



# HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

## PRACTICAL METHODOLOGIES

The Council of Europe defines Human Rights Education as “...educational programmes and activities that focus on equality in human dignity...”, COMPASS, the CoE manual on human rights education with young people, contains many useful training methods on the subject. Here as a bonus we present two more activities. Following the Compass complexity levels, “One world of song” is at level 2 and “Rich Meal Poor Meal” is at level 1

### 1 ONE WORLD OF SONG

#### Themes :

General human rights / Media

#### Taster

*"Music itself does not change the world, people change the world; but music can be a powerful instrument of information".*

**Peter Gabriel**

#### Overview

Use songs, poems, limericks, and raps - what you will - to let people celebrate and support human rights through music and rhyme.

#### Related Rights

- Equality in dignity and rights
- Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- Right to freedom of opinion and expression.

**Group size :** Any

**Time :** 40+

#### Objectives :

- To stimulate interest in human rights issues
- To develop creativity and skills for communication and co-operation
- To promote solidarity

#### Materials :

- Paper and pens, enough for one per participant
- Percussion and music instruments (*optional*)
- Tape recorder, tape and microphone for making recordings (*optional*)
- Tape of whales' or dolphins' songs (*optional*)

#### Preparation

Have ready a tape of whales' or dolphins' songs or similar mood music to play as people enter the room.

#### Instructions :

1. Get everyone to sit or lie in silence with their eyes closed for a few minutes and to think of a song about justice and human rights - one they are particularly attached to.
2. Then ask participants to share their songs in groups of six to eight people and to discuss the lyrics and why they are emotionally powerful.
3. Now ask groups to begin to think about a human rights song that they would like to write together. First they will have to identify (for example through brainstorming and diamond ranking) a human rights issue that is important to them.
4. Ask the groups to identify the key words they want to include in the song. Then, in pairs (or individually) to write one verse around one key word.  
When they have done that, each pair should swap their lyrics with another pair and add a second verse in the spirit of the first. Repeat the process until all the pieces of paper have verses from everyone.
5. There should now be three or four draft song lyrics. Ask the groups to review their material and to focus on writing one song to present back in plenary.  
Remind them not to forget about the accompanying music or percussion!
6. Finally, in plenary ask each group to present their results.

#### Debriefing and evaluation :

Start the debriefing by asking people to provide feedback on each other's work and then go on to how they enjoyed the activity and what they learned.

- What is most important in a good song? The lyrics? The music? A combination of both?
- Did the groups enjoy the method of each pair writing a verse? How successful was it for producing material to work on?
- Which human rights issues did the groups work on, why did they choose them and how did they decide on them?
- How did it feel to give and to receive feedback about the work?
- Has anyone gained new insights into human rights as a result of writing their own song, or from hearing anyone else's?

### Tips for facilitators

The method described above is only one suggestion about how to develop material. It was chosen because it is a good method of promoting co-operation and group work skills. You should feel free to use any method you think will work best for your group.

You will find information about the technique of diamond ranking on page 50 and tips on helping people to give feedback on page 54 of the Compass manual.

### Variations

Ask the participants beforehand to bring their CDs and tapes with "songs of concern" that they like. Start the session by playing some of them.

### Suggestions for follow up

Ask participants to link their favourite songs and their newly composed ones to the various articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Ask them to reproduce the title of the articles on a large sheet of paper and collectively "map" the songs in connection with the articles. They can continue updating the poster over a period of time.

If people liked making music they may also like to draw pictures. They could do the picture activities on page 188 and illustrate their ideas about human rights. Alternatively, they could write poems or raps - see below.

### Ideas for action

Look for other groups of young people across Europe and the world that are identifying or producing human rights songs, and exchange work with them. Alternatively, organise a human rights music day together with other classes or youth groups in the school or community.

### Key dates

1 October, International Music Day

### Further information

Celebration of and struggles for human rights have a long record of drawing inspiration from songs. To give just one example, in 1979 Pink Floyd released *The Wall* including the song *Another Brick in the Wall, part 2*. The following lyrics had a special impact on South Africans, who soon turned them into a protest song against the (then) apartheid regime:

*We don't need no education,*

*we don't need no thought control.*

*No dark sarcasm in the classroom,*

*teachers leave us kids alone.*

The South African government banned selling the Pink Floyd LP and broadcasting it on radio. The ban is no longer in place now that apartheid is abolished.

### Website:

<http://www.antenna.nl/amnesty-nijmegen/scriptie-fd7.html>,

which is produced in co-operation with Amnesty International Nijmegen, Holland, gives a long list of songs that address human rights and human rights abuses. There are concerned songs, songs about (political) prisoners, about torture, the death penalty and missing people (desaparecidos), songs about refugees and asylum seekers and songs of freedom. More details are given on the Council of Europe website.

## OTHER IDEAS FOR USING POEMS, LIMERICKS AND RAPS

Creative composing is an excellent way to develop group work skills and co-operation. In the debriefing and evaluation you can help people understand that not everyone has to be good at everything! Recognising other people's talents and learning to divide tasks and share responsibility for a job do not come automatically to many people, especially those who naturally tend to take control in a situation. You could ask people:

- How did they come up with the topic of the song, poem, rap - whatever?
- How did they share the work and how did they decide who should do what?  
(For example, did one person generate the ideas and the others do the writing?)

### Themes:

Old tunes - new songs

### Taster

Stay where there are songs. A Roma proverb.

### Instructions

1. Ask people to think of popular, traditional or folk songs.  
You could all sing a few to warm up!
2. Then get people in pairs or small groups to put new words about any human-rights issue to an old tune.  
They should write the words up on a large sheet of paper.
3. Gather everyone together and sing each other's new versions of the old favourites.

### Tips for facilitators

For example, to the tune of «What shall we do with a drunken sailor» you could sing:

What shall we do with war crimes suspects,

What shall we do with war crimes suspects,

What shall we do with war crimes suspects

In the 21st cent'ry?

Take them to The Hague and show them justice

Take them to The Hague and show them justice

Take them to The Hague and show them justice

We will claim our ri-ights.

You can also use this “new for old” method with poems. For example, the following poem would make a good starter for the Work and Babies activity on page 260 of Compass.

**The Assault on Reproductive Rights** by Carol Moseley-Braun (Based on a famous poem by Martin Niemöller, a Protestant minister held in a German concentration camp for 7 years.)

*First they came for poor women and I did not speak out - because I was not a poor woman. Then they came for the teenagers and I did not speak out - because I was no longer a teenager. Then they came for women in the military and I did not speak out - because I was not in the military. Then they came for women in the Federal Government and I did not speak out - because I did not work for the Government. Then they came for the doctors and I did not speak out - because I was not a doctor. Then they came for me - and there was no one left to speak out for me.*

## LIMERICKS

### T a s t e r

A limerick is a rhyme which by tradition comes from Ireland. Limericks are usually irreverent or bawdy!

### I n s t r u c t i o n s

1. Check that everyone knows what a limerick is.
2. Tell everyone to find a partner and try to write a limerick together. It can be about any human-rights issue.
3. Gather everyone together and ask them in turn to read out their limericks.

### T i p s f o r f a c i l i t a t o r s

A limerick must have five lines with an AA BB a rhyme scheme. As for the rhythm, the beat must be anapaestic (weak, weak, strong) with three feet in lines 1, 2, and 5 and 2 feet in lines 3 and 4.

S equals a strong beat and w indicates a weak beat and [w] indicates an optional beat thus:

Lines 1, 2, 5: w [w] S w w S w w S [w] [w]

Lines 3, 4: w [w] S w w S [w] [w]

Here is an example:

To *say* what I *like* I am free  
It's a *Right* both for *you* and for me  
To say *Frog*, Kraut or *Wop*  
Is *o* - ver the *top*  
A - *buse* of hard *won* lib - er - ty

Note "frog", "kraut" and "wop" are derogatory slang words for a Frenchman, a German and someone from mid- or southern Europe, especially an Italian.



## HAIKU

### T a s t e r

The Zen Buddhist masters say that more than inspiration, you need meditation, effort and perception to compose a real Haiku!

### I n s t r u c t i o n s

4. Check everyone knows what a Haiku is.
5. Get people in pairs to write a haiku about any human-rights issue.
6. Gather everyone together and ask them in turn to read out their Haiku.

A Haiku usually has 3 lines and 17 syllables divided up 5, 7, 5. It must record or convey a moment, sensation, impression or drama of a specific fact of nature. The following example is an effort to express concern about issues of globalisation and western consumerism as exemplified by demands for high-fashion footwear which is made by child labour in countries of the Far East.

*Image craving style  
sports shoes promise golden glow  
child labourer dies.*

Information on how to write a haiku and other forms of poems such as a cinquain, quatrain, tanka, couplet, a name poem or an ABC poem can be found on

<http://www.umeedu.maine.edu/coehd/wind/poemtypes.html>

### T i p s f o r f a c i l i t a t o r s

Haiku are a form of small poem. They come to us from the oriental mystics and Zen Buddhist masters who expressed much of their thought in the form of myths, symbols, paradoxes and poetic images. The object is to transcend the limitations imposed by everyday language and the linear/scientific thinking that treats nature and human beings as machines.

## RAPS

### T a s t e r

Say it to the beat!

### I n s t r u c t i o n s

1. Talk about raps, what they are, and why they are popular.
2. Get people in pairs to write a rap about any human-rights issue.
3. Gather everyone together and work out lots of different ways of making percussion to tap out the beat, for example by clicking fingers or tapping a glass as well as clapping or stamping feet.
4. Now take turns to present. Each performer in turn should start by giving the beat and getting everyone into the rhythm and then start their rap.

The second thing you need to know is about the rhyme pattern of A-A-B-B. Notice that the last word in the first line («win») rhymes with the last word in the second line («spin»), and the last word in the third line («aggression») rhymes with the last word in the fourth line («oppression»).

With only **words** they **say** that **we** just can't **win**  
But we'll **not** bend down **low**; we will **let** them **spin**  
For we **know** that it's **time** to de-**nounce** all a - **ggression**  
We will **break** from the **spiral** of **violence** and o- **ppression**  
It don' **matter** if we **learned** it at **school** or i' the **street**  
By de-**nouncing** all the **rights** vi-o-**lations** we will **beat** it  
Don' **accept** what they **do** to my **brother** or **me**  
United **we** will **stand**. Let them **wait** and **see**.

It can be useful to have a tape/CD with a standard rap-type rhythm to back up the final products (an example is provided in the tape included in the «Worlds behind the music - an activity pack on World Music and development» education pack produced by RISC and VSO, UK).

You will find more information about raps and tips on how to write them on the following web sites:

<http://www.gigglepoetry.com/raphelp.html>

<http://www.lessonplanspage.com/MusicWriteRapSong68.htm>

### T i p s f o r f a c i l i t a t o r s

The first thing you'll need is a beat.  
Here is the rhythm that a lot of rap artists use:  
da *dum* da da *dum* da da *dum* da *dum* (A)  
da *dum* da da *dum* da da *dum* da *dum* (A)

### Or if you prefer

A-one and a-two and a-three and a-four  
A-one and a-two and a-three and a-four.