1.4. HUMAN NEEDS JIGSAW

Aim

This exercise will help people realise that what they see as important might be different for others, and also have them reflect on the fact that we all share the same fundamental human rights.

Time needed
1 hour

Resources needed
One big sheet of paper for every participant
Markers
Scissors

Group size
Various

Step-by-step description

1. Give all participants a piece of paper and let them draw an outline of themselves. (If the paper is big enough, they might also lie down on the paper and let someone else draw them). Cut out all drawings. Let the participants then divide their drawings with a marker into a jigsaw of six parts.

2. Make a list, with all participants, of the things that might be important to them, for instance, food, friends, shelter, love, education, a stable income, good health, a good environment, religion, a nice family, ideals, freedom of speech, the possibility of travel, peace, not being discriminated against, etc., until you have a list of at least 25 to 30 items.

3. Ask all participants to pick out six rights from this list that they consider important for themselves at this moment. They can write each one on the jigsaw pieces they have made from their drawing.

4. When everyone has written down a right on each of their jigsaw pieces, they can cut up the drawings.

5. Ask a volunteer to present his/her jigsaw to the group, explaining why they have chosen these six rights. Let the volunteer name the selected rights one by one. When a right is named that others in the group have selected as well, they should take out the corresponding piece from their drawing and place it in front of them.

6. After the volunteer is finished, ask the rest of the group if anyone had selected the same rights, or if anyone had any rights in common. Take care that you do not start a discussion about whether the choice of rights was sensible or not; the choice is purely individual and should not be discussed at this stage.

7. Ask some other volunteers to share their selection of important things with the group (preferably someone who had nothing or only one or two things in common with the first volunteer) and repeat step 6.

8. Discuss with the group how it is that people can perceive their needs differently. Ask them if they perceive that any needs/rights (newly offered or from the list already made) are absolutely fundamental for every human being. Make a list of these and compare them with the simplified version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
Reflection and evaluation

- Did many of your needs overlap with those of other persons?
- Did you understand why others chose other things as more important for them?
- How did you choose your needs?
- Do you think your list has changed from the list you would have made five years ago, or will change from a future list?
- Are there needs/rights that must be respected for everyone without exception? Why is this if we can perceive our needs differently?

Some further tips

You can also vary this exercise by giving people role cards; a 90-year-old grandmother, a refugee seeking asylum, a boy in a wheelchair, a businessman, a student on a low income, a homeless girl, a professional football player, a child growing up in an Indian orphanage, a farmer from Venezuela, etc. Then ask the participant to empathise with the person on their role card and guess which rights are important to them.