrants who do not speak the primary language in a community or who have different customs may face discrimination when they try to buy a home or rent an apartment, leading to a violation of their right to housing. Women, who have the same education and prior work experience as men in their field, may not receive promotions or pay raises at their job because of discrimination, leading to violations of their right to equal pay for equal work and their right to an adequate standard of living.

Even though the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family, and the U.S. Constitution’s Bill of Rights guarantees the right to equal treatment regardless of race, sex, religion or national origin, discrimination is still extremely common. People of color, women, gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and trans-gendered people, people with disabilities, immigrants and people living in poverty face both obvious and subtle kinds of discrimination in America today.

DISCRIMINATION

OVERVIEW

LESSON ON THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR)

Choose one of the three lessons included in Part I of this manual to introduce learners to the broad concept of human rights and the UDHR.



INTRODUCTORY LESSON

DISCRIMINATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

This is an introductory lesson to familiarize learners with the human right to equal treatment and freedom from discrimination. Learners will identify forms of discrimination in the United States and around the world and explore the case of Apartheid in South Africa.



HUMAN RIGHTS SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECTS:

This section includes two human rights service-learning projects that you can choose from. One focuses on discrimination faced by people with disabilities, and the other focuses on discrimination faced by refugees and immigrants. Both use in-class HRE lessons, service activities, and reflection exercises:



PROJECT 1

EQUAL RIGHTS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

This project explores the forms of discrimination faced by people with disabilities.

LESSON: Equal Rights for People with Disabilities

PROJECT OPTION 1: *Access in Your Community*

Learners document access to public facilities for people with disabilities and report their findings.

PROJECT OPTION 2: *Building Relationships with People with Disabilities*

Learners work with people with disabilities in their community to support their human rights claims.



PROJECT 2

REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

This project explores the challenges faced by refugees and immigrant communities to claim their rights.

LESSON: Rights for Refugees and Immigrants

PROJECT OPTION 1: *Reading for Refugees*

Learners will raise money for refugees while reading with members of their community.

PROJECT OPTION 2: *Providing Service for Refugees/Immigrants*

Learners will provide services for refugees and immigrants and organize a cultural celebration.

DISCRIMINATION

LESSON

3.3

The Right to Freedom from Discrimination

OBJECTIVES

- To introduce learners to the human right to be free from discrimination; and
- To have learners discuss different types of discrimination that exist in the world and in their own community.

MATERIALS

Copies of the **UDHR** and **Handout #5**, flip charts and markers or blackboard and chalk.

TIME ALLOTMENT

90 minutes

PROCEDURES

1. Ask learners to share examples of when they have witnessed someone being discriminated against or felt that someone discriminated against them. Ask learners to write down individually what the word discrimination means, and then ask for volunteers to share with the class. Write these definitions on the board. Read aloud Article 2 of the **UDHR** and comment on differences between the definitions of discrimination:

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

2. Divide learners into small groups. Ask learners to list groups in their communities and around the world that have suffered discrimination in the past or who suffer from discrimination now. Ask learners to share their answers. Be sure that a wide range of groups are mentioned, including women and girls, ethnic, racial and religious groups, immigrant communities, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people, etc.. Describe to learners some of the international human rights treaties that prohibit discrimination, and both the benefits and challenges of those treaties.

Information for Teachers: The Relative Role of Laws Prohibiting Discrimination

Point out to learners that every major human rights treaty prohibits discrimination in the protection of all human rights, and that several specific treaties have been created to protect the rights of particular groups in society who face discrimination. For example, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) prohibit discrimination against women and on the basis of race respectively. International and domestic laws have also been created to prevent discrimination in particular areas of life, such as labor laws in the United States that protect against discrimination in the work place.

While many human rights treaties prohibit discrimination, it is important to recognize that these treaties and their definition of discrimination were developed by a United Nations committee and then approved by government representatives who have political interests and biases of their own. While it is significant that international conventions are passed and national laws are changed, behavior does not change overnight. Laws have to be enforced and it sometimes takes time for societies to change.

Source: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights www.ohchr.org/english/law/index.htm

DISCRIMINATION

LESSON

3.3

3. Distribute copies of a case study to learners describing an example of discrimination in the United States or internationally. **Handout #5** contains a case study on Apartheid in South Africa that existed until the early 1990s.¹⁴

4. Distribute copies of the **UDHR** to each group and ask learners to identify what types of discrimination the Black and Coloured population in South Africa faced and which of their rights were violated. Ask each group to share their answers with the class. Ask learners the following questions: What structural factors in society enabled the system of apartheid to stay in place for so long? What role did laws play in perpetuating that system?

Tips For Teachers – Discrimination can take many forms. People can be discriminated against in the way they are treated based on prejudice and stereotypes, and in the barriers they face to access certain services (like healthcare) or opportunities (like employment). In society, structural discrimination can exist which creates the conditions so that some groups of people are excluded from access to services and opportunities. Under the human rights framework, rights must be guaranteed without discrimination of any kind. This includes not only purposeful discrimination, but also protection from policies and practices which may have a discriminatory effect whether or not the effect was intentional.

5. Point out to learners that the system of Apartheid in South Africa that legalized discrimination and the oppression of the Black and Coloured population, was similar to the segregation laws that existed in the United States until the 1960s and the historical and present treatment of many Native American communities. We encourage you to identify articles to share with learners and ask them to find similarities and differences between them. In the United States and South Africa, there were many human rights heroes like Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela who fought against discrimination. Eventually, movements of people formed to fight segregation and apartheid, which led to changes in laws and social practices. In both cases, the movements were led by the people who were most affected by the discrimination. Ask students to brainstorm other movements throughout history and today that have formed to fight discrimination – for example the women's suffrage movement, the immigrant rights movement, etc.

REFLECTION

1. In groups or as a whole class, ask learners to share discrimination they have experienced or witnessed in their community. How could some of the needs in your community concerning discrimination be addressed through service-learning?
2. The U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights guarantees the right of equal treatment regardless of race, sex, religion or national origin. Write an essay giving examples of ways in which rights are guaranteed, and not guaranteed, in today's society.

¹⁴ Robinson, Alonford James. Apartheid. *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience*. Eds. Appiah and Louis. Perseus: New York. 1999.

DISCRIMINATION

PROJECT 1

Equal Rights for People With Disabilities

3.3

OBJECTIVES

- To have learners gain knowledge about discrimination faced by people with disabilities and their role in claiming their own rights;
- To introduce learners to the international human rights and domestic legal standards for prohibiting discrimination against people with disabilities and guaranteeing them access and services;
- To have participants take action to improve equal access to rights and services for people with disabilities, and to meet a community need; and
- To improve learners' research and analytical skills to document information and draw conclusions, and to improve writing skills.

CURRICULUM LINK

This project can be taught in conjunction with a Social Studies, Literature or Art class.

HR LESSON

Equal Rights for People with Disabilities

MATERIALS

Copies of the **UDHR, Handout #6**, and access for learners to research articles or books about people with disabilities.

TIME ALLOTMENT

90 minutes

PROCEDURES

1. A couple of days before you begin this lesson, distribute **Handout #6**¹⁵ and spend 5 to 10 minutes introducing learners to the history of the treatment of people with disabilities in the US and the development of the disability rights movement. Give learners the assignment to find and read an article or book that tells the story of a person that has a disability. The stories can describe both challenges and personal accomplishments the person has faced and/or a campaign the person has participated in to gain certain rights. You can encourage learners to find stories on people with different types of disabilities. For example, learners can research stories on the blind, deaf, people with physical disabilities (in wheelchairs or similar situations), and people with mental disabilities. Ask learners not to choose stories on Helen Keller because she was included in the handout.
2. At the start of the class for this lesson, ask for two or three students to share summaries of the stories they read. Then ask for volunteers to share how disability has impacted their own lives. Maybe some of the students have disabilities themselves, or have friends or family members with disabilities. What are some of the stereotypes that exist about people with disabilities?
3. Now ask learners to walk through "a day in the life" of a person with the kind of disability described in the story they read. Learners should begin by writing down a list of everything they did the day before from the time they woke up in the morning to the time they went to bed at night. Next, ask learners to imagine how each thing they did that day would be the same or different for a person with the disability they read about. Ask for volunteers to share with the class.
4. Divide learners into groups and give each group one copy of the **UDHR**. Ask learners in each group to choose three rights and discuss the discrimination that people with disabilities might face with regard to those rights. Ask for a volunteer from each group to share their answers.
5. Discuss with learners ways that discrimination against people with disabilities can be overcome. People with disabilities are the most powerful force in guaranteeing rights and services for themselves. Learners should think about the ways in which they can support those efforts, such as creating greater understanding among the public about people with disabilities in order to decrease preju-

¹⁵ Shreve, Maggie. The Movement for Independent Living: A Brief History. *National Council on Independent Living; and Royal National Institute for the Blind*. The life of Helen Keller. www.rnib.org.uk

DISCRIMINATION

PROJECT 1

3.3

dice, or supporting advocacy campaigns around their rights. Ask learners what can be done in their school or broader community to help guarantee the rights of and decrease discrimination against people with disabilities.

PROJECT

Equal Rights for People With Disabilities

OVERVIEW

There are two different options for this project. In the first option, learners will research whether people with disabilities are able to access key services in their community or school. In the second option, learners work with an organization providing services or advocating for people with disabilities.

OPTION A

Access in Your Community

PROCEDURES

1. Working with learners, identify an organization in your community that provides services or advocates for the rights of people with disabilities. Working with that organization, identify a set of public or school-based services where greater access is needed for individuals with disabilities. Learners will run a documentation project to measure access in that setting. For example, you can choose to document access for people with disabilities in: public libraries and post offices; public transportation services; services at hospitals, unemployment offices or city council meetings. You can also choose to document access in your school, not only for students in your school, but family members as well that may have disabilities and need access to the building, meetings with teachers, or informational materials.
2. Learners will then have to generate a human rights checklist for what types of services should be available. To develop the checklist, learners can research federal, state and local guidelines as well as human rights standards, they can interview people with disabilities, and they can formulate their own opinions on what services should be available. Services on the checklist can range from observing availability of ramps or elevators for wheelchair access, to the availability of interpreters for the deaf at hospitals, schools or city council meetings.
3. Once learners have developed their human rights checklist, they should decide how they want to carry out their research. This can include visits to observe buildings and offices, research on the web about department policies, interviews with staff at offices, and interviews with people with disabilities. The class can then decide how to divide up responsibilities among the learners and begin their research.
4. After the research has been completed, learners will need to compile the information and develop conclusions about how accessible the services are for people with disabilities based on the human rights checklists. Ask learners to consider the cost implications of guaranteeing access for people with disabilities. How much would it cost to improve access and who should pay? How could improving access for people with disabilities save money in the long run and make services better for everyone?

5. Learners can then send their documentation to the partnering organization. Based on learners' research and the needs described by the organization, identify a specific area of access that learners can help address themselves. For example, if you researched libraries and the partner organization identifies that there are not enough books on tape or in Braille available for the blind, learners can raise money to purchase those items for the library. Learners can also send the results of their human rights checklists in the form of letters to the administrators in charge of the public facilities they researched, as well as relevant elected officials. If learners researched access in their school, they should arrange meetings with their principal and the broader school community to share their findings and raise awareness.

OPTION B

Building Relationships with People with Disabilities

PROCEDURES

1. In consultation with your learners, identify an organization in your community that works for the rights of people with disabilities, or a classroom in your school or a nearby school that teaches children with disabilities.
2. Working with the organization or classroom teacher, identify a specific need that learners can help to fill through a project. For example, learners can contribute to a campaign that an organization is working on by writing letters, doing research, collecting signatures for a petition, or designing posters. Learners can also help raise money or gather donations of art supplies for a classroom or community center or read with children who have disabilities. Some aspect of the project should include interacting with people that have disabilities.
3. It is important to emphasize to learners during the development and implementation of the project that their role as human rights promoters should be to support people with disabilities in claiming rights for themselves. Human rights work is not meant to be a charitable service, but rather a means to assist vulnerable communities in gaining greater self-determination and power to claim their own rights.
4. Throughout the project, ask learners to keep a journal recording their experiences. When writing in their journal, ask learners to think about what they have learned with regards to the challenges that people with disabilities face. Ask learners to think about misconceptions or assumptions they may have had about people with disabilities that have been challenged or changed through this project. Ask learners to think about things they have learned that they can share with others to help overcome prejudice or misperceptions that contribute to discrimination in their community.

ACTIVITY

At the end of either project option, ask each learner to choose one thing they learned about people with disabilities that they would like to share with others. You can have learners write a hypothetical letter to a friend, create a piece of artwork, or write a speech to the school community. Learners' letters, speeches or artwork can then be displayed in the school or presented to the broader community at a celebration.

REFLECTION

Be sure to conduct a reflection activity and to hold a celebration with your learners. A list of possible options for reflection can be found in **Part 2.0** of this manual.

PROJECT 2

3.3

DISCRIMINATION

Refugees and Immigrant Communities

OBJECTIVES

- To have learners learn about and understand the rights of immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees, and to understand causes leading to someone becoming a refugee;
- To introduce learners to the challenges and discrimination facing immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers;
- To have learners meet a community need through action that addresses a challenge facing immigrants, asylum seekers, or refugees; and
- To improve learners' analytical skills.

CURRICULUM LINK

This project can be taught in conjunction with a Social Studies, Literature, History, Religion, or Language class.

HR LESSON

Rights for Refugees and Immigrants

MATERIALS

Copies of the **UDHR**, **Handouts #7**, **#8** and **#9**.

TIME ALLOTMENT

2 class periods

PROCEDURES

Before engaging in the following discussion and exercise, be sure that you are familiar with the definitions and experiences of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. **Handout #7** provides some information. You can also visit the websites listed in **APPENDIX B**, *Find out More About Discrimination* section, which includes links to organizations that work with immigrant and refugee communities and links to government websites that describe U.S. laws pertaining to immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

1. Introduce learners to this topic by asking them the following questions: What is an immigrant? Did any of your families immigrate to the United States? What are some of the reasons why people immigrate? What are some of the hardships and challenges that immigrants might face when they come to the United States? What is a refugee? Did any of your families come to the U.S. as refugees? Why might someone become a refugee? What types of discrimination do these groups face?
2. Continue this discussion by utilizing **Handout #7**. Once learners have had the opportunity to become familiar with the information and definitions in **Handout #7**, distribute one of the case studies included in **Handout #9** for participants to read.¹⁶
3. After they read the case study, have a discussion on what they have read. Ask them how they would feel if they found themselves in a situation similar to that in the case study. What would they do that was similar to the actions taken in the case study? What would they do that was different? What human rights issues were at stake?

¹⁶ This handout includes case studies taken from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). www.unhcr.ch/.

4. The learners will now engage in a simulation of an asylum hearing. The simulation is based in a courtroom setting. Explain to the learners that usually asylum cases are heard and decided by a single judge who hears testimony from the person seeking asylum and decides whether that person can remain in the country. But because we want all of the learners to play a role we are going to have a group of them decide the outcome as a jury. There are three cases each involving an asylum seeker, lawyer, judge, jury and an interpreter. You can switch the roles for each case or keep the same jury and judge for all cases.

Tips for Teachers – In one of the asylum cases assigned to learners in this simulation, a young woman is seeking asylum because the village that she comes from practices female genital cutting, a practice which she is opposed to. If learners are unfamiliar with this practice, you may wish to introduce it to learners during the class discussion prior to the simulation exercise. To learn more about the issue you can visit Amnesty International's website - *Female Genital Mutilation: A human rights information pack* at: www.amnesty.org/ailib/intcam/femgen/fgm1.htm

5. Once you have assigned the roles allow 10 minutes for each learner to become familiar with their role. The descriptions of the asylum seekers' life stories included in **Handout #8** are very brief. You can encourage the individuals who are playing the roles of asylum seekers to be creative and develop a more detailed account of why they are seeking asylum. Learners can refer to the case studies in **Handout #9** for ideas. Lawyers should work with their asylum seeker clients to anticipate questions that the judge might ask of them about why they are seeking asylum and what they plan to do if they are given entry into their new country. Judges should decide what questions they want to ask of asylum seekers and the jury should decide what criteria they want to use to decide if a person should be granted entry into the country. If you can, you may want to assign the roles prior to the lesson to allow for longer preparation time so that learners can research their roles. You can refer learners to the websites in the FIND OUT MORE section. Additional instructions for learners playing the roles of the judge, jury, lawyer, asylum seeker and interpreter are included in **Handout #8**.

Tips for Teachers – The role of the interpreter can be optional depending on your time. In many cases an asylum seeker to the United States does not speak English and must use an interpreter. If you choose to simulate that experience, asylum seekers will not be able to speak directly to their lawyer, the judge or the jury. The asylum seeker will have to whisper information to the interpreter who will repeat it to the lawyer or judge. The asylum seeker must trust the interpreter to properly repeat the information and cannot correct the interpreter because they do not understand the language.

6. Before beginning the simulation, you must also go over the rules of how the courtroom will be run. Feel free to be creative. You may want the lawyers to make opening statements, followed by questions from the judge to the lawyer and/or the asylum seeker. Be sure to go over the rules to avoid confusion. Allow 5-10 minutes for each case to go before the judge and an additional 5 minutes for the jury to decide whether or not asylum is granted in each case. After hearing each case the jury should briefly present their decision and reasoning (2 minutes).

7. When they have finished the simulation ask the learners to share what it was like to be in that role. If they found themselves in that situation, what would they want someone else to do on their behalf?

8. If time allows, ask learners to identify one right in the UDHR that refugees and/or asylum seekers are denied while they seek entry into a country or after they have arrived. Ask learners what they can do to protect the rights of refugees and asylum seekers.

3.3

PROJECT

Refugees and Immigrant Communities

OVERVIEW

There are two different options for this project, and there are variations you can choose within each option. In the first option learners have a read-a-thon to raise money for supplies for refugees and read with people in their community. In the second project learners will work at a local organization that serves refugees, asylum seekers and/or immigrants, or if such an organization is not readily available in your area, your project can raise awareness in your community.

OPTION A

Reading for Refugees

PROCEDURES

Learners will hold a reading marathon to collect pledges for every book they read in order to raise money or supplies to donate to an organization that serves refugees or immigrants. The money raised can be donated directly to the organization, or the project can be a two part series with the second part consisting of buying and delivering supplies and materials needed by the organization. For example, learners can create 'exit' backpacks filled with necessities for young children or adults entering the country as asylum seekers. Learners can also spend some of the time for the marathon reading books with a group of people in their community.

1. Identify with learners an organization that serves a refugee population internationally or in your local community to which learners can donate money or supplies. (See the list of possible organizations included under the FIND OUT MORE section.)
2. Together with your learners, develop a timeline and work plan for the project. Work with learners to decide how many books they want to read on their own as part of the marathon and to develop a list of books to read. You should include several books or articles in the list that tell the story of a refugee or refugee community. Learners will need to decide whether they want to ask people to pledge money or supplies to donate to an organization serving refugees, and how much they will ask for each book. Learners will need to think about who they want to approach for pledges (family, teachers, local businesses, etc.), how they plan to keep track of the books they read, and how they will collect the pledges.
3. To add an extra dimension to the project, you can also identify an organization that works with refugees or immigrants in your local neighborhood that learners would like to work with as part of the reading marathon. Learners may wish to work with ESL students at their school or with refugees or immigrants at an English language center. Together with the learners, you will need to work with the ESL teacher of the class or director of the community organization where learners plan to read to arrange for visits to the agency, to hold any training sessions that learners need, to decide how many books you want to read, and to choose audience-appropriate books.
4. Once the book lists are finalized and the visits are arranged for reading, learners should begin collecting their pledges and reading their books, keeping a log of the books they read. Learners should keep a journal with either daily entries about the books they are reading or one-to two-page summaries of each book after they complete them.