

Human Rights Human aon :
An activity guide for living together
with respect to human rights

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Contents

Where did human rights come from?	8
Key Principles of Human Rights	18
Human Rights Core Values	33
Human Dignity	34
Equity	41
Diversity	60
Respect	70
Value	76
Non-discrimination	82
Freedom	90
Human Rights and the State Obligations	106
Human Rights Mechanisms and State Obligations	120
International Human Rights Obligations	132

Introduction

Human Rights is a definition that comes from recognizing universal values (Core values) in society, such as, justice, respecting one another and human dignity.

Declaration, treaties and other laws relating to human rights are the first steps towards recognizing these values in every human life. Human rights are, therefore, not the concept of enforcement of rights as a legal mechanism.

The state law guarantees all citizens access to fundamental human rights.

Human rights also mean the relationship between us and society. Learning about human rights or human rights education is an effort to create a culture of living together with respect. Understanding human rights will help us, as citizens of the society and of the world, to understand current problems and situations that occur in our society. Younger generations can understand today's fast-paced world and live together in peace.

Human rights are the core principles of every human life. If young adults understand the concept of human rights; it will be an important step for people to have a future together. Almost every aspect of the life of today's young generation is involved with human rights. From bullying in school, discipline, punishment, sexual diversity up to more critical issues such as poverty, terrorism, sexual harassment, contamination of toxic substances in the ocean, etc.

The human rights concept will help us understand where all the conflicts in the world come from, and whether we will be able to solve them. It will also help us learn how to avoid bias and stereotyping, how to live happily together in a society where people might not think and believe the same way.

Human rights education should enable students to 1) develop knowledge and understanding of human rights 2) develop attitudes, perspectives and behaviours that respect the rights of others and 3) develop skills to protect and promote their own rights and the rights of others.

Therefore, human rights education is learning about (About) human rights in a learning environment and process (Through) that creates a human rights culture, such as, everyone has the right to express their ideas and listen to other people's opinions and participate in the decision-making process leading to (For) the exercise of rights and claims for oneself and the society.

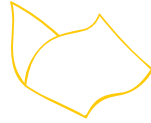
This book was published during the 70th anniversary of

the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration that various countries signed together to sustain the rights of all human beings, regardless of their status, nationality, belief or religion. It is among one of the campaigns promoting human rights education, which was designed to make learning basic human rights easy to understand and not too complex. So everyone can understand the basic ideas of human rights and how they relate to our lives. Examples of stories and experiences of people who have worked in human rights issues for many years are provided in this booklet. Why would they dedicate their lives to such a seemingly abstract subject? And if we were the ones to spread this knowledge to others, how could we help them to understand what it is?

This book offers simple activities that invite everyone to review and ask ourselves to challenge our beliefs, throw away our myths, and look at our fellow humans and the world based on universal knowledge and principles.

For those who want to provide human rights education for friends, activists, students, or fellow members in organizations, institutions or departments in the society, we hope this book will be a helpful guidebook for your journey to travel, review and pass forward the knowledge of human rights.

If you are confused or wondering why these rights are so important and why the world needs to care or why we must care, then let's open and find out.

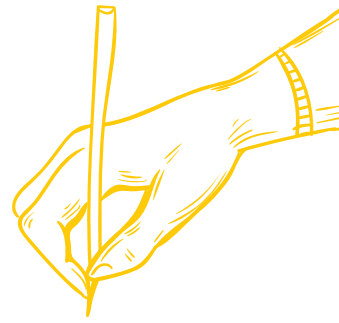
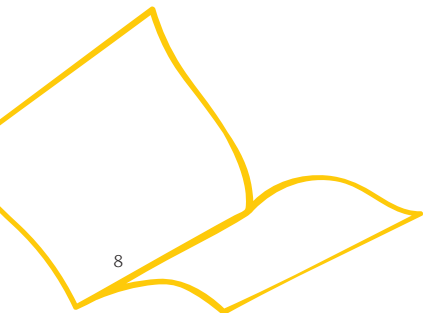


Where did human rights come from?



Some human rights activists define the term 'human rights' as if we compare the life of one human being to a tree, human rights would be the environment necessary for the growth of that tree. It can be sunlight, soil, water, nutrients, or even shield to allow tiny seeds to grow into tall, strong perennials.

Philosophers from ancient times have described that what distinguishes humans from other animals is; human beings are "capable of reasoning." Freedom and the ability to think are in human nature, which can never be taken from us nor can we give these abilities to others, and because of this, our ability to think and reason are in line with our characteristics as social creatures. We can think and use reasons for coexistence.



To think of this, this right and freedom is our 'natural right' in which we can use to do goods to ourselves and society.

As a member of society, we may not be able to deny the rules established for coexistence. However, for the rules to not deprive of our natural rights, human beings, therefore, have the principles of governing by law or rule of law linked to natural rights, for example, a government in which people have the right to express their opinions and vote, and have freedom to live.

The principles of human rights are established on the respect of natural rights, which will not interfere with the natural rights of others.



Human Dignity

We are born with natural rights, meaning the ability to think, analyze, decide and reason for ourselves. These things are classified as unique to human beings. They are the qualities that have been carried since birth and have become the honour and dignity of all human beings, which no one can take away from.

Human dignity refers to our natural abilities, our being. No matter what our social status may be, all human beings have equal dignity and must be equally respected by other human beings.

If we have human dignity, others must also share the same value and must be given equal 'respect' and 'honour'. All human beings should be able to live with honour and dignity, and should be able to freely enjoy their natural rights without fear that they might be violated.

Value in each individual must not be defined by his social or economic status. All human beings have equal value and dignity. Any action or practice that humiliates, diminishes, or devalues humanity would be contrary to this principle and a violation of human rights.

Throughout humanity's long history, man created and invented many wonders and things; appliances, languages, architecture, agriculture, industry and technology. However, there is one other thing, which is as equally important for coexistence of human beings, and that is human rights.

"Human Rights Timeline" records important events that promote and protect human rights nationally and globally ever since the first human civilization began.

2200 BC

Persian Empire was the first to have human rights inscription. They proclaimed that citizens of the empire were allowed to freely practice their faith. Slaves were paid labor and enacted to protect various rights in terms of freedom and safety.



1300 BC

Moses proclaimed the Ten Commandments. It is the first charter to say that community members have fundamental rights that everyone should respect, especially the right to life (not to kill).

600 BC

The Lord Buddha spoke of non-violence and conducts to remind us that all human beings have value. He contested the caste system and said that differences between human beings were insignificant.

500 BC

The term "freedom of opinion" or freedom of speech emerged for the first time by the Greeks and the idea of "Equality before the law" was discussed.

400 BC

Mozi, the Chinese philosopher traveled across China trying to stop the war with the doctrine of love for all human beings, not just for one's own community or family.

Early 1st Century

Jesus Christ spoke of equality, patience, forgiveness and love among humans in Palestine.

AD 500

The sanctuary of the prophet, Muhammad, had the same teachings of compassion, justice and peace.

AD 1215

Landholders in England united and called for King John to issue the royal charter "Magna Carta" granting rights to citizens. No independent citizen will be arrested and imprisoned. This marked the country's and the world's first provision that defined parental authority and rights to the liberty of the subordinates, written clearly in letters.

AD 1789

The Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen was approved at The French National Constituent Assembly. It stated "Men are born and remain free and equal in rights."

AD 1800

The United States declared the abolition of slavery.

AD 1848

Karl Marx, a German philosopher, released a statement on the Communist Party, making society free from class division.

AD 1864

The first treaty by the Red Cross began with the recognition of religions, abolition of slavery and protection of rights in war.

AD 1893

New Zealand was the first country in the world where women had the right to vote.

AD 1905

King Chulalongkorn declared the abolition of slavery, which was an important improvement in human rights in Thai history.

AD 1916-1945

Mahatma Gandhi advocated peaceful forms of civil disobedience, equality and understanding the differences of people in India.

AD 1945

World War II resulted in many killings. The United Nations was formed to promote world peace and human rights.

December 10th 1948

Various countries signed on in agreement with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

AD 1960

Martin Luther King led the movement of black equality in the United States in a peaceful manner.

AD 1961

Amnesty International, the world's first human rights organization was established. Founded by a British lawyer, who wrote an article demanding the release of two Portuguese students, who were put in prison by the authoritarian government just because they were drinking to celebrate their freedom.

AD 1965

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)

AD 1970

Women rose to demand gender equality in the United States.

Before the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, each person's rights depended on the state and the country in which he or she resided. After World War II, people realized that human protection must apply to all human beings, no matter where they are.

The immense importance of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the recognition that all human beings shall enjoy equal protection of human rights. It is the duty of the international community to monitor and make sure

AD 1989

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

AD 1998

United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders

AD 2001

Thai people urged and called for the creation of the National Human Rights Commission as an independent mechanism to promote and protect the rights and liberties of the people after the promulgation of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand in BE 2540, which has widely guaranteed human rights and freedom. As widely adopted in this Constitution, the right and liberties are guaranteed.

all states protect the rights of their own citizens.

A society that vigorously promotes and protects human rights will allow the whole society to develop rapidly. On the contrary, whenever human rights are being violated, it can cause development to become stagnant.

Development must include gross happiness of all people, freedom, equality, quality of life, safety, education, access to public health services and other dimensions.



Key Principles of Human Rights



“Fundamental human rights are what we are entitled to have and survive as humans. They do not have to be made into law, but every human being must earn these rights as a human being. People must have proper accommodations, proper clothes to protect themselves from harsh weather. They should be able to live with dignity, get taken care of when sick and have enough food to eat. We were all born equal with the same dignity and we all have the rights to receive these things”

Sarawut Pratoomraj, human rights lawyer, tells us about human basic needs, also known as the 4 requisites.



However, we all know that a good life is not only dependent on the 4 requisites. There are many other things that can affect our lives significantly. Imagine being forced into a ritual or a cult that we do not believe in, to say that something is good or right when we truly know it is wrong, to stay silent despite our suffering, or to drop out of school due to financial shortage. These are some examples of what human rights mean. Human beings must have freedom of expression, be able to choose their own religion, have education opportunity and have good health.

The needs and freedom mentioned above constitutes to the first principle of human rights, that is, human dignity.



Human Rights Principles

Just as food, clothing, medicine and accommodation are essential to our lives, human rights act as protective shield for all humans who were born with equal honor and dignity. No matter what kind of family we were born into, no matter what our race or nationality may be, all human beings must be given the right to live, have stability in life, and be able to develop themselves as part of the world citizen.

On the other hand, human rights guide us on how we should behave so that our actions will not violate other human beings.

When human rights are compared to large umbrellas distributed to all human beings on earth, inevitably, there must be a 'Principle' for creating umbrellas to answer to everyone's needs. It must be ensured that the state in which each individual resides in is unable to take away the rights. The state must certify its existence, support and create an environment conducive to the exercise of human rights.

There are five key areas of human rights principles:

1. They are rights that come with being human

Although there is no document attached with birth certificate for our parents, but when we were born, human rights came with us from the moment we started breathing and no matter where we go in the world. These rights cannot be bought or passed along because it is something every human must get.



2. They are universal

Each person's appearance may differ, be it skin color, height, social status, beliefs, etc., but human rights are the rights of all human beings given equally as all humans are born with the same freedom, dignity and equality.



3. They are rights that cannot be taken away or give to one another

We may be familiar with the principles of state citizenship, but the principles of human rights transcend the state. No one can claim that we have no human rights. If the country where we live does not acknowledge or violates our human rights, we still have human rights.

4. The rights are indivisible

The 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are divided into two main groups: civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights. Both groups are closely related and must always be used hand in hand. One cannot be used without the other. So the word 'indivisible' means we have to be able to defend and protect



every article of human rights and the state or the authority must refrain from interfering with the enjoyment of human rights.

5. They are based on equality and non-discrimination

When human rights are universal as the umbrellas of the same color distributed to everyone on earth, enforcement or claiming rights cannot discriminate regardless of race, skin colour, gender, language, religion, political belief, birth status or other status.



Although human rights are written about in social studies textbooks or even in the book you are holding right now, explaining all dimensions of human rights is still not easy.



“

“It’s human dignity. Think about how water or food is so important to our lives. If we were born in a country where clean water is not even available, we would know that the right to access clean water or the right to access food and clothing are essential for survival. Without them, we die.

“So why do we need to understand human rights? It doesn’t matter if you are going to protect others or not, but if you don’t have these things [human rights to survive] you will need to struggle to get these things for yourself, too.”

Nawaporn Supawitkul

Campaign Officer, Oxfam Thailand

Former Activism Officer, Amnesty International Thailand

”

I have...

Let's take a look at yourself. Have you ever decided to do or not to do something based on how you feel about a person?

Have you ever met someone, whether it's your classmate or a person waiting at the same bus stop as you and thought...

- *This person is strange*
That person is... How is he strange?...
- *It's not that I don't like this person or hate him, but I don't want to be near him or ever talk to him.*
That person is... Why don't you want to talk to him?...
- *It's not like I feel disgusted or anything...but I feel safer if I stay away from him.*
That person is... Why are you scared of him?...
- *I don't hate him, but I don't know, I just want to make fun of him. All of his friends do it all the time. It's just a joke, nothing serious.*
That person is... Why is he so fun to pick on?...
- *He seems nice, but why does he always do something weird? Something that no one else does...*
That person is... What does he do that is different from others?...

Who are those people that we feel "discriminated against"? Perhaps it is a friend in class who rarely speaks? A junior in your faculty who wears a lot of makeup and always looks super confident? A teacher who walks with a limp? A dirty looking man who sleeps at the bus stop? A food vender who always speaks loudly?

When we feel that someone is "different" or an "outcast", our sense of feeling "not okay" may grow larger and larger, and if someone we know feel like us, that sense of feeling "not okay" will grow enormous that it feels right if we "reject" that person or choose "to do" or "not to do" something with that person, which leads us to "discriminate."

No matter who that person might be. He has the same dignity as other human beings. If we choose to let culture, habits, or myth of a community or society influence your judgment, we will lose sight of the value of diversity and forget that we can accept those values. In fact, this world doesn't have only "you", but "we" must live together.

Activity

School Rules

Objective:

Understand the fundamental meaning of the term “Universal Values” and the origin of “Human Rights”

Equipments:

“New School Rules” list, blank paper, pen

Steps:

1. Activity leader assumes all participants are students in the same institution. The Ministry of Education has announced new regulations for every school and every university all over the country to implement correspondingly. The activity leader reads the new rules one by one and let the participants write down their first thoughts when they hear each rule.
2. Have participants pair up or gather together in a group to discuss if the new school rules are fair/just. Why or why not?
3. Ask participants to explain what the words “fair” or “just” mean to them.
4. The activity leader writes down the key words the participants have brought up and demonstrates how these words are related to universal values of human rights.
5. Ask participants to modify or design new school rules to be fair or just. It must be fair for everyone in the school, such as, teachers, parents, janitors or school directors. Have each group explain why their newly designed rules are important or necessary.



New school rules

1. Teachers can hit students any time.
2. Students have to convert to the same religion as the school director.
3. Teachers can check students' bags any time.
4. Anyone who complains or criticizes the school rules will be punished.
5. Students are prohibited from congregating in a group of more than five people during breaks.
6. Students can be expelled from the school at any time without reason given from the school. Students are prohibited from arguing or objecting to school decisions.
7. Students whose names begin with the letter "A" do not have to attend class. Rather, they must clean the school's restrooms until the end of the class.



Summarizing questions

Words or thoughts that we feel or express, such as fair, just, willing, inclusive, equal, reasonable, different, not take advantage of one other, non-discriminating, etc. are all relevant and are what people try to define as universal values; values that everyone on this planet needs. Activity leader further explains the universal values of human rights, which has been talked about or tried to implement into law for a long time, until after World War II that was when the term "Human Rights" was defined.

Humans must coexist in society thereby there must be an enactment or regulations in order for everyone to live together in peace. It will only be fair to all parties only when those regulations are just, not violating the rights of others.



Tips

Have participants brainstorm if the rules actually became true in our institution. What shall we do? How can these regulations change? To allow participants to review or propose solutions, examples might be provided on how to resolve injustice or violation of the rights that have occurred.



Human Rights Core Values

Human rights is a term defined by recognition of values, including human dignity, equality, treating each other with peaceful means, mutual respect, giving value, freedom, inclusivity and non-discrimination.

Human Dignity



Human dignity means value in each individual must not be defined by their social or economic status. Therefore, all human beings have equal value and dignity. Any action or practice that humiliates, diminishes, or devalues humanity would be contrary to this principle and a violation of human rights.

Granting rights, freedom and equality to any person must be based on respect for their dignity and understanding their true needs.



It is also something that cannot be taken away or passed on to one another. No one can take away human rights, values and dignity or even take life from a person. Even if a country does not recognize human rights, the people of that country still have human rights.



Petcharat Saksirwetkul, human rights activist, reviewed the topic of human dignity during human rights activities with participants

“

“Should humans have dignity? What does dignity really mean? The fact that a person is born and is discriminated against and is not treated equally to others is something that should never happen. Everyone wants to have a good life, lives in a good environment. I believe that if everyone respects each other and learns how to live together, our society will be better.

“When I do activities promoting human rights education, if I say this is right, or this is wrong, the participants will feel rejected because they might think otherwise. However, if I ask them to think, talk, and ask questions, the participants will engage more. Let’s say if I talk about abortion, I won’t say whether it’s right or wrong, but rather each of us adheres to different beliefs. For example, if I live by my religion’s principles and they somehow cause me to violate other people’s rights that would be unacceptable for me.

“Most of the activities we do promote better understanding of human rights and are ‘mind-based’

”

“

(one of the three learning bases of human beings: the thinking base, the action-oriented base, and the sensory-focused mind base. – Compiler). This lets the participants hear direct experiences from people who were violated, see the inequality that actually took place, brought into the core values that have been taken away from a person. It shows how these things make living so difficult. Have they ever encountered such an experience? If it were them who had to deal with such experience, what would they do? Really let them feel the experience, and then talk about principles and structures.

“One thing to keep in mind is the background of the participants. The topics or examples of situations that we choose to raise must be appropriate for the attendants. Choose the contents and examples well. We may run into difficult questions that many people need answers to as well. If we cannot answer, ask everyone to help find the answers.

“If we hold on to the core values or human rights principles clearly, even though we might not be perfect in using academic vocabulary or it may not meet Thai standards, but it will be fine. This is a matter of international standards.”

”

Activity

Human Ship



Objective: The participants can understand and be able to explain the meaning of human dignity **Duration:** 40 minutes

(This activity should be attended by at least 8 people)

Steps: By telling story and asking questions from the picture

1. Divide the participants into 8 groups and have representatives from each group draw different roles for each member of the group. These include an elderly, a child, a pregnant woman, a disabled, a labour worker, a migrant worker, a national team athlete, an HIV patient, and a monk.
2. Have the participants in the group try to imagine themselves in a position of the person they portray. What kind of personalities or characters will they have? Why do they choose to do what they do? What do they like or dislike? What dreams in life may they have?
3. Let the participants in the group share their answers with group members. Have participants get into new groups with every group having people from all roles. All participants help each other answer these two questions; what do people on the ship have in common and what are their differences?



4. Tell participants that the ship is overloaded and about to sink. If five people were to be eliminated, the ship would hold weight and the rest would survive. Have each group talk about who to eliminate.

Questions from lessons learned

1. Who did we choose to stay and who did we pick out and why?
2. Who were we? How did we feel? What were we thinking?
3. What made us think that someone should die? Did we feel like ourselves or other people were less human than others?
4. In real life, have we ever encountered or heard of events that may diminish human dignity?

Further explanation

Our society is driven by many illusions including occupation, financial position, social status, virtue, and belief in race, religion, and discrimination. All of this may lead us to accidentally treat others in a way that diminishes their human dignity or in a way that clearly shows how we have forgotten that we are all human beings after all and thus have equal human dignity.

We do not have the right to choose anyone to die or live without dignity, no matter what kind of person he is, which race he was born in, which religion he chooses to believe, how he thinks, what his financial status or physical characteristics may be.



Tips

Give participants some time to talk and discuss so that participants can reflect on the lessons learned and summarize main ideas by themselves.

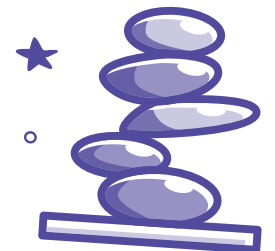


Equity



It is an important principle, which means treating everyone equally without discrimination and not treating anyone unfairly because of their differences.

Therefore, any act or practice that is discriminatory, preventive, or limitative to a person's rights would be contrary to this principle and a violation of human rights.





■ The story of Billy, a Karen, and the way of life in the forest

Mr. Porlajee Rakjongjaroen or “Billy” was a Karen or Pga K’nyau. Billy’s community and family had lived in a forested area in Phetchaburi province for 3-4 generations.

The Pga K’nyau community’s way of life relies on the forest. They are villagers who know nature and the forest well.

The Karen people depend on the forest to make their living whilst also take care of nature. There is a tradition of hanging the umbilical cord of a newborn baby on a tree, signifying that they must grow old together. Anyone is forbidden to cut that tree. In the upstream area, villages perform merit making to the protectors of the forest. Karen people live with respect for the forest, animals and trees. They do farming by cultivating in a circular motion and never use chemicals, as a result balance in the ecosystem is maintained. This kind of cultivation has been registered as world intellectual heritage. Karen people will perform the ritual of asking for forgiveness before doing anything to nature, such as a ritual for telling the guardians of the forest

that they will be doing rice plantation. After the completion of the plantation, there will be a return ceremony with a belief that the whole area belongs to the guardians of the forest.

This reality of the Karen people who are so environmentally friendly and know nature so well is against what most of us have known in the past. Nowadays, the urban lifestyle has led to the loss of natural resources without us even realizing. We lost the opportunity to experience the beauty of nature and the potential to live in harmony with nature.

But then one day, over 50 families in Billy’s community were forced to move out of the forest. Their houses were set on fire. It was such a violent way to drive people out of the forest. If this were to happen to us we would not be able to tolerate it, either. In human rights standpoint, this is a violation of community’s right to live in local community by using force of law and state power.

Billy then became the mainstay of the community. He tried to fight for the right of the community to live in the forest. Until one day, he was detained by government officials claiming that Billy had wild honey in his possession and no one had seen him ever since. Billy disappeared.

In human rights perspective, this phenomenon is called “Enforced Disappearance” or being abducted by state agents.

“

To drive people out of the forest
in a violent way, if it happened
to us, as a human being, would
not be able to tolerate it, either

”

30 Articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights



The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed by the United Nations Member States to declare and affirm 30 basic human rights articles of all individuals. Try to go through these articles while imagining your life or others' whose lives we feel may not be fair, or are socially disadvantaged so that we can see the big picture and understand the meaning of each article more clearly.



1. All human beings are born free and equal

We are all free to have our own thoughts and dreams and no one can take that away from us.

2. Freedom from discrimination

Whether we were born rich or poor, what our race, religion, sex, hair colour may be or whichever country we were born in, we are all equal.

3. Right to life

Everyone has the right to live happily and safely and the freedom to choose how to live our lives.

4. Freedom from slavery

5. Freedom from torture, punishment and inhuman treatment

6. Right to recognition before the law

7. Right to equality before the law

8. Right to remedy

9. Freedom from arbitrary detention

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.





10. Right to fair trial

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing.

11. Presumption of innocence until proven guilty

Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.

12. Right to privacy

No one shall be subjected to interference with privacy, family, home, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation.

13. Freedom of movement

Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence and the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

14. Right to asylum

15. Right to nationality



16. Right to marry and to found a family

17. Right to own property

18. Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

19. Freedom of opinion and expression

20. Freedom of peaceful assembly and association

21. Right to take part in the government and to equal access to public service

22. Right to social security

23. Right to work

Everyone has the right to equal pay for equal work. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

24. Right to rest and leisure

25. Right to adequate standard of living

Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance.





26. Right to education

Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages.

27. Right to cultural, artistic and scientific life

Everyone has the right to participate in cultural life in the community and has the right to protection of his artistic production of which he is the author.

28. Right to a fair and free world

29. Duties and limitations

Everyone has duties to the community and we should respect and protect the rights of others and ourselves.

30. Rights are inalienable



Out of the 30 articles, human rights that have been recognized around the world as basic human rights standards can be divided into 5 main groups, that is:

Civil rights relate to people's physical well being, stability in life, and justice system.

Political rights refer to an individual's ability to participate in politics and have freedom of thoughts and opinions.

Economic rights mean everyone has the right to work and receive fair wage. Every individual has the right to own property.

Social rights guarantee rights to education, health and well-being and to marry and have family.

Cultural rights affirm our freedom to choose our own religion, language and what to wear.



Activity

Human Rights Principles

Objective: understanding human rights principles

Duration: 30 minutes

Steps:

1. Do any of these situations violate human rights principles? If so, how?
2. Activity leader draws markings on the floor to split sides so that participants can choose the side they want to be on. Participants can also raise their hands or raise the signs representing different colours to express their opinion whether they think the following situations violate or are contrary to human rights principles or not.



answer

Situation	Violate/contrary to human rights principles because...
1. Calling an ethnic group "Phee Thong Lueng."	In human rights standpoint, this is an insulting and discriminating remark, which diminishes human dignity.
2. People with disability are unable to use the metro as there is no wheelchair access pathway and no elevator.	This shows real inequality and discrimination. The state has duty to take care of all citizens of all statuses to have access to basic public utilities.
3. Parents can scold, hit, ground or abuse their children however they like.	This violates human rights principles due to the use of violence, grounding, abusing and restraining involved. Being a person who gives birth to another person is not an excuse to violate another person's human rights.
4. Homeless people are not allowed inside the hospital because they are not properly dressed.	Contrary to the principles of human rights as this is a discriminatory act.
5. Teachers punish students by making them do 50 push-ups in the field at midday.	Violation to human rights principles due to torture, causing harm to the body, which is an unreasonable punishment.
6. Calling new foreign students using stereotypical names.	Devalues human dignity because calling a person with words that refer to race or national origin in a discriminatory manner.
7. People can form groups, clubs or association without being legally registered.	No violation as it is the right that everyone is entitled to have.

answer



Situation

8. Thai illegal immigrants work at a restaurant in Malaysia and receive less pay than Malaysians who work at the same restaurant.

9. Married couples fighting is a matter of their own business.

10. Every person was born with unequal human dignity, just like our fingers, not all of them are equally the same size.

11. "Joy" was hit by the military and sprinkled with salt on his back because he stole mangoes at Khun Luang Osot Boriban's house.

12. Students create a thread online criticizing school rules.

13. A Muslim person will not pay respect to the Buddha when visiting a Buddhist friend's house.

Violate/contrary to human rights principles because...

Contrary to human rights principles due to "discrimination by race", which is considered to be social injustice. If the state enacted the law stating that Thai people must get higher pay than other individuals from other nationalities, it would clearly be a violation of human rights.

If there is a conflict between two parties in which one party is assaulted without consent an outsider is able to intervene and offer help.

All human beings have equal dignity. It is not comparable to any physical characteristics.

This is too extreme of a punishment for the cause and is also a violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights regarding torture as well.

No violation to the principles of human rights as everyone is entitled to freedom of speech.

Not contrary to any human rights principle because it is a fundamental right to practice according to their own belief or religion.

Further explanation

Whenever we see or hear about any situation that we are unsure whether they violate human rights or not, we can observe from the five main principles of human rights.

Human rights violation is a rather sensitive matter and there are other factors that must be taken into consideration. We cannot make a conclusion based on one action. Many situations are referred to as social injustice. Some textbooks suggest that violation of human rights only means creating unjust laws or unfair practices carried out by the state, but the most important thing about understanding human rights is to understand the value of living together as human beings no matter what their status may be.



Tips

If there are no more than 20 participants, use the method of having participants get up and move to the opposite side. Moving will get people to be with their thoughts more. It will also be easier for the activity leader to ask participants questions from each side of the room.

You should do some research in advance to back your reasons for each situation in order to be able to clearly explain to the participants, or choose the situations that you understand well to do the activity. At least 8 situations should be selected in order for participants to experience a variety of issues.

Activity

Fabulous 30

Objective: Understanding the principle of Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Duration: 20 minutes

Equipments: a copy of 30 UDHR list for each person

Steps:

1. Divide participants into groups, 5-6 people in each group. Provide each group with UDHR list and go through the details of the 30 articles.
2. Activity leader reads out each situation one by one. After finish reading, set a timer for 10 seconds and let each group discuss and help each other answer which articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights the situation is related to.
3. If the answers are different, ask each group why they chose that answer.
4. Give them the correct answer and give points to the correct group.

answer

No.	Situation	UDHR Article No.
1	Veena was forced to marry a man out of her parents' debt.	16
2	Captain invented cheap air filter and registered a patent. Later on, a merchant copied his model and put the products all over the market.	17
3	Sakda criticizes the government's work on water management on his Facebook page.	19
4	The Mokens were forced to live on the ground resulting in a loss of their way of life.	18
5	Women labour gather at Japan Embassy demanding for justice from Japanese companies that mistreat them.	20
6	According to Labour law, no person should work more than 48 hours/week	24
7	Chardchai runs for election in a position of Subdistrict Administrative Organization (SAO) representative.	21
8	Makin was denied to continue his education in secondary school because he didn't own an ID card.	26
9	After Tsunami, hotel owner took the opportunity to drive local homeowners out of their homes even though they have lived there for many generations.	25
10	A police officer beat up Yusuf and threatened to harm his son if he did not confess to a crime he did not commit.	5

answer

No.	Situation	UDHR Article No.
11	Da, aged 14, was forced to do house chores from 4 A.M. until midnight everyday.	4
12	Leng got into a fight with a motorcycle mechanic. Police came in between them and took the mechanic to the police station and fined him, while Leng was charged with nothing.	7
13	Bank was walking in a desolate alley and saw a gang of teenagers. Not long after that, the gang ran away and the police came and saw Bank in the alley, so they captured him, claiming he had drugs in his possession.	9
14	A Burmese was convicted without having the right to consult his lawyer nor having a translator to explain the charges he was placed on.	10
15	School friends hated Da and they bullied her by sharing her family stories on Facebook page.	12
16	Minway and family fled out of Myanmar into Tak province because the Burmese army had invaded Shan and caused many deaths.	14
17	Fah was born in a hospital in Mae Sariang, but the hospital won't issue her a birth certificate since her parents are "Karen", making her a person without a nationality.	15



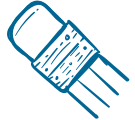
Tips

This activity is a game so the activity leader should create a fun and competitive atmosphere. Do not talk with monotone voice or set the pace too slow. No need to be too strict. If participants are about to answer, you may count down faster. Do not spend too long discussing each situation, move along and keep the game exciting.

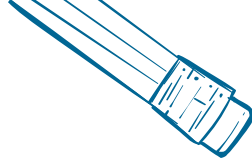
If you do not want to use the game, you may change the activity by distributing worksheets for participants to complete by themselves, then try to answer together.

When the activity is over you may invite participants to talk about which articles they like in particular, why, and which ones they think are the most difficult to understand.





Diversity



As of 2018, the estimated number of the world population is 7,600 million people.

We are what we called ourselves “humans” living in all over the continents of the world. The smallest unit inside our bodies called “genetic code” is what defines our distinct physical attributes, without anyone being able to choose any characteristics for themselves whether it’s height, skin colour, body shape, facial features or evens nationality.

Apart from our physical differences, we also have different beliefs, values, religions and ideologies. These were built on many factors; e.g. how we were raised, how we learn things and how we live our lives. It is impossible that everyone will see and perceive everything the same way.

But how can we coexist with our differences?



Accepting “diversity” is a basic human right every human is entitled to have and accepting our differences is a fundamental thing for us all humans to do. By that we can learn from our differences, seeing strengths and weaknesses in each individual will lead to an exchange of perspectives and development of society, making it more pleasant for all of us to live in.

Our individual identity with the ability to think, to choose to believe or to hold onto what we stand for are beautiful aspects of humanity. The diversity we come across will broaden our perspectives and leads us to finally understand that we are all made of small components of one another.

Even though some of the differences of some people in our society may seem strange or look bad to us, we can still exchange thoughts and try to understand them. However, we cannot force them to change to be like us. A society that accepts, respects and promotes diversity is a society where human rights are in its way of life. Respecting differences of others, even if it is someone we do not like or disagree with, means we insist on believing in the principle of protecting everyone, including ourselves, to live with virtues of humanity, to enjoy the rights and freedoms that human beings deserve, and can enjoy a happy life in the same world.



The Teacher who fights for “Diversity”

Teacher Koi - Krittika Pokagorn, Technical Support Officer, Raks Thai Foundation, Founder of the Teacher Club for Life Skills and Sexuality Education, Bangkok

Teacher Koi said that it is not easy to communicate to people about gender diversity. Saying that children have these rights is not easy, either. In the context of school where there is no exchange of communication about gender diversity, teaching students sex education or gender diversity appears to be uncommon and encourages children to misbehave.

“

“I really want people to accept this. I have taught in many schools and saw teachers use their power and would not accept differences, but lately things have gotten a little better. I hope teachers start to see the abilities of children who may not be at the top of the class. Basic human rights should start at school. There must be a human rights course in every school. We have to find new energy from old teachers who have been trained to pass on the knowledge.

“If I look back at the beginning of my career, I think it’s good that I wasn’t a quiet person, refusing to accept inequality. I’m glad that I enjoy talking to

”

“

people, allowing myself to exchange knowledge and develop my ideas.

“If at the time I kept quiet or did not write a thesis while studying for a master’s degree in Women’s education, I wouldn’t have talked to myself or to other people. It is to use stories as a process of healing myself.

“I want anyone who feels pain to get up and tell your story. It will help you understand your own thoughts and grow from there and gain experience in human rights.

“The word human rights in my opinion is that you have the right to make your own decisions, to accept others, and to prevent others from making decisions for you. Only then will you have the right of your own.

“The state will say there are laws that people have to accept, but in some cases, if the laws make people feel pressured or forced, whoever that person may be we must not neglect him.

“There are laws that still violate human rights, such as, abortion or prostitution. This is a matter of giving a person the right to make his own choice rather than making laws based on cultural perspective, forgetting to take into account a person’s heart, pain and suffering.”

”

Activity

I draw you, you draw me

Objective:

To learn and understand diversity, knowing that each individual has his own identity and we do not have to be the same

Duration: 30 minutes

Equipments: Paper, crayon or marker

Steps:

1 Hand out a paper and crayon and have everyone write down their names on the top right corner.

2 Pair up and swap paper, let your friend draw your facial structure and you draw his.

3 Once you finish the drawing, swap back the paper, switch pairs and let a new friend draw your hairstyle and hair colour and you draw his.

4 Keep switching pairs and draw the rest of the face until everyone has full facial features (eyes, nose, eyebrows, ears, mouth, skin colour and other main features).

Questions from lessons learned

1 When drawing your friends' faces, do they have the same hairstyle? Do they all have the same facial features? If not, what are the differences?

2 What would it be like if everyone in the world had the exact same facial structure, same nose size and same skin colour?

3 When your friends drew your face, was it how you imagined? If not, how did it differ from your imagination?

4 Apart from our appearances or how we see each other, in what other ways are we different?

Activity summary

Each of us has different views and perspectives. Even when we see the same thing, how we feel or understand that thing might not be the same. This is because every individual has his or her own identity. No one is exactly the same as another human being, even twins. Our world is beautiful because of these differences, even a colour has many shades and leaves have various patterns. Each person has his own thoughts, dreams and beliefs. If we can accept that everyone is different, we will never feel dissatisfied or hate the people who think or see things differently from us, look different from us or possess any other distinctions. We will see it as completely normal and we can all live together peacefully.



Activity

Labeling

Objective: To learn and understand non-discrimination, equality in rights and freedom

Duration: 45 minutes

Equipments: post-its, pen, tape

Steps:

1. Activity leader asks participants to write down a word they would use to call each individual with particular identity (such as certain nationality, skin colour, belief, gender, social status) on a piece of paper; by writing each identity per sheet. Give examples to participants, such as, a black man, a Chinese tourist, a Muslim woman, a Political prisoner, a handsome gay, a Khmer worker. Think and write down the words without letting other participants see.



2. Pair up and put the paper that you wrote down on your pair's forehead without letting him know what it says.
3. Walk around the room and greet each other just how you would when you see the person on each person's forehead. Do not tell anyone their identity but try to guess your own identity by observing how other people treat you.
4. Imagine each participant is really the person as the word labeling him, and we have to choose our representative for our group to receive the prize on behalf of your group or to be on a popular live show. Who would you choose or not choose? Discuss in your group.
5. Look at the word on our forehead.

Questions from lessons learned and to summarize the activity

1. How did you feel when you saw the first person you greeted and saw the word on his forehead (e.g. admired, humorous, shocked, disgusted, curious, scared)? What did you say or react towards him (e.g. make fun, criticize, compliment, start a conversation, run away, comfort)?
2. How did our friends talk or react to us (e.g. mock, show pity, act disgusted, blame, admire, walk away, sympathize, curious, scared)? How did that make us feel?
3. We feel or believe that each person must be a certain way, where did this idea or belief come from? (e.g. direct experience/encounter, watching movies, reading it from books, having been told by other people).
4. Why did we choose or not choose particular friends to represent the group and why? (For example, we did not choose the beggar because we thought he was dirty. We did not choose Khmer worker because we believed he was not trustworthy, not capable enough, nor would he be able to communicate. We chose the teacher to represent the group because he seemed credible, educated and must have good manners, etc.)
5. In real life, have you ever used words, acted with a different attitude, or discriminated against someone because of their skin colour, race, religion, beliefs, values, or social status? Give us an example.
6. How would you feel if you were discriminated by others because of your skin colour, race, religion, beliefs, etc.? (For example, how would you feel if you went on a trip to a foreign country and the police asked to search your luggage accusing you of stealing things because you are Thai? How would you feel if the bank clerk did not serve you because you were a Muslim?)

Further explanation

By labeling, having bias, or stereotyping against a particular race, skin colour, religion or belief, causes us to have a negative attitude towards those individuals and makes us choose to do or not to do something to them; that is called discrimination. When in reality, those individuals may not even be close to what we thought they might be.

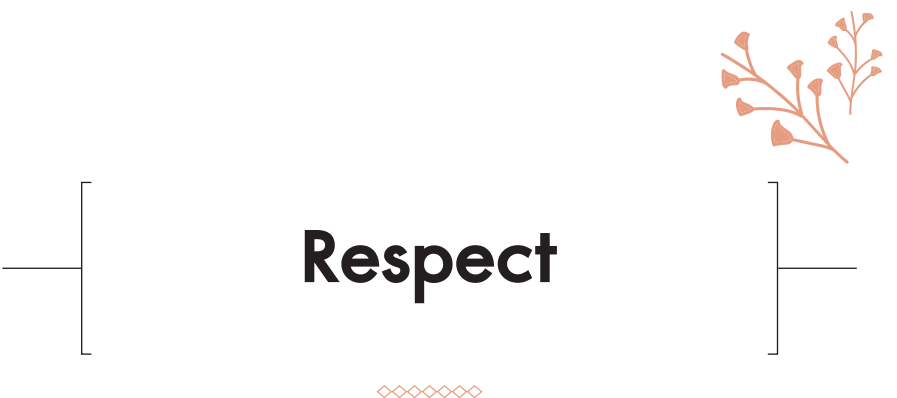
Society often divides human beings based on differences in two main areas:

1. Discrimination by genetic differences: including gender, age, race, national origin and physical appearances.
2. Discrimination by differences in social environment: e.g. boundaries, beliefs, religion, culture, education, social status, economic status and political opinions.



Tips

The examples that activity leader chooses to provide can influence participants' way of thinking and understanding. Various examples given in this activity are meant to help participants see the possibilities of each individual so they can respond and review more accurately.



Respect

If we try looking up the word “respect” in the dictionary, we will find two meanings that seem similar, but at the same time they are completely different in practice.

One meaning is to *show respect*

Another meaning is to *not violate*

According to human rights values, mutual respect does not mean to respect anyone or any group of people for the reason that the person has more power or a higher rank than we are. Rather, it is to not violate human rights of fellow humans and express our respect through actions, words, or by treating them with consideration of their feelings in mind.

This is called “respect”.

We may disagree with someone’s thoughts, beliefs, or actions. We can express our disagreements, but with the concept



of mutual respect, we should argue with a friendly and polite attitude because we care and respect the feelings of one other. After all, we would not want others to threaten, insult, or make us feel bad, either.

For example, we can respect a person who stands up for what he believes in even though it might be difficult for us (since we believe differently). Students do not make noise in the library because they do not want to disturb the people who are reading. We do not talk to others with profanity because we do not want to make them feel bad (whether we may like or dislike him or not).

We respect or honour others because everyone has equal human dignity.



Turning negativity into positivity with human rights principles

Sothonsinee Supanusorn, Head of Corporate Social Responsibility and former coordinator of the Asian Institute for Human Rights (AIHR), urged us to try to understand the simple concept of human rights. We can understand how to live together by respecting the differences of people.



The meaning of human rights (simple version)

In human rights, we often speak about human dignity and equality, which people may not always understand. To make the concept of human rights simpler is to look at other people as fellow humans without taking into account their financial status, education or national origin, to decide who has more rights. It is a basic matter for people to not look down upon each other, to not look at others as inferior or superior. All human beings are equal and should be treated with equal respect.

Rights in a world of inequality

The world cannot really be equal; there is still disparity between social classes and levels of education. Human rights are basic principles in which everyone should view others as people like us. If such principles did not exist, people would cross the line indefinitely. If we do not have human dignity, a beggar may be viewed as an insignificant and dirty person who can never develop or become better. We may think we can treat migrant

workers any way we like, but if we do not have them, can we get by?

If we know what rights we and others have, we will never violate one other. It will help people with more opportunity to support the less fortunate.

Now I work in a private sector. I have access to company resources. I talked to the children and the community about what they want to improve about themselves. By talking to them lets them know that human rights belong to them since they were born. They have the right to education and have the opportunity to develop themselves. However, if they are unable to access these resources, people with more resources should offer these opportunities to them.

In a working person's perspective, being aware of the rights principles leads us to define our work that will focus on development, not just give and be done with it, but help people to build their capacity in a sustainable way.

Good society is possible

By having awareness of human rights and truly understanding its principles will help us treat fellow humans with respect. We do not have to worry about how we will be taken advantage of or violated today, or whom we are going to take advantage of tomorrow. We will have more positive perspectives and more happiness.

Human rights can turn negativity into positivity. Make people think good things about each other. It's not just about the law but also about the way of life. Some would say that it is the same thinking as dharma of Buddhism. We do not violate other people. We can have conflicts, we can be different, but we will not use violence against each another. We can listen to each other without judging, we can talk, and we can understand each other. There will never be a day that everyone sees everything the same way, but we can live together based on mutual respect.



Value



Value is when people give meaning or importance to something. There is a reason or feeling of that person behind it, whether it is material value or sentimental value. It can be concrete or abstract and living or non-living object.

Many times, giving value is a complicated thing. We may value objects such as mobile phones, motorcycles or oblations. However, by giving value to objects, there may be an underlying cause of personal value behind it. It may be accomplishments, efficiency, peace of mind or safety.

We can also give value to actions, such as, growth, recognition, ethical courage and intellectual values like goodness, truth, beauty, happiness and dreams, etc.



Dr. Prasert Palitpongpanim, psychiatrist specialized in Child and Adolescent Developmental Psychology and author, once commented that the value that people give can be divided into 3 levels:

1. Self Value
2. The value of your occupation (or profession)
3. The value of life (including the life of all things, such as, animals and wildlife)

These three values are placed in order of being the easiest to understand to the most complex, and from things that are easily visible to the things that are hard to see.

Human rights refer to the “value of life” that includes the “human value”, the value that can actually be realized by people in society when everyone sees others as equal to themselves. No one’s life is more valuable than others’. We all have equal human values.



Activity

WHO are we?

Objective:

To learn and understand human value, core values of life that may be different or similar in each person

Duration:

45 minutes

Equipments:

Post-its, pen, tape

Steps:

1. Hand out each person 10 post-its.
2. Pair up and ask your friend "who are you?" (Give examples of answers such as "I'm a store owner/ I'm a tourist.")

4. Ask the same question again and write down the answer and stick it on your friend.

7. Once all participants have completed the task, change pairs. Ask your partner "If you have to lose a part of your identity and still remain the same person, what would it be?" Take a piece of that post-it out.

3. Once your friend has answered the question, write down the answer and stick it on your friend.

5. Keep asking the same question until you get all your post-its filled or until your friend runs out of answers.
6. Swap the role and let your friend ask you the same question.

8. Keep asking the question until there is only one post-it left.
9. Have your partner ask you the same question until there is only one post-it remaining.

Questions from lessons learned and to summarize the activity

1. What were the things we have chosen to lose?

2. What was “our last identity” that we decided to keep?
And why did we choose that one?

Further explanation

If we paid attention to when each participant decided to lose parts of their identity, we would see that they were secondary values. We can divide our thinking of giving value into two main parts:

1. Human value- if we lose our secondary values, such as, social status, occupation, gender, age or nationality, we would still be left with human value. It is a value that all humans possess equally and is considered a basic human right.

2. Value given to humans based on their differences- such as gender, age, skin colour, nationality, physical appearance, race, belief, religion, culture, education, social status, financial status, or political opinion. If we use these secondary values to judge others, we make humans unequal leading to human abuses or human rights violations.



Tips

1. While the participants ask their partner “who are you?” the activity leader may give clues that the words to describe who we are might be something abstract or something only we know about ourselves (e.g. being brave) so participants can get the ideas that they can be something other than concrete values.

2. Participants who might not be familiar with talking about this topic may not know how to answer well. Activity leader may start a conversation with them or give them examples of other participants’ to give them clearer ideas of what human value means. Activity leader should not tell them that their answers are wrong, but instead should guide and support them to see another perspective.

Example

Whenever the poor are being evicted from their homes, there is a saying, “Small people must sacrifice for the public”, “Sacrifice for the nation”, which are phrases used so often that we may forget to notice that all human lives have equal value. The poor, fishermen or farmers all have human values and rights to live without having to “sacrifice” for the urban population, the rich or the private sector.

The idea that 1 life is sacrificed for 10 million lives or 100 families are sacrificed for the entire country is not acceptable. From the activity, we know that human value is the core value of every human being. It is an important value that we will not give up. It is more important than our reputation or money. Once we realize that all humans have equal value, we will never want anybody to sacrifice their lives or their homes for us.



Non-discrimination



A society that is not open-minded and ignores the fundamental rights such as human rights and diversity is a society at high risk of discrimination. If we have an opinion, appearance or status that is different from the majority of people or fall into a situation where the public does not accept us, we will be at risk of human rights abuses and subject to discrimination.

The word “Discrimination” means treating someone with bias just because he is different from you in some way or another. This may be ethnicity, appearance, skin color, gender, language, or internal factors, such as, beliefs, religion, political ideas, or even social status or financial status of an individual.

These individuals may be banned from pursuing an honorable occupation just because they are not straight. Some may be discriminated by certain groups of people for being black. And there are also instances where some people may get arrested for disagreeing with the state policy, etc.



In the first two articles of Universal Declarations of Human Rights, it is written that *all human beings have dignity, freedom, and equality and have the right not to be discriminated against for their differences.*

Let's take a look back at World War II, the time and the reason the Declaration was created. We will find that discrimination is not a small matter.

Certain groups of people discriminated against the Jews and caused genocide, just because they held different religious and ethnic beliefs. They chose to ignore human rights and caused millions of people to lose their lives, diminished human values and destroyed fellow human beings who had the same dignity and right to live.

This lesson taught us that discrimination results in the oppression of others and diminished value and meaning of humanity.



Human rights in the context of discrimination

Below is a lesson from Ying-Nasrin Jarong, a youth leader in human rights. She is a woman who works in the area with only men, in the three southernmost provinces, where incidents continue to occur.

Have you encountered any issues with discrimination?

In my field or work, I encountered some challenging and stressful issues. The most concerning issue in the three southern provinces is enforced disappearance. Many people may not be aware of this issue. I made the people in the area aware that cases of torture and enforced disappearances exist where they live. I told real cases that happened through the activities that I did.

In the three provinces, martial law has been used continuously since 2006, making it impossible for local residents to speak up or express any opinions. If the state thinks local people are terrorists, especially young men, soldiers can arrest and take them to the military camp where there might be hitting, torturing or enforced disappearance involved. People in the village have had these experiences as well.

What is the human rights issue in our country that you think needs to be addressed urgently?

I would say torture since there are cases that we know about and still many cases we are unaware of. If we can reduce torture incidents, our society may improve, allowing more people to speak up freely.

However, in general context, it would probably be freedom of expression because in our society today we are under a political situation where people are arrested and threatened simply because they exercise their right to freedom of expression. If the state does not violate human rights, it may be good for them to know what the people really want so that they can improve the administration of the country.

I am now working to educate the youths and high school students on human rights and to empower people in the society. As for myself, by the time I learned what human rights meant I was already in university.

How are human rights important to us as a human?

We live in a society where men are honoured more than women, even though being a woman does not mean diminished ability to work or to live a normal life. They think women have to stay home and do housework, that education is not necessary. The knowledge of human rights might help change people's view towards discrimination.

What is the meaning of human rights in your opinion?

It is the principle of life, human dignity, that desire for others to view us as fellow human beings so that there will be no discrimination in society. We were born as equal human beings despite our differences in gender, religion, nation, thoughts, etc.

The space between us

Objective: To understand the meaning of discrimination and how marginalized people in society should be able to enjoy their rights.

Duration: 1 hour

Steps:

1. Have participants make a draw of identity then stand in row at designated spot.
2. The activity leader reads out scenarios for the participants to imagine that if they really were that person, would they be able to enjoy these rights, receive these opportunities, or this quality of life? After reading each scenario, let the participants choose as follows:
 - If you have access to such quality of life or are granted those rights, take one step forward.
 - If you do not have access to such quality of life or are not granted those rights, take one step back.
 - If the situation is neutral and does not have a clearly positive or negative impact on you, then remain in the same spot.
3. At the end of the game, invite participants to take a look at the group overview and talk to those 2-3 people who are at the farthest spots, and 2-3 people who are closest to the starting point and see what they think.

Identities: student, member of parliament, business owner, large company employee, police, landowner, private hospital doctor, civil servant, public school teacher, third gender, mall worker, migrant worker, farmer, factory girl, hill tribe, construction worker, blind person, homeless, street sweeper, online seller, small blogger, street vendor and security guard (make sure there are a mix of identities with different incomes and social statuses in the group.)

Situations

1. You have a proper home with running water, electricity and restroom.
2. You can buy new clothes regularly.
3. You have enough food to eat.
4. You can access public health services whenever you are sick.
5. All of your children have the opportunity to study.
6. You have stability in your career.
7. You can marry whomever you choose.
8. You can vote.
9. You are not afraid of the police.
10. Others respect what you say or what you express.
11. You have never felt discriminated against.
12. You have been making progress at work.
13. You receive reasonable pay for your work.
14. You have a stable future.
15. You have the right to justice and fair trial.
16. You can travel or rest whenever you want.
17. You have sufficient information to make decisions on anything related to you.



Questions from lessons learned and to summarize the activity

1. What did you find from this activity?
2. How do you think what you found is related to human rights?
3. What are the causes or factors that lead to discrimination or inequality?
4. When it comes to equality, should we all receive the same things in life?
5. How should we solve these problems?
6. If everyone in the society, including the government, really sees the importance of discrimination and equality, do you think it will help change society?

Summary guidelines

You will find that in our society, without human rights perspective, there will always be people who are discriminated against. Due to discrimination, those people are unable to have access to basic rights, resulting in a lack of opportunity for personal development and improving their quality of life (read more on Discrimination and Injustice).



Tips

If time permits, after reading each situation and participants have already chosen to go forward or backward, randomly ask a few of the participants what identity they received, why they chose to go forward or backward, observe and ask other people to get different answers. While playing the game, participants may put on a badge or a hat to show their identity.





Freedom



The meaning of the word “Freedom” generally refers to the freedom to “act” or to “not act” without being influenced by domination of a particular person or obligation.

Freedom is of great importance to human beings because it allows us to speak, write and express ourselves freely. Freedom goes in many dimensions, such as, freedom of movement, freedom of occupation, freedom of religion, and freedom of assembly to claim their rights, which can be said that freedom allows us to design our own lives and the society that we want to live in.

Freedom must be a part of the learning process in activities when teaching about human right.



Muhammad Mu'minin Muhanna, coordinator of human rights activists, gave an example:

“When I go to work, I value everyone. For example, when I work with young people who are interested in freedom issues, everyone has the right to express himself. The people I work with are free to express themselves, give comments, share what activities they like and don't like. I feel that it is fundamental that we respect them for who they really are and their honest opinions. In many aspects of life, such as in university setting, respect and acceptance of diversity is rarely seen.

“Doing activity is not just finishing a project and getting it over with. In every process of work, while learning and doing activities, we try to create a new culture, where everyone respects one another and sees the importance of freedom of expression. Regardless of their age, we try to make room for everyone to express himself and respect one another. We planned it from the beginning to make the participants see the big picture and they will be able to see humanity as equal.”

Activity

The day I have to leave

Objective: To understand human dignity and freedom.

Duration: 45 minutes

Equipments: paper, pen, pictures and stories of refugees to be used as examples.

Steps:

1. Have participants get into groups of 3-4 people.
2. Give a hypothetical event; there is a great catastrophe, a war is happening. If you are still at home you may get killed, you must evacuate immediately. You only have 3 minutes to choose 5 items to bring with you. Each person writes down on a piece of paper and place it in the middle of the group. Share with your friends why you choose those particular items.
3. Give each group different photographs of refugees, and ask the participants to try and figure out what kind of situations the people in the pictures might have encountered and what items they might bring out.
4. Give a brief answer about what the people in the picture have encountered, what they have brought with them, and which country they got to without telling the participants what they have come across in the new country.
5. Ask the participants if they were to encounter the same situation, which country would they move to? Who would they take with them? And what career would they pursue in their new country? Write down on the same piece of paper.
6. Exchange within the group about your answers and how well you think you can handle the situation; how you would feel and have 2-3 people share their thoughts in a large group.
7. Share the real story with all participants as to what happened to the refugees when they arrived in a new country (when you are a refugee in a particular country, you cannot go to the mall, go to school, or work. If you are arrested, you will be detained, deported, and possibly killed upon returning to your home country. If you have officially applied to become a refugee, you will still have to wait a few years while living in hiding or having to stay in the refugee camp until the review is complete. The outcome could be a life as a refugee with limitations or being deported back to home country).

Further explanation



The thing that will be taken away from you when you are a refugee is “freedom”; freedom of movement, freedom of opinion, freedom of expression. Your life will be restricted in many ways, for example, right to education, right to medical care because you entered the country illegally and if you are put in a refugee camp, you must remain in the camp. If you are arrested by the immigration police, you will be detained and will only be released upon returning to your home country. Even if you have obtained higher education, language skills, or the ability to do a lot of things, you still cannot work. Apart from that, people in that country will see you as a burden of the society, which they have to pay taxes to take care of.

Many people in the society are conceived by the myths of race and national boundaries dictating who they should offer help to or care for, forgetting that everyone is human with equal dignity and rights. No matter where on the planet, if you observe in each country today, it is formed by the coexistence of people who have come from different places and migrated to one country together, and eventually became members of the same community. In Thailand, it is filled with people who were once called “Chinks” and were discriminated against, “Crackers” and “Curry Munchers” who used to be considered as “outsiders”. After all, who can we really call real “Thai” people?

We have friends, siblings, lovers who are people of different ethnic backgrounds with different cultures, rituals, yet we still find a way to live together peacefully.



The lost freedom of refugees in Bangkok

A middle-class Christian family from Pakistan received a murder threat letter attached with three bullets, forcing the whole family to abandon their possessions and evacuate to safety. The husband and wife are both fluent in English. The husband owned a moving company while his wife was an art teacher.

In their home country, they lived in a three-bedroom apartment with a modern kitchen and a play station for their children. The couple and their friends worked together to run a charity school for children in need.

One morning of 2013, a letter signed by extremist Muslims was inserted through the door of the school office with the message: "Stop teaching Muslim children about religion or we will shoot you and your children." Ten days later, the school received another threat. Three bullets were attached, so the volunteers working at the school went to the police.

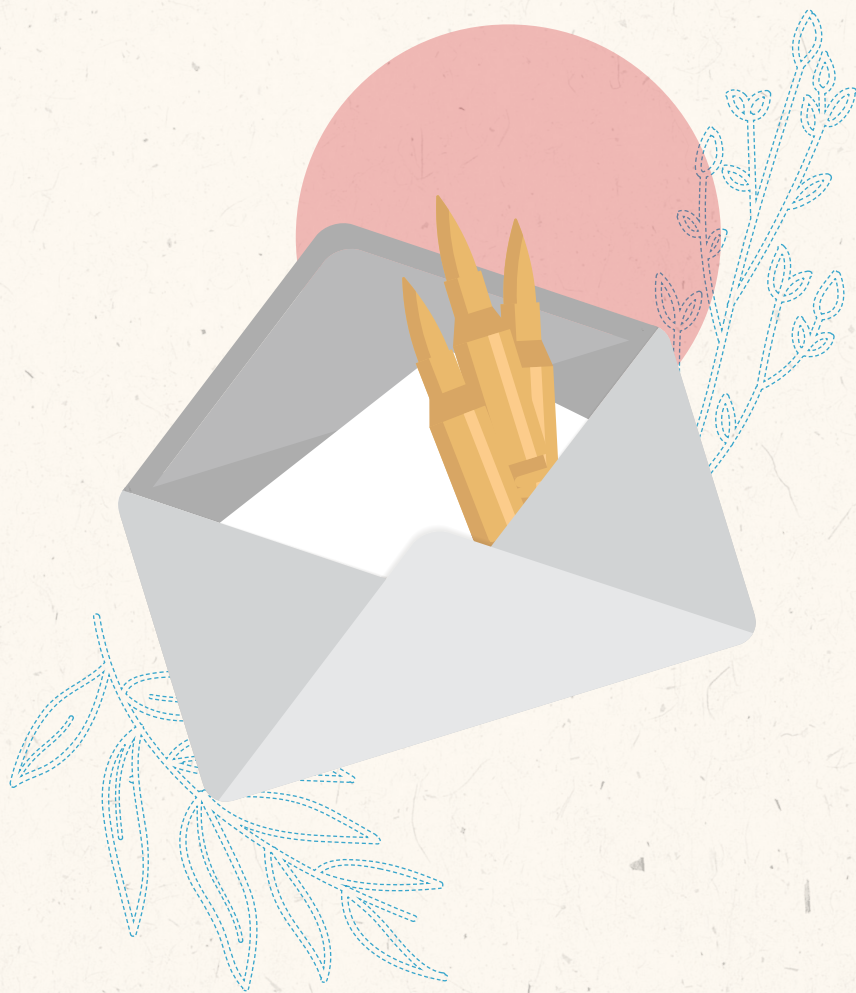


This story contains factual evidence, both in documents and the information the people at the AP news agency received. They insisted that the school did not teach religion to Muslim children. Today, after the threat of murder, the Pakistani family fled for their lives, living in a poor-conditioned room in Bangkok, where the children sleep on the bed and their parents have to lie on the floor, and cook on a small balcony with a gas stove.

They are individuals who entered the country illegally. They have to hide and sustain their lives by doing jobs that no one wants to do. They received a certain amount of donation, just enough to survive. The children cannot go to school and have to spend all day in the room. "I just want to save all of our lives," the father added and asked for his name not to be disclosed since their visa has already expired, "We didn't know anything when we arrived. At this time, we are just struggling to survive."

If we were them, how would we feel about this situation? How would we adjust to the new life in a strange country? And what would we do with our life?





The extensive refugee crisis The lives of the Pakistani family is just one example among many cases that are occurring in today society, where the numbers of refugees are constantly increasing around the world. There are fourteen million lives protected by the UN Refugee Agency, and more than half of them do not live in refugee camps as they should. Refugees are living in major cities around the world; across Asia, from India to the Pacific islands, and there are more than half a million of people that are “urban refugees.” According to the United Nations, the increasing number of urban refugees creates a dilemma for the host country. Thailand itself has once helped refugees from neighboring countries living in refugee camps along the border. However, Thailand did not grant asylum seekers or refugees their rights to live legally in the country, and has not signed the 1951 Refugee Convention, making it impossible for them to live, and work freely.

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- Refugee is defined as a group of people who have left their country due to war, violence, killings, or other serious human rights abuses, whether for reasons of race, nationality, religion, or political opinion. Most refugees are unable to return to their homeland, for fear of danger, and sometimes they are called the asylum seekers until refugee status is granted.



**Additional definitions
and overview of the refugee situation**





Normally, getting a Thai tourist visa is very easy and it is one of the reasons why the number of refugees in Thailand has jumped to over 8,000 in the past few years (based on the 2017 data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)).

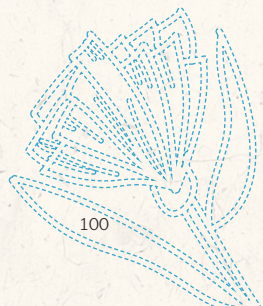
Many people are shocked to learn that they will be arrested if their visa is expired. They hope that the UNHCR will be able to help, but that is not always the case. Refugee workers report that the Thai police usually ignore certificate of personal status confirming them as persons of concern. Thailand did not sign the 1951 Refugee Convention, protecting the rights of refugees, which neither Malaysia nor Indonesia has signed. Both countries have more than thousands of refugees, who are struggling to survive under limited conditions. If we were to be in the same situation, we would not know what to do, either. Even if we were surrounded by fellow human beings, we would not be able to seek help or live a normal life ever again.

“This is the future. We have to help refugees living in urban environment,” said Mireille Girard, Representative for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Human rights workers say that people of other religions in Pakistan are increasingly being assaulted, not only Christians but also Hindus, Ahmadis, or even Muslims from other sects, who were rejected by the mainstream Muslims. Although no one has yet been executed for blasphemy, but laws regarding blasphemy have been used as a tool to threaten people from other religions and cause many violent protests.

Farrukh Saif, head of an asylum seekers aid group in Bangkok, said there were approximately 12,000 religious minorities fleeing from Pakistan since 2009.

The Pakistani couple had been hiding for months until one day they decided to get on a midnight flight to Bangkok. They chose to fly to Thailand because their friends said it was very easy to get a tourist visa and many other Christians from Pakistan have taken refuge here as well.





However, upon arrival in Bangkok, their relief had turned into concern. The father went to UNHCR to apply for refugee status but he was shocked to find out that they would have to spend two more years in hiding. They had to wait until September 2015 for an interview with UNHCR officials to be determined whether or not they will be qualified as refugees. Refugees who arrived later on have to wait three years to be interviewed.

Mireille Girard said that UNHCR has more than sixty officials to review thousands of refugees, and to determine whether they meet the eligibility criteria to be considered a refugee, meaning a person must have well-founded fear of being persecuted. In each case, there must be an investigation and isolation of those who take advantage of this system, such as, those traveling with human traffickers.

During the waiting period, money is of great importance. After their savings have depleted, the Pakistani family had to seek help from Christian churches, most of which refused to help. Finally there was one that gave them \$100 a month.



The mother got a job as an English teacher teaching children earning 8,000 baht per month, which was enough to pay for the rental, water, electricity bills, and some food. The father had been unemployed for several months and recently got a job at a childcare center. However, this means that their three children have to be by themselves all day in the apartment, and it also means that the couple could be arrested anytime for working illegally.

“When I go to work, I don’t know if I will ever see my children again,” said the father. No matter how hard their lives may be, the family will never return to Pakistan.

“We are going to face the same threat. I am not going to sacrifice the lives of my children like that,” added the mother.

The father said that he had no choice but to wait for a delayed process from UNHCR before they can start a new life.

“We want to go to a place where our lives will be safe and we can have our freedom,” said the father with a sigh.





We try to create a new culture,
where everyone respects one
another and sees the importance
of freedom of expression.

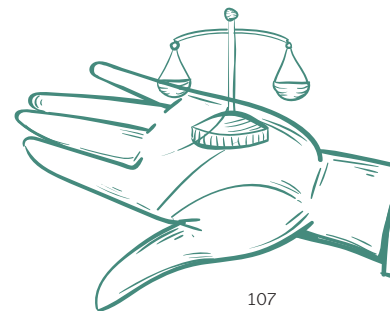
Human Rights and the State Obligations



State obligations on human rights refer to obligations that the state must do as its duty to create favourable human rights conditions for its people. It must respect, protect, promote, and fulfill human rights. These obligations have led to the creation of many human rights treaties. These treaties consist of international laws that many states, which were members of the United Nations, and the world community have certified. There are many stages in the process of making a treaty; from negotiation, state consent by signing, ratification, and accession. Once a state has become a party to the treaty, it has obligations to comply with the treaty. Thailand is also one of the member countries of the UN and is bound to respect the obligations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).



Becoming a party to a treaty creates an obligation that one must act in accordance to obligations contained in the treaty, otherwise they might be condemned internationally. Therefore, once Thailand has become a party to human rights treaties, it must fulfill the obligations of the treaties. Failure to comply with the obligations may lead to criticism by the United Nations, other party members and civil society. Additionally, social and economic pressure might be imposed upon these countries to send a message to people around the world to recognize human rights and to ensure that these rights must not be violated.





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“Human rights is not a difficult subject. The important thing is in your heart, whether you believe in other human beings or not. Many people know about human rights. They know the meaning, how many principles there are, but they don’t believe that people are really equal, that they all have equal dignity.

“If teachers ‘believe’ in human rights, they will know how to teach children to understand and believe in these rights as well. If the ministers or leaders in organizations believe in human rights, it will definitely change our social situation.”

Pitak Kerdhom

*Director of the Institute for Promotion
and Protection of Rights*

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Human rights in the eye of the Thai state

Below is a story of **Pitak Kerdhom**, Director of the Institute for Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, during the time he was working with government officials.

Recognition of human rights is the duty of the state. The state must protect and respect the natural rights of all citizens. However, we still often see the work of the Thai government that conflicts with human rights principles.

What makes the work of the government officials conflicts with how they should be? How does it affect the understanding of the people in society on human rights issues?

Work limitations of government officials

The government officials' way of working is to strictly obey the word of command. Although they might believe in human rights, when they are constrained to obey the order, which might violate human rights, it must still be done. Human rights principles will always be the last priority in the operating protocols. That is the limitation I see today and we can do very little about it.

I think they understand human rights. Those who work in besieging and search operations have a high chance of violating human rights. They understand that the people they are fighting against are also humans. In real life situation, it is not as when they were trained, for example, when dispersing the rally, the term 'Human Rights' may not be strong enough to make them feel that they have to hold on to the principle.

Many officials do not reject the principles, they even agree with the ideas. However, what is essentially more important is the explanation of 'Laws' and 'Human Rights'. Sometimes human rights activists only put an emphasis on the principles, but provide no details on how to act. Therefore, when the officials are on duty, they tend to follow the laws rather than ambiguous human rights principles. What I think we must do is clearly explain to them how to act, to avoid the saying 'We must essentially obey the law, we cannot give importance to human rights principles alone', as they actually cannot be separated; they are the same thing.

When talking about human rights, the state might say 'Don't join the rally because it violates other people's rights'. This actually prevents people from exercising their rights. This makes us see that people don't really understand the concept of human rights. In order to make people understand human rights, we cannot only refer to international laws, but we must also focus on methods of implementation.

The promotion of human rights understanding

At present, every ministry and government agency does not reject human rights, but they still lack an understanding of the core principles of human rights. Therefore, we must explain to them what they are and show them what they should do. We must give concrete examples, such as, if military officers have an operation to besiege, search, and arrest, we must explain what protocols and actions are considered appropriate to take without violating human rights. By doing this, they will have a clearer understanding of human rights concepts, so they can perform their duty without any doubts when the time comes.

We often see government officials mistreat demonstrators, even though they have already had human rights training. Police and soldiers have to take it every six months. Evidently, these trainings have proven unsuccessful since their practices still violate human rights. This is probably one of the biggest challenges for human rights workers in Thailand.

Human rights organizations like us are also responsible for the rejection of human rights in the Thai society. Regardless

of political polarity, more than half of the population does not accept all human rights principles.

When talking about human rights principles, people will only take on the principles they see fit, which means that human rights organizations in Thailand still have not accomplished their goals. In the online world, whenever there is an issue, we still see people post comments judging and condemning those who have done wrong, or post offensive images. If Thai people truly understood and believed in human rights, we would not see this happening. This means we still have a lot of work to do.

The concept of human rights has never been introduced to us ever since childhood. Therefore, whenever there is an issue related to human rights and human rights organizations have something to say about it, most people tend to react negatively, which is not supposed to be normal.

Human rights movement must become a big trend, which the majority of people want to be a part of, as it relates to all humans. We must work hard for human rights principles to be accepted by the Thai society.

Why don't Thai people value human rights principles?

We have many limitations. Government agencies may arrange education sessions nationwide for both students and teachers. Although, we can organize learning activities on a national scale, but if it cannot be done continuously due to budget limitation, eventually it has to be ceased.

On the other hand, NGOs will only focus on small groups or as they call 'the quality groups.' However, let's imagine that the ocean is vast, but we only make a grain of sand, it is very difficult to create any change. We can see that there are limitations in both of these groups.

Therefore, I think both groups have to re-think their strategies. The NGOs must think big like the government, it is not that focusing on small groups is not as important, but we must strive to create a bigger movement.

What is the importance of passing on the belief of human rights?

We must go through a fair amount of processes. The turning point that may cause people to change their belief is not only by providing them trainings, but also by letting them face real situations.

There is a reason why the violated villagers are very aware of their rights; it is because they faced it themselves. The people who are fighting for human rights are mostly from this group because they have had direct experiences far too many times.

I came to work on the dissemination of this issue and realized that I liked this field of work when I encountered the case of a British student who was killed in Phuket. The moment her mother got off the plane, the Thai media was already waiting to interview her on the case. They expected her to say that she wanted the person who raped and killed her daughter to be executed. However, those words did not come out of her mouth, instead she said 'my daughter would not want any more people to be killed, just bring in the perpetrator and let him receive a fair punishment. That would be enough.'

You will see that her way of thinking is different from our society. It shows that her country must have done a good job educating its people about human rights. In the case of arresting perpetrators, some might say it is a fair punishment, while some might think the punishment needs to be stronger. All in all, their decisions are not based on the principles of human rights, but rather on their personal emotions. So, how do we know what would be the appropriate action to take?

The day I heard the mother say those words, I knew we still have to work a lot more to put human rights into people's conscience.



“Can the police search our house without a warrant?”

“Today, a policeman came in and searched my house. The searching has caused a lot of mess, leaving nothing in its original place. They did not have a search warrant. I’m afraid they could have hidden something illegal in my house, too. What should I do?”

“The police came in to search for drugs in the monk’s residence without permission from the abbot, and there was no search warrant. Can they do this?”

“Today, a policeman entered the house and asked my brother for urinary check without a warrant.”

“Out of the blue, a troop in military police uniforms rushed into our warehouse, searched us, and forced us to do urinary tests, searched the place without letting us know the reason. They forced us to take a photo of our ID cards, took our pictures and did not present any search warrant, arrest warrant, or their identity cards. What should we do?”

These are only some examples of real incidents of police or military personnel breaking into civilians’ residences without search warrant claiming to check for drugs possessions or to look for criminals. Sadly, police officers should be the ones responsible for the safety and welfare of the citizens; instead they abuse their power and violate the rights of the people.

These situations seemed to escalate after martial law has been used. Martial law is often used during war times giving the military absolute power to do anything. When martial law was used in 2014, for over 10 months, detainees were not allowed to contact their relatives or lawyer and were not allowed to reveal



their place of detention. All of their communication devices were seized by the officials. They were also investigated, with the intention that they might reveal any information that can be used as evidence to prosecute them, and have been brought into discuss sessions to “adjust attitude”. They were forced to sign a consent document agreeing not to comment and not to be part of any political movement. Many were charged after detention based on information obtained during the investigations. Additionally, there were reports of at least 28 cases of torture during that time. After martial law was lifted on April 1, 2015, The National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) issued a decree to the head of the NCPO No. 3/2558 instead, by the special power of Article 44 of the temporary constitution of the year 2014, which the NCPO issued, and issued another order to the NCPO chief No. 13/2559. This was to give the military the power to suppress influential people, such as, drug trafficking suspects or individuals suspected of possessing weapons, by working with the police even in normal situations.

These incidents happen so often that we sometimes forget that they violate human rights principles and the laws. The state must respect the rights and freedom of the people. A house search can only be done if there are legitimate reasons (such as instances where obtaining a search warrant might delay the search and the suspect might get away or the evidence-based property would be transferred, concealed, destructed), which must be clearly proven. Otherwise, a home search must have a search warrant issued by court.

When government officials use their power without concerning about the laws and human rights, any good citizen can be searched or arrested arbitrarily without any way to defend himself.

THROWING RUBBER BANDS

Objective: To understand that real participation is a part of human rights.

Duration: 45 minutes

Equipment: 1 bag of large size rubber bands

Steps:

1 Draw a line dividing two sides then let the participants stand on one side.

2 Ask 2-3 volunteers to stand on the other side of the group to throw rubber bands to the rest of the participants.

3 Tell each participant to use their index finger to catch as many rubber bands as possible. Play for a total of 4 rounds, 10 seconds for each round.

- Before starting the 1st round, tell the rules that everyone must not speak and must not communicate.
- Before starting the 2nd round, allow 20 seconds for preparation. This time the receivers of the rubber bands must not speak, but the throwers can speak.
- Before starting the 3rd round, allow 20 seconds for preparation. Those who throw rubber bands must not speak, but the receivers can speak.
- Before starting the 4th round, allow 30 seconds for preparation. This time both the receivers and throwers can communicate.

4 Complete the game. Count the rubber bands in your hand and the ones that are on the floor.

Summarizing questions

1. How many strands of rubber band did you catch?
2. How was the result of each round? Could you catch more strands of rubber band after each round? Why?
3. If asked to compare this game to real-life situations, what are some of the situations you can think of?
4. How did the people on both sides feel? How did it feel to be able to speak or not speak? If you were to compare this situation to real life, which role would you play in society?
5. If we compare rubber band throwers to the government sector, and rubber band receivers as citizens, how do you see resources management from the government sector and participation of the citizens?

Summary guidelines

Participation can be real participation, where the rubber band receivers and the rubber band throwers can communicate, or symbolic participation where the rubber band receivers only wait to catch the rubber bands. We might compare this activity to how the government works. It has a handful of resources with the delivery methods that are performed as duties. The recipients are the people waiting to receive the resources, some people get more, and some get less. In real life, if we encourage real participation, it will be very helpful for work and resources allocation. We will know what the recipients need and what the allocator should do to meet those needs. This is a method that will help promote human rights.



Human Rights Mechanisms and State Obligations



Sarawut Pratoomraj, human rights lawyer, summarized the concepts of human rights mechanisms and state obligations as follows:

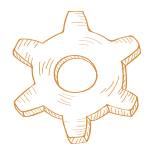
“The state must support the poorest people in society to overcome inadequate living standards. Those who have escaped poverty should be educated to not violate other people’s rights.” Sarawut further explained that when talking about the state, we have to look at the following components:

First, the state must be responsible for protecting the rights of its citizens, such as, facilitating student rallies and ensuring all citizens have the rights to vote for their leader since these are rights that the people are entitled to.

Second, the state must respect the rights and freedoms of its people, and must not violate them by using the law to arrest or detain those who think differently.

Third, the state has duty to fulfill and enact laws to ensure equal rights for all citizens.

These are the 3 things every country must aim to achieve



according to international standards.

“As a state, it cannot claim that it cannot afford to provide basic education to all citizens until university level. It should at least try to set a timeframe to do better, for example, within the first three to five years it will provide free elementary education, then for the next ten years it will be able to provide free education until secondary level. We need to have a plan and be able to respond to the United Nations on how we will gradually improve so that our country can develop as well as fulfill our obligations.”

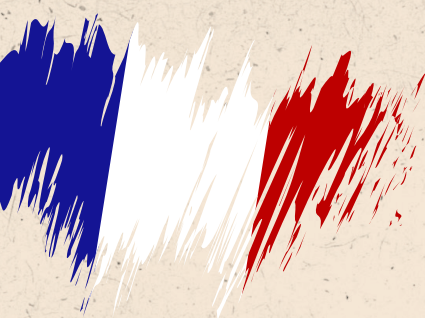
In summary, the state has obligations to ensure that there is a system put in place to protect and promote human rights in the nation. Such obligations consist of:

Obligation to Respect: The state must refrain from violating the rights of its people.

Obligation to Protect: The state shall protect against the violation of rights by third party actors. This means it must put its best efforts to prevent, punish, investigate, or remedy damages resulting from violation caused by individuals or organizations.

Obligation to Fulfill Human Rights to All Citizens: The state must take legal, administrative, budgetary, judicial, educational, or other measures to ensure that everyone in the country has fundamental rights.

The state must equally respect, protect, and fulfill the rights of the less fortunate.



How can human rights in France and Sudan be the same?

“They may be different, but the principles are the same.” Sarawut Pratoomraj further explained about the important human rights principles, which are universal to all human beings.

“The fundamental need of the Sudanese people is maternal and child health. All children must be fed with milk, food, and supplements that are sufficient for them to grow. This is the basic right any newborn should get. When they grow up, they should be able to study, which is the responsibility of the state. However, children who are born in France, apart from having this right, they should be educated on how to exercise their rights without violating others. Countries that already have awareness of human rights principles are usually highly developed. Their main concern is no longer about child well being, contrarily, Sudan is still far from that.”



People in different countries may not have equal access to fundamental rights. However, human rights will make the state aware of their duty to manage, take care, ensure, and facilitate to promote the well-being of all its citizens. Each country may develop at a different pace socially, economically, and technologically, but humanity in every one of us is the same.

“Rights are not equally enjoyed by all. The state must do its best to fix this problem. This means that Sudan still needs to improve human rights awareness.”





Lady of Loei

and her fight to protect community rights

In 2018, if you had the opportunity to take a walk in Na Nong Bong Village, Khao Luang Sub-District, Wang Saphung District, Loei Province, a village surrounded by mountains (some of the mountains have begun to disappear), you may have met a thin woman with greyish yellow hair weaving from homegrown cotton. If you talked to her, you would have learned that her name was Mae Ros, or Mrs. Ranong Kongsang, a 57-year-old woman who used to lead a calm and easy-going life then later became a fighter to defend the rights of her community.

The area around Na Nong Bong Village used to be rich in rice, fish, food and mountains. Every area was a food source and had been the source of income for the villagers for a long time. Then, after the area has turned into gold mine, everything changed.

One day in 1997, Mae Ros and the other villagers learned that the mountains they were living, harvesting, catching fish, or growing rice will become a gold mine, an area covering 6 villages in Khao Luang Sub-District, Wang Saphung District, Loei Province, where more than 1,000 households and 3,500 villagers were living.

Officials from the gold mine and government officials of various agencies told the villagers that the gold mine will make the community become more developed, yield public benefits and result in a construction of public facilities in the community for a better quality of life for everyone. However, they never mentioned about the impacts of the gold mine to the people.

An uncle who lived in the same village as Mae Ros said “It is impossible that the government officials are not aware of the impacts of gold mining, nevertheless ALRO (Agricultural Land Reform Office)

and PRFO (Provincial Royal Forest Office) gave permission to the company to do mining in conserved forest.”

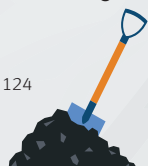
In 2006, some of the villagers sold their land to the mine owner for a cheap price without knowing that what followed would be a huge cloud of dust, scattered rock fragments, excessive noise and vibrations constantly generated by mine explosion day and night. The mining operation is very close to the community, or just 500 meters away.

Khao Luang Sub-District area is an upstream forest, resulting in many creeks flowing through the area around the gold mine. Some creeks flow through the waste pond containing hundreds of acres of toxic heavy metal water.

Mountains, forests, and natural water bodies have been destroyed and contaminated with heavy metals. Rice, fish, food, and drinking water were contaminated and unsafe to consume, and the water for agriculture became dry. The villagers had to buy water for drinking and for daily use. Many had fallen ill with symptoms such as itchy rashes and pustules on the skin. They were later examined and the doctor detected a higher level of chemical contamination than the standard values.

At the same time, there was a leak of the cyanide dam of the mine reservoir, causing the water from the dam to flow into the rice fields, public water sources, creeks, and groundwater sources of the villagers.

“The water flowed out of the waste pond, making it impossible for the rice to grow so they eventually died. The toxins and chemicals were killing our shrimps, shellfish, crabs, and fish. The chemical levels in our blood have exceeded the standard. No one has come in to take responsibility and try to redress these issues in our community. We have to buy water and food to sustain our lives. If it (the mining)



still continues, how will the community survive? We must fight back.” This is one of the reasons why Mae Ros could not stand to watch the children in the village live with a future like this.

For over two decades, Mae Ros and other people from the six affected villages gathered together and called themselves “People who preserve their hometown”, took turns to submit complaint letters to the government, ministers and relevant government agencies. They submitted letters, protested, and filed a complaint to the administrative court, fighting for their legitimate rights stated in many constitutional laws, such as, the right of the community to participate in resources management to preserve nature, health and livelihood of the people in the community, or the right to freedom of assembly, which is also a right written in the constitution.

Mae Ros’s community collapsed, separated, and people gradually got sick and died. They were repeatedly violated. Many forms of violence were being used on the villagers including slandering, threatening, besieging, causing harm, and using the law to prosecute civil and criminal cases, claiming damage from the community with an exorbitant amount of money. There were still ongoing cases even until October 2018.

Government agencies should be responsible for applying the laws to ensure the rights and well-being of its people. Instead of doing so, they did everything for the benefits of the company. The Ministry of Industry provided “Monopoly right” for mineral exploration and issued mineral mine concession certificate, which violates all types of land laws, to mining operators by utilizing a special channel, or the “special license” since the beginning of 1989. Government agencies also organized an allocation of 700 police forces to block villagers from joining a forum to establish guidelines for assessing the environmental and health impact, which was held by the mining company in 2012. This was a very serious rights violation.

“Gold might have its value, but people’s lives are more valuable. Our daily wage of only 100-200 baht is hardly enough for us to survive. How can we afford to pay for the lawsuit? They want us to stop protesting for our land, but we can’t. We love our home. How many more lives will we have to sacrifice to be worth the price of gold that the capitalists want?” Mae Ros, “Lady of Loei”, who has been charged with over ten cases by the state and the mining company, was disappointed by the government’s actions to facilitate large-scale gold mining operations.

“The villagers see themselves as victims, the people who were affected, but instead they were neglected by relevant government agencies. The local government organization, which should be the one that the villagers could depend on, did nothing to help, either. Instead they chose to be on the capitalist’s side and sued the villagers who stood up to protect and take care of their own homes.”

As of October 2018, after fighting a long battle, the gold mine has finally closed down, leaving only deteriorating mountains as remains. The condition of the post-mining area that has been contaminated with toxins will take decades to recover. This creates burden to the whole country since tax money will be utilized to restore these national resources.

It would be difficult to count the days and years Mae Ros had spent taking trips to court, attending meetings, and giving interviews to the media. All of that time, she could have used to do farming, growing cotton, or spending it with her children. The state must realize that it is not the ultimate resources management authority. It must listen to the voices of those being directly affected and protect its citizens. Only then, everyone in the society will live happily and safely in their communities, as they are the true owners of all resources.



Activity

State Obligations

Objective: To understand that the state has duty to fulfill its obligations, which is crucial for social development.

Duration: 45 minutes

Equipments: Proof paper, chalk or markers for 3 groups of participants.

Steps:

1. Divide participants into 3 groups according to the main obligations of the state.

- Respect group
- Protect group
- Fulfill rights group

2. Write example cases on the board one by one. Give time for each group to write on a large piece of paper what they think the state must do to fulfill its obligations on each particular case:

1. A teenage boy was killed, with government officials as suspects, but the case did not make any progress.

2. People are protesting because the price of rubber fell.
 3. Some people are suffering from the side effects of weight loss pills.
 4. Children with no nationality cannot enter school, while Thai children can study up to ninth grade for free.
 5. A person wants to post comments and protest against the government, but he does not feel safe.
- (Activity leader may refer to news from the newspaper or online and discuss with participants.)

3. After all groups have completed writing down their answers, look at each case together one by one and have each group share what they have written down before moving on to the next case. You can discuss and exchange ideas during the presentation, for instance, people in other groups could give additional suggestions for the state obligations that the other groups have proposed.

Summary guidelines

The state is responsible for their obligations. It must not interfere with the enjoyment of human rights and must safeguard against human rights violations. It must do whatever it takes to guarantee all people their fundamental rights. It also has a duty to ensure that there is a system put in place to protect and promote human rights in the nation, which is crucial for social development.

If we, as citizens, are not aware of state obligations to human rights, we will not know what rights we have or be able to protect our own rights. We will not be able to monitor or pressure the state to develop our society in a way that promotes humanity and human rights.

“

The state has obligations to ensure that there is a system put in place to protect and promote human rights in the nation.

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International Human Rights Obligations



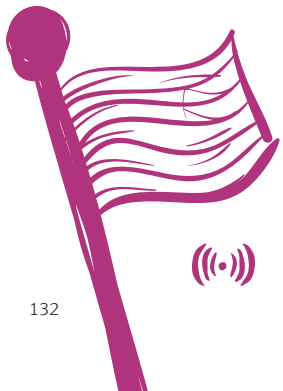
Human rights laws or mechanisms can be divided into 3 levels:

1. International level

It comes in the forms of declarations, treaties or agreements, which do not have to be made into law. Once the country has signed to become a party member, it is expected to act according to the agreement. If a country violates such a declaration or agreement, there will be no penalties, but it could be subject to economic pressure or sanctions.

2. Regional level

Laws or agreements that may or may not be legally enforced, but are mutually agreed upon by each region. For example, the EU Court, which hears cases involving member



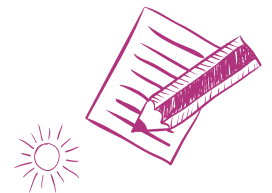
states of the European Union, is therefore legally enforced. While the AICHR (ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights), which Thailand has signed along with other ASEAN member countries, is not legally enforced.

3. National level

These are Constitutional Laws, Acts, Ministerial Laws enacted by each country and are legally enforced. The examples in Thailand are the Administrative Court, the Constitution, and the Human Rights Commission.

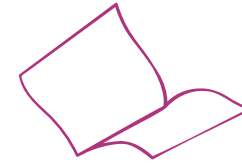


Various mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights



Thailand became party to human rights treaties by signing them, with the state agreeing to be bound by the treaties. Thailand, therefore, must comply with the obligations of that contract. There are seven core international human rights treaties, which are:

1. Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
2. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
3. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights - ICCPR
4. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - ICESCR
5. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination - CERD



6. Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment - CAT

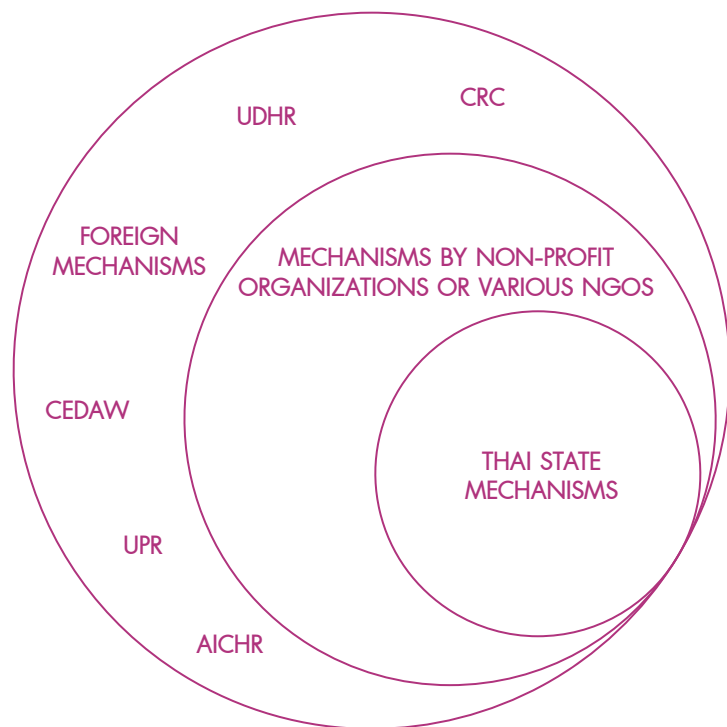
7. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - CRPD

There are also mechanisms under the UN Human Rights Council, such as, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). This requires 193 UN member states to prepare individual human rights review reports, known as the UPR report, to submit to the Human Rights Council without any exception. Each review will take approximately 4 and a half years.



■ The power of various mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights

Thai state mechanisms -> NGO mechanisms
-> Regional and international mechanisms



We have learned the origin and importance of human rights principles for the protection of humanity. What is more important is how we can apply those principles in the real world.

Since the 1997 constitution, a mechanism to protect and promote human rights in the country, **The National Human Rights Commission of Thailand**, was established as an independent organization. Its duties include hearing complaints, investigating and reporting on actions that may violate human rights, as well as proposing appropriate redress measures to the offenders. At the same time, it can raise some of the issues encountered to the state's administration if it feels that certain laws need to be reviewed. This is to prevent future violations of human rights.



Phoptham Sunantham, Human Rights Scholar at the Expert Bureau of Human Rights Protection, one of the departments of the National Human Rights Commission that serves to protect all of our rights, explained his duty of protecting human rights, as follows:

“Since complaints are usually categorized into different issues, my work is to investigate cases that are mainly related to the issues of community rights and natural resources. We will then begin to gather all the facts from the complainant, the accused, and related departments. Additionally, we collect other necessary information, such as, opinions from expert witnesses and experts in various fields, or facts that we seek ourselves since our position is similar to officials working under the Criminal Code. Our method of investigation is very careful and thorough, similar to the investigation of police officers.



“Gathering facts can be done in many ways, including writing a letter of inquiry to an agency, invitation for an interview, or field visits. Some cases require inspection at the actual site, such as, the problem of factory pollution, which we actually held a meeting at the site and invited relevant agencies to attend. In the cases that have already been filed by the court, the Rights Committee cannot examine on those same cases since it will violate the court jurisdiction.

“The Rights Committee’s decision does not hold the same legal force as the court’s decision, which requires compliance obligations, but acts rather like a ‘suggestion’ of what we think you should do. We do not have the authority, but we have the power to propose to the agency to consider giving an order. If the agency has different opinions than us the matter will eventually reach the Cabinet, which is considered to be the supreme executive body with the power to direct all government agencies.

“We act as a surveillance organization; there are other departments in our organization that are proactive in providing human rights education by working with human rights promotion organizations.

“The proactive and defensive work that we do can be harmonized together. If there are specific types of cases that keep occurring repeatedly, we can assess what issues are being violated the most and we can then set strategies to work on those issues. For example, if there are many cases of migrant workers being repeatedly violated, we can focus on working to promote individual rights. This also affects our position internationally, particularly when signing conventions, our human rights status is one of the main factors that will be considered.”

Gathering facts in cases involving civilians and government agencies. Is it necessary to prioritize civilians?

According to human rights principles, everyone must be able to access their rights. If the status of the complainant is a civilian, a minority, or a person with little or no power, the



Rights Committee must help equalize their power to the same level of the defendant (in this case, a more powerful capitalist or government agency). The Rights Committee must ensure the safety of the complainant as well.

By doing this, people will feel that they are not fighting on their own. These principles are not a deflection from neutrality, but rather to ensure people who are unable to access their rights and marginalized people to gain access to the rights they are entitled to have.

An example of this is the state announcing measures to support people with disabilities, children and the elderly. From the general public point of view, this may be seen as unequal treatment, but the truth is it helps the vulnerable groups in the society to feel equal to others. These measures may include providing special care and support for children, building ramps or installing elevators in public places for people with disabilities, or helping citizens with low income through government grants.

If we take on the principles of equality and justice, equality means that everyone should be treated equally. When the rich



get six hundred baht a month, and the poor also get six hundred baht a month, everyone gets the same amount of money. If everyone is equal, it must be given to everyone equally, but if we ask whether this is fair, clearly it is not.

If the complainants have no access to justice system, we go in and help them. For example, if they are accused, the Rights Committee will coordinate with the Justice Department on the Justice Fund to help them fight their case. This is to give them a fair opportunity to fight for justice. An example of this is people with no citizenship or state welfare that have been prosecuted for trespassing of the protected forest areas, even though they have lived there for a long time. According to the law, we give priority to the status of the person before other matters. The term 'Human Rights' is much broader, it is the rights all human beings are entitled to regardless of their race or religion.

By writing a letter to request information from a government agency who is the defendant in the case, it is also an opportunity for us to check for their transparency. Additionally,

it shows that we do not intend to help the complainant alone, but also allow the other party to clarify themselves as well. We must give both the complainant access to justice, and the government or the defendant a chance to clarify, which is a general principle of the fact-finding process.

Are there any cases that you have worked in and felt that human rights principles can be applied?

Actually, there are many cases. As in the case of constructing a motorway in Korat, the main problem that we encountered was the conflict between the right to personal privacy, including property, land and houses, and community development. We had to check if the state compensated those who were affected fairly. Ultimately, the complainants usually want to take part in the consideration process for compensation, along with the process to determine the locations of resting points or road exits. This will allow residents to live without difficulty, and ensure that they will get fair compensation.

States often view themselves as having unilateral powers,



but we have advised that there must be a representative of the civil sector who was affected involved in the process in order to produce a more satisfying outcome. It is our job to point out that the state should carry out a comprehensive and inclusive engagement process. If the state refuses to accept our suggestion, it must be pointed out that the steps required by law have not been taken.

Sometimes the existing legal regulations are no longer relevant in today's society. We have to propose to the state to consider revising those regulations and policies since we have the power to do so.

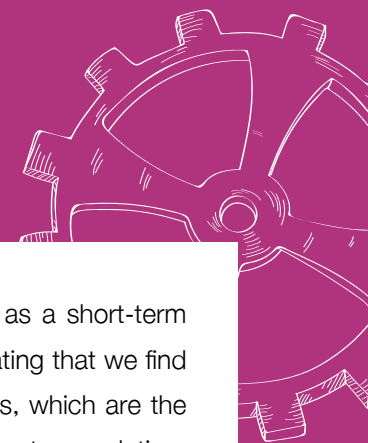
Does it mean that filing a complaint to the Rights Committee can help create change in society?

Yes, because sometimes if you go to court directly and the court makes a decision, the case can be closed. However, if you come to us, we will listen to all parties and gather the facts and if there is a violation, meaning negligence from complying with existing laws or damage caused by operating business, we will then make two separate proposals.

One is to propose solutions to the case as a short-term measure. The second is policy proposal by stating that we find flaws from existing procedures and blind spots, which are the causes of various problems. We will offer a long-term solution, both methodology and policy change. We use real cases as lessons in solving problems in the future.

As a human rights worker, how does it feel to see a successful case?

I feel really good, of course. As we know, for villagers or ordinary civilians to go straight to a government agency asking for help is almost impossible. Villagers often feel 'scared' of government officials, for fear that there might be a lawsuit filing against them. In our society, there are very few people who dare to get out there to defend human rights or take actions to claim rights on behalf of others. As an officer of the Human Rights Commission, I can be of help either more or less. Some cases may seem like an individual problem, but by solving that problem we might be able to find solutions for other similar problems as well.



Activity

How to Fight!

Understanding participation by studying the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Objective: to understand that real participation is a part of human rights.

Duration: 30 minutes

Equipment: A sheet of "The Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR)" for each participant



Steps:

1. Let participants get into groups of 3 people, pick a topic of interest, and find a conclusion of the selected topic. Each topic contains different roles of actors who are involved with the case. Give the participants 5-10 minutes to pick their role and role-play by debating within the group.

- There is a mine next to your house, which is the cause of dangerously toxic substances.

Roles: mine owner, you, government official

- There are Muslims who want to pray during working hours.

Roles: company owner, a Muslim, Buddhist colleague

- There are students who want to wear white-gray socks instead of plain white socks.

Roles: student, school director, teacher

- Villagers are protesting on road expansion.

Roles: villagers who do not want road expansion, government official, concessionaire

- Street vendors are prohibited from selling on the pavement.

Roles: street vendor, customer, municipal official



2. Each group presents their conclusions.

3. Distribute the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) to participants and ask them to determine which situation is related to which article.

4. Activity leader asks all participants to review how the actors in each situation contributed to ease up the situation or come to a solution that is accepted by all parties.

Summary guidelines

- We can see that human rights work is based on principles and operations that require real participation.
- Participation means everyone is involved in every process, from thinking, doing, and evaluating. Everyone is equally informed. Everyone has the right to express their opinions, be involved in the decision making, and evaluating the outcome.
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states participation in articles 1, 2, 17, 19, 21, 27, and 29.

A way to determine whether there is real participation is the level of enthusiasm of the people. It must be voluntary participation. What is told/done has to be meaningful. Participation is crucial, especially in development projects. If we work in human rights, participation is not just an option; it is something that is mandatory. It should start from the beginning of a project, in the early stages of planning.



Tips

If participants share the same opinions and are able to conclude quickly, the activity leader can challenge them by asking if there are others who disagree with them, how might they feel? And what might their opinions be?

Communicating Human Rights

As a former activism officer of Amnesty International Thailand, Nawaporn Supawitkul told the story of her lessons and dreams from working to communicate the understanding of human rights in Thai society. She shared with us about how human rights are so closely related to our lives and how to work on issues that people are familiar with but do not yet understand.

“I grew up in ordinary schools, from rural province then moved to Bangkok. When it comes to the term ‘Human Rights’, I didn’t understand what it was. I did, however, understand that people should not be treated in certain ways, for example, I knew it was not right for people to get beaten in prison, but I didn’t know how to call it.

“When I finally learned what human rights were, I realized that this knowledge should not be limited to the people working in this field, but everyone in society should learn about it too. They don’t have to know everything like us who work in human rights organizations, but they should know when something is not right, that it is a violation of the rights of another human being. It is a matter of being able to take other people’s feelings into consideration, rather than just understanding complex human rights terminology.”

How would you describe human rights to someone who had never known it before?

I love to talk to the people and ask their opinions. I question their thoughts and let their thoughts guide them to the final destination, which I never know where they might lead. They might be very into the ideas, or may not agree with me at all. My duty is to initiate the conversation, ask questions about what they believe in, and sometimes they will come to a realization on their own. This kind of moment is a gift for me in this field of work. The moment when the people we work with eventually understand the meaning of human rights is often expressed by the look in their eyes, the words they speak, etc.

For me, a good human rights education worker is someone who can create an atmosphere for the people in the room to start asking questions by themselves. It is also important to remind oneself that we work with various types of people. So how will we manage the relationship within the group? We don’t want people to argue; we must create a safe space where everyone can feel safe and trusted to exchange their thoughts.

If a person says abortion is very bad and sinful. We shouldn’t be the one to tell them that what they believe is contrary to human rights principles. However, we should ask the others in the group who have not yet expressed their opinions to debate. We may help by throwing in some questions at the right time, which is also important. It is an art of helping people to learn about human rights.

As of today, in what sense is the word human rights misunderstood?

Since working in this field, a lot of people have misunderstood the word 'dignity'. When translated into Thai, people often think that it means that 'someone is superior to others', which is not true. Everyone is equal, but having a 'superior' financial status or social status is often mistaken for human dignity, which is not true! It is that you are born as a human being and all human beings have the same dignity.

Another misconception is people tend to think that human rights means being able to do whatever we want, for example, cursing at anyone, painting in public places without permission, etc. Human rights, in fact, are what make humans human, and at the same time you should not violate other human beings. Due to this false understanding, many people who watch the news assume that human rights activists like to do whatever we want, which is not true.

People think that human rights are the duty of the state. Of course, people cannot issue the laws by themselves, but it doesn't always have to start with the state. If you want people to be the first to take action, you should work directly with them and encourage them to create change.

Why do you think the people in our society do not adhere to human rights principles in their way of life?

The heart of human rights education is not an understanding of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, or understanding that the United Nations recognizes this right, but rather seeing other people as human beings and recognizing what we, as human beings, are entitled to have.

This realization can be founded by being shaped to respect these principles, to respect others besides oneself, and by living in a society that is ready to allow them to speak out when they see things differently. If you live in a closed society, even if you understand these rights, they will not be recognized by the society because no one will dare to come out and speak their mind. Talking about these principles to others will also cause you more harm than good.

We do not need to understand human rights principles, but we must learn from real stories of people, to understand what we do not want to happen to us as human beings, including the right to life, freedom from torture, etc.

Societies must allow people who think differently to speak out, which we think is an essential element in a society where you want true understanding of human rights to occur.

Do you feel exhausted or discouraged when speaking of human rights, which is something everyone should understand?

Yes, sometimes it can be very exhausting, but what I get from my work is empathy for the people who have the power to make decisions, knowing what they have to go through, and why they sometimes cannot do it. We do understand from their context when they say some issues have to wait five years of study to confirm, but at the same time feel angered enough to say that it can't wait five years. One year is more than enough.

We are tired and angry. Why do we have to solve one problem then go on to face another? Sometimes we feel like we are in the year 2018 already, why do we still have to demand for women's rights, equality, etc.? These matters should have been understood since a long time ago.

But I'm proud of it, this feeling is important. If the people working in this field do not feel a sense of pride, we really cannot go on. To see more people join us, understand us, is probably something we can be proud of. It feels good to know that what we do is not meaningless; it can change the life of one person or a family. If I was asked if this would make the exhaustion go away, I would say no (laugh), but it keeps us on track knowing that what we do has meaning. We must encourage others to join us, just in case if one day we are tired or dead, this will still remain.

What did you dream of when you started this work?

When I stepped in, it wasn't only the idea of believing in a beautiful world, but that this job would fulfill our humanity if I

could do it. It's a job that I really care about, and I want to see a better society. What I wanted to see then, I still want to see now.

This does not mean that I don't want to see a country where people don't argue with each other, but I want everyone to be able to live together. It would be nice if we could fight but still be able to stay together.

In an ideal world, I would say that I don't want this world to have human rights organizations because everyone would be able to defend their own rights. The government, the private sector, and the society are all okay with this topic and anyone can go out there and talk about it on their own.

I want people to speak out about what they believe in even when there is a dispute. If you agree or disagree with abortion, explain your reasons but also listen to other people as well and do some critical thinking.

Even if you are currently a supporter of anti-abortion movement, one day you might change your mind. Likewise, if you are on the side that supports abortion, one day you might come across a situation that moves you and changes your perspectives. Allow yourself to learn and argue with others about this issue.

It is not wrong to change your mind. Of course, we would like to see people support human rights. However, in reality, it is quite unlikely that you will change your way of thinking. Supposedly, if you are anti-death penalty, then one day you encounter an event that makes you question your belief, you might have a change in your judgment or it could affirm what you already believe in.

Allow yourself to continue asking questions, even in what you already believe in.

Who is Amnesty?

Amnesty, known as Amnesty International, is a group of more than 7 million ordinary people around the world who have gathered to campaign, protect, and promote human rights. We call for justice for people who have been violated by working with the government to advance laws and policies, and to build an understanding of human rights for youth and other people in society.

Amnesty believes that although people are born with different socioeconomic statuses, everyone has equal rights as a human being.

- Amnesty International aims to develop human rights processes and culture in society by working through campaigns, international unity activities, and human rights education.

- Amnesty International is independent of any political ideology, economic interest, religious beliefs or creeds.

- Amnesty International conducts campaign activities rooted in research and campaign to promote knowledge and understanding of human rights issues. We campaign for the change, for a fair society, law reform, the release of prisoners and unjust imprisonment, to protect human rights activists who have been threatened, and to help refugees.

- Amnesty International conducts a campaign by writing urgent action letters and coordinating with international media. This includes campaigning with governments and state internal organizations to certify the constitution, treaties, and other laws on human rights principles in addition to civil and political rights work.

- Amnesty International Thailand has been operating in Thailand since 1995 and has registered the organization as “Amnesty International Organization” in 2003. We conduct activities to promote knowledge, understanding, and protect human rights by coordinating with both public and private organizations, as well as various independent organizations.

- Amnesty holds on to impartiality, independence, and transparency. We only accept donations for human rights campaigns from ordinary people like you. We reject funding from both the public and private sectors because the only benefit we hold on to is the human rights of all people.

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What is the Friedrich Naumann Foundation?

The Friedrich Naumann Foundation is a non-profit organization from the Federal Republic of Germany that promotes Liberal democracy, Rule of law, Human rights, and Market economy. We specially focus on the areas of promoting political knowledge and Civic Education, Democracy, Human rights, and Economic freedom.

The name of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation was named after Friedrich Naumann (1890-1919), who believed that the full implementation of democratic power requires education in the civil sector to lay the foundations in education and provide citizens with knowledge. Therefore, people will know how to participate in the direction of growth and development of the country.

The Friedrich Naumann Foundation has branches in 65 countries around the world to provide information to the general public, other NGOs, and institutions. We collaborate with NGOs, government agencies, civil society organizations, and educational institutions to exchange skills, knowledge and promote cooperation in the development of that country.

In Thailand, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation has been doing activities to promote democracy, human rights, state law, and economic freedom by collaborating with both public and private organizations for over 40 years.

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