

It's About Ability

Learning Guide on the Convention on
the Rights of Persons with Disabilities



Acknowledgements

This guide was written by Valerie Karr, a Ph.D candidate at Teachers College, Columbia University and an expert in the field of child education and disability.

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Participatory human rights education:

How to use this guide

Introduction

The purpose of this human rights activities guide is to empower children and young people with and without disabilities to speak out on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), to advocate for their rights and to make their communities more inclusive.

The guide was designed to serve as a resource to the booklet *It's About Ability: An explanation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, a summary of the Convention written especially for children. The activities in this guide are to be used by young leaders, peer educators, teachers and other educators at the community level to facilitate learning among 12- to 18-year-olds about the Convention and how it applies to children. The main thrust of this guide is that all children and young people are equal: with appropriate attitudes, supports and confidence every person can lead fruitful and self-determined lives in her or his community with dignity.

Take note that this guide is not an exhaustive resource of the Convention. More information on the rights within the Convention can be found at www.un.org/disabilities.

Participatory learning focus

This activity guide is intended for children and young people with and without disabilities to become knowledgeable learners empowered to advocate for human rights and disability. The units and sessions can be used by themselves or as a whole. All participants are encouraged to actively join in the activities and facilitators are welcome to adapt this guide to suit the needs of their learners. Visual graphics, drawings and hands-on activities that include everyone are an important part of the participatory learning process.

Please remember that the goal of this guide is for individuals and groups to come together and cooperatively explore these topics and issues in an open format free from judgment and to encourage effective action for change. Everyone has a right to her or his opinion and individual differences must be respected.

Facilitator's notes

Responding to individual differences

Children and young people are not all the same and together they will bring many different backgrounds, experiences and needs to a group setting. **Equal access to participation** is key to meeting a variety of needs, keeping in mind that some children and young people will need more support and more time than others to participate.

Key issues to consider:

- Assemble groups that are as diverse as possible, including children with and without disabilities and a balance of gender and minorities.
- Ensure that any chosen location is comfortable and safe for group work and sharing.
- Allow plenty of time for personal and group interaction and sharing so members can build relationships and friendships and begin to feel like a team. Assist children that are isolated so they may join the group if they would like to. Respect their will, if they do not want to interact with others but try to facilitate their participation.
- Ensure that all language needs are provided for. If sign language interpreters are needed, provide them. Descriptions of images, materials and situations should be provided for children who are blind or visually impaired (*see Handout 2 on page 86 for different modes of communication*).
- Simple language should be provided, especially for children with intellectual disabilities, for those who are illiterate or for those with a low level of education as well as children whose first language is different from the one being spoken.
- Ensure that all aspects of the programme are accessible to all children – from games and group activities to discussions. Consider the following questions:
 - Is the location accessible?
 - Does the building have stairs or doorways that may not allow wheelchairs to enter?
 - Are the toilets accessible for wheelchairs and children with mobility difficulties?
 - Will seating and tables include everyone? Do the chairs pull out to allow for wheelchairs at the table?
 - Can you provide handouts in a larger font size for children and young people with visual impairments?
 - Are language, materials and methodology accommodating to children in the broadest types of characteristics/conditions/situations?
 - Are language, materials and methodology culturally appropriate for all of the children in the group?

Source: *So you want to consult with children?: A toolkit of good practice*, Save the Children, 2003.

Positive attitudes

Never underestimate the power you have and how you can influence others. Always encourage a positive and accepting attitude in a group by example and education. Prejudice can easily arise in a group, so a positive attitude is essential. Participants may bring prejudices or stereotypes into the group from home or from friends. It is important to remember that if you encounter prejudice, challenge the comment or behavior in a non-threatening manner as soon as it occurs. This needs to be handled in a firm, understanding manner that allows the whole group to learn to be accepting. Try rephrasing comments to emphasize an accepting attitude and the value of human diversity.

Participatory learning

The activities in this guide are based on the participatory learning approach. The facilitator is meant to guide the activities and allow groups to interact actively in discussion and learning. Remember that the smaller the groups, the more participatory the process. While valuing human diversity, we should let everyone have a voice and remember to allow for flexibility and input from young participants. Groups should ideally be no larger than 15 participants.

Disability in the life cycle

Society is composed by individuals and groups with diverse ways of functioning. Disability is part of everyone's life cycle and it can appear in different moments of life.

Here are some examples:

- a baby that needs to be held or carried in a stroller for mobility
- a small boy that can not reach his floor's button in the elevator
- someone with a broken leg in a cast trying to go up the stairs
- a woman in advanced pregnancy trying to get up the stairs of a bus
- an illiterate citizen looking for information on the Internet
- a group of tourists that do not speak the local language
- someone that cannot read the small letters on a prescription's instructions
- an older person with arthritis that cannot open a door handle

In general, people face disabling conditions in a society that is unprepared or unaccepting of diversity. Keep in mind that the most important aspect of independent living is the empowerment of individuals to make their own decisions and manage their responsibilities. The use of support to accomplish daily activities is considered a reasonable accommodation for access: it is not to be seen as dependence. The key to an inclusive society is acceptance and support that ensure human rights are accessible for all.

Understanding disability

Our understanding of disability has changed over time. In the past, persons with disabilities have been regarded as objects of charity and passive recipients of welfare.

“Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”

— Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 1.

This view is slowly giving way to a human rights-based approach to disability, which rejects the long-established idea that obstacles to the participation of persons with disabilities arise primarily from their impairment. Instead, it focuses on eliminating barriers created by society that prevent persons with disabilities from enjoying their human rights on an equal basis with others. Such barriers include, for example, negative attitudes, discriminatory policies and practices, and inaccessible

environments. In line with this approach, disability is seen as a socially created problem, and as a matter of removing barriers to the full participation of persons with disabilities.

These barriers are what can prohibit full and equal participation in society. By eliminating attitudinal and environmental barriers — as opposed to treating persons with disabilities as problems to be fixed — persons with disabilities can participate as active members of society and enjoy the full range of their rights.

The Convention includes persons with long-term physical, mental, intellectual and sensory disabilities. It can also cover persons with short-term disabilities that are deprived of their human rights.

Source: United Nations Enable; for details see <www.un.org/disabilities>.

Inclusion is not about inserting persons with disabilities into existing structures, but about transforming systems to be inclusive of everyone. Inclusive communities put into place measures to support all children at home, at school, vocational centers, sports and cultural events and in their communities. When barriers exist, inclusive communities transform the way they are organized to meet the needs of all children.

Source: *Children with Disabilities. Ending Discrimination and Promoting Participation, Development and Inclusion*, Programme Guidance Note, UNICEF, 2007

General tips for inclusion:

- Always treat children and young people with respect! Make sure you speak directly to them and not to a parent or interpreter.
- Respond to individual needs and listen to the person.
- Respect privacy. If you have questions about the person's needs or supports, ask him or her in a conversation away from the group. Do not single out an individual or share his or her private information.
- Be open and flexible to change. Depending on the needs of your group, some of these activities will need to be altered or changed. That is fine. Remember that the general goal of the activity is inclusion and make minor changes to include everyone.
- Use peers and encourage teamwork. As a group, any difficulties can be overcome.
- Treat everyone with dignity, respect and courtesy. Be sure not to patronize.
- Offer assistance always asking if and how a person wants or needs to be assisted. Do not insist or be offended if your offer is not accepted.
- Check whether the group work setting allows everyone to participate equally (accessibly).

Additional tips for inclusion of persons with different types of disabilities can be found in Annex I (*page 87*).

Practical implications of human rights

Exercising rights depends on social, economic and cultural circumstances. In many countries human rights exist only on paper. It is important for us to understand the practical applications of our human rights.

If the facilitator feels that the group is prepared, discuss the social, economic and cultural circumstances that impact the rights of children and young people around the world and compare those circumstances with their own community (e.g., children living in areas affected by war, child labor, girls not allowed in schools, children with disabilities, etc.).

Unit I: Introduction to human rights and disability



Ami Verdyan, © Armenia

Human diversity and human rights

Rationale and overview

Participants will briefly review or gain an understanding of human diversity and basic human rights and an introduction to United Nations conventions. The focus of this unit is on basic understanding and awareness. Sessions aim to draw a connection between human rights and the value of human diversity.

Overall objectives

At the end of the module, participants will be able to:

- understand the value of human diversity
- understand the basic principles of human rights
- understand the role of the United Nations in human rights
- understand the role of the local government and other institutions including the community

Suggested time

2 hours and 15 minutes

Sessions

A. Valuing differences

B. What are human rights?

A. Valuing differences

Brief description of the session

In this session participants will gain an understanding of different abilities and the value of using all abilities as a team.

Objective:

By the end of the session participants will be able to identify the different abilities of the group and how working together helps overcome any barrier. They will also understand that everyone has unique abilities and differences.

Duration:

1 hour and 15 minutes

Session methods:

Small group discussions, large group discussions and presentations

Materials:

Blackboard and chalk or chart paper and markers

Process

STEP 1: Large group activity (*10 minutes*)

Divide the group in two and ask members to regroup the following characteristics based on differences or similarities:

- all long hair/short hair
- all girls/boys
- all tall/not tall
- all who like sports/do not
- all who play music/do not
- all shy/not shy

Facilitator's note: The same people will regroup under the different characteristics. This activity aims to develop an understanding and appreciation of human diversity.

STEP 2: Large group discussion (*10 minutes*)

Discuss with the entire group that diversity is a natural part of human life.

Everybody has differences, whether that difference relates to color, gender, size, shape, religion, neighborhood or anything else. A disability is no different. It may limit a person's mobility (ability to walk) or his or her ability to hear, see, taste or smell, but it does not limit his or her strengths and abilities. Differences in a group are valuable. Those differences are where creativity and new ideas are born.

Tell the following story:

Fatima is 14 years old and she has a visual impairment. She attends the local school with her friends, but cannot see well enough to read books or look at pictures used in class. Sometimes her teacher writes numbers and images on the board that she cannot see. Fatima's best friend, Alya, sits next to her in class and describes the images and facial expressions the teacher makes. Alya also reads to Fatima and describes the pictures in their books so that Fatima can participate fully in class. Fatima is very good at remembering history lessons and helps Alya prepare for tests. Alya also loves numbers and math. As a team, both girls do very well in school. They help each other in school by using the best of their abilities.

Facilitator's note: This is a fictional story for discussion purposes. Please use personal stories if desired.

STEP 3: Small group discussion (*25 minutes*)

Divide participants into groups of four or five. Ask groups to think of the story just shared about Fatima and Alya and to come up with one or two instances where they struggled with a task and someone helped them accomplish the task using teamwork.

Ask participants to discuss and list all of the abilities that helped them accomplish the task (the person who needed assistance and the person who gave assistance) on chart paper. Then ask them to prepare their discussion for the group. For example, being good at numbers, listening, drawing, reading, ability to speak up, etc.

STEP 4: Presentations (*25 minutes*)

Ask the group to come back together as a large group. Have each group hang their chart paper at the front of the room. Each group will present its collective abilities. After each presentation, ask the group what was key to accomplishing the task. Give participants time to discuss and reflect on the lists.

STEP 5: Summary (*3 to 5 minutes*)

Reiterate that every group member has unique abilities; as a team and with support, every person can be a contributing member to the group.

Key points

- Everyone has unique and valuable abilities.
- Working together people can accomplish anything they want.
- Ensuring rights and opportunities for all promotes ability.

B. What are human rights?

Brief description of the session

In this session participants will learn what human rights are and about United Nations conventions.

Objective:

By the end of the session participants will be able to understand what human rights are and identify some of the key principles of human rights (e.g., human rights are for all, they cannot be taken away or be broken up). They will gain an understanding of the United Nations and the role of United Nations conventions as international law.

Duration:

1 hour

Session methods:

Large group discussions and brainstorm

Materials:

Blackboard and chalk or chart paper and markers

Process

STEP 1: Large group discussion (25 minutes)

Write the following quotations on a piece of chart paper or blackboard or read them aloud.

“A teacher yells at me and she calls me an animal. She loudly shouts (...) and then she immediately starts to beat me.”

—Child with a disability, 12, Sudan. Source: *Ending Legalised Violence Against Children, Global Report 2006*, Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2006.

“Every night when its time to rest my head I’m very scared that I might be hunted by people who were killed in the war, especially friends who were fighting in the war with me.”

—Young man, 21, Liberia. Source: *Voices of Youth*, UNICEF; for details see <www.unicef.org/voy/speakout/speakout_453.html>.

“[I wish] I could take part in events, go somewhere where children who are not disabled can go.”

—Girl, 11, Latvia. Source: *Innocenti Insight on Children and Disability in Transition in CEE/CIS and Baltic States*, UNICEF, 2005.

“I received [corporal punishment from the day I started school. Now I am used to it.”

—Grade 7 student, Pakistan. Source: *Ending Legalised Violence Against Children, Global Report 2006*, Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2006.

Read the above quotations out loud to the group and ask participants for their observations:

What do the statements have in common?

The quotations are testimonies of children who have experienced injustice in different ways. Something has been taken away from them and they do not feel safe and secure. They do not feel respected and are discriminated against or they are not allowed to participate, whether in school or other activities. There is a name for that “something”: It is called “rights”.

Read the definition below and review the Did you know? bullet points.

Did you know?

- The rights of each person should be recognized and respected by everyone.
- Human rights are part of you. Everyone is born free and equal.
- Human rights belong to everyone. They do not need to be given to you and they cannot be taken away. No one can tell you that you do not have these rights.

- Human rights relate to each other. They cannot be separated from each other.
- Human rights cannot be exercised if you do not know you have them!

STEP 2: Brainstorm
(15 minutes)

Ask participants to name some human rights and to share experiences where they were able (or not) to realize a right in their community. List or draw the extremes of having and not having a right on chart paper, blackboard, or cardboard. Provide examples of human rights as needed.

STEP 3: Large group discussion (20 minutes)

Explain to the group that they will be learning much more about human rights and how they relate to each other. Tell them that the United Nations provide the platform for countries to develop international agreements (also called Conventions) to protect and further people's human rights.

Human rights:

Everyone in this world is protected by laws that defend their rights and inherent dignity (the dignity all people are born with). For example, every human being has the right to life and freedom from slavery. These rights are affirmed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by all member states of the United Nations in 1948. All children have the right to food and health care, the right to go to school and the right to be protected from violence and abuse. Children also have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account. The rights of children are stated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Source: *It's About Ability*, UNICEF, April 2008.

Examples of human rights

- The right to life
- The right to go to school
- The right to live independently in the community
- The right to live in freedom and safety
- The right to belong to a country
- The right to have opinions, to speak them and to share them with other people
- The right to work
- The right to privacy
- The right to non-discrimination
- The right to be treated fairly in a court of law
- The right to get married and have a family
- Freedom from cruelty or punishment
- Freedom from violence and abuse

Explain that the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), adopted in 1989, is one important result of the United Nations' work to promote human rights. The Convention was the first to make the rights of children a priority in the global struggle for human rights. The rights in the Convention are intended to make sure that children have what they need to grow, develop and learn in safety and in good health to become full members of their communities. The CRC makes clear that all children have the same rights, including those with disabilities!

To ensure that persons with disabilities are treated in the same way as other people, the Member States of the United

Nations developed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). To do so, they had the help of persons with disabilities themselves, and their representative organizations.

What is a convention?

A **convention** is an agreement between countries to obey the same law about a specific issue. When a country signs and ratifies (approves) a convention, it becomes a legal promise and guides the actions of the government. It often leads the government to adapt and change its own laws to support the goals of the convention. **Ratification** occurs when a signed convention or agreement is officially approved by a country and becomes the law in that country.

Source: *It's About Ability*, UNICEF, April 2008.

The **United Nations** is an international organization formed by the governments of 192 member countries working together to bring peace and justice into the world. The UN was created in 1945 to prevent future wars, to protect human rights and to provide a place for all the countries in the world to come together and discuss important questions and problems that affect everyone.

Source: *United Nations Guidelines on Justice in Matters Involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crimes (Child-Friendly Version)*, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime/ UNICEF, 2006.

The Convention entered into force (e.g., became international law) on 3 May 2008. The Convention protects and promotes the human rights of all persons with disabilities, including children and young people.

Taken together, the CRC and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities provide a strong legal framework to make sure

that children with disabilities can go to school, play and take part in things every child wants to do. The CRC lists all children's rights. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities reaffirms these rights for children (and adults) who live with a disability and spells out what actions governments must take for children (and adults) with disabilities to realize their rights.

Key points

- Persons with disabilities, including children, are often deprived of their rights.
- Human rights are for all regardless of people's differences.
- Human rights are inter-connected. They affect one another and cannot be separated.
- United Nations conventions are international laws that countries can sign and ratify. Countries that have ratified (approved) a convention have promised to follow it. They are bound to review and revise, where needed, their own national laws to make sure these are in line with the goals of the Convention.

Additional resources:

www.un.org/rights/dpi1774e.htm

www.un.org/millennium/law/treaties.htm

www.unicef.org/crc/

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

Rationale and overview

Participants will review and become acquainted with the principles of the Convention and the social model of disability.

Overall objectives

At the end of the module, participants will be able to:

- understand the principles of the Convention
- understand the interrelation between human rights
- understand the different types of views towards disability

Suggested time

3 hours and 5 minutes

Sessions

- A. United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- B. Diagrams illustrating the interdependence of rights
- C. Social model of disability

A. United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Brief description of the session

This session aims to introduce participants to the rights of persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities.

Objective:

By the end of the session participants will be able to explain the goals of the Convention, why a separate international agreement for persons with disabilities, including children was needed, and give examples of achieving human rights.

Duration:

1 hour and 20 minutes

Session methods:

Large group presentation, discussion and small group activity

Materials:

Roll of chart paper, colored markers or paint, handout on the child-friendly version of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on pages 81–85

Process

STEP 1: Introduction (20 minutes)

Introduce the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as a United Nations convention that protects and promotes the human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons with disabilities, including children. Ask participants why they think a separate convention was needed when other conventions were in place to protect and promote the rights of all people. State that the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) applies to all children, including children with disabilities and that the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities expands upon the rights described in the CRC.

Discuss the poem and use the information from box as additional input to the discussion.

*I have no legs,
But I still have feeling,
I cannot see,
But I think all the time,
Although I'm deaf,
I still want to communicate,
Why do people see me as useless, thoughtless, talkless,
When I am as capable as any,
For thoughts about our world*

—Coralie, Severs, 14
United Kingdom

Handout 1: Child-friendly version of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on pages 81–85.

Emphasize that all of the articles in the Convention are indivisible, interdependent, and interrelated, meaning they relate closely to each other and cannot be divided. Review that some articles are general and apply broadly to the entire Convention and some articles are specific like the right to education and work. Point out that while all the articles of the Convention apply to children as much as to adults, it also includes a specific article just dedicated to children – Article 7.

Children with disabilities and their families continue to be confronted with daily challenges that compromise the enjoyment of their rights. Discrimination and exclusion related to disabilities occur in all countries, all sectors of society and across all economic, political, religious and cultural settings. The discrimination children with disabilities and their families endure can be direct, indirect, or a combination of the two. Direct discrimination takes place when a child with a disability is deliberately treated differently from a child without a disability, on the basis of his or her impairment. Indirect discrimination occurs when practices or policies that do not immediately appear to discriminate against children with disabilities actually have a discriminatory impact in practice, resulting in the denial of certain human rights.

Source: *Promoting the Rights of Children with Disabilities*, Innocenti Digest No. 13, UNICEF

Article 7 – Children with disabilities

Governments agree to take every possible action so that children with disabilities can enjoy all human rights and freedoms equally with other children. They also agree to make sure that children with disabilities can express their views freely on all things that affect them. What is best for each child should always be considered first.

Source: *It's About Ability*, UNICEF, April 2008.

General articles:

Article 1: Purpose

Article 2: Definitions

Article 3: General principles

Article 4: General obligations

Broad articles:

Article 5: Equality and non-discrimination

Article 6: Women with disabilities

Article 7: Children with disabilities

Article 8: Awareness raising

Article 9: Accessibility

Specific articles:

Article 10: Right to life

Article 11: Risks and emergencies

Article 12: Equal recognition before the law

Articles 13 and 14: Access to justice

Article 14: Liberty and security of the person

Article 15: Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

Article 16: Freedom from violence and abuse

Article 17: Protecting the person

Article 18: Liberty of movement and nationality

Article 19: Independent living

Article 20: Personal mobility

Article 21: Access to information and expression

Article 22: Respect for privacy

Article 23: Respect for home and family

Article 24: Education

Article 25 and 26: Health and rehabilitation

Article 27: Work

Article 28: Social protection

Article 29: Participation in political and public life

Article 30: Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport

Point out that the Convention has 50 articles in all. Articles 1 to 31 are about the rights of persons with disabilities and the measures governments should take to protect these. Articles 32 to 50 are about how governments and civil society (including organizations representing children and young people) should work together to make sure all persons with disabilities get all their rights.

Article 35, for example, sets out that governments that ratified the Convention must track their progress towards keeping with its promises. They must document their progress and the measures they have taken in a report. Persons with disabilities, including children have the right to participate in this report. A committee at the United Nations (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) will review these reports and provide countries with guidance on additional actions to implement the Convention's provisions and thus better protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

STEP 2: Small group activity (*30 minutes*)

Divide participants into four or five groups and distribute chart paper and markers or paint. Assign each group a section of rights. Ask them to discuss and draw or paint examples of someone being denied these rights on one side of the chart paper. Then ask them to discuss and draw an example of someone enjoying the rights on the other side of the paper. Tell them that these pictures will be displayed in the room, school, center or community to show that everyone has these rights.

STEP 3: Large group discussion (*30 minutes*)

Ask participants to present their drawings to the larger group. Start with the drawing of the right being denied, then the right being enjoyed. Ask the following:

- How did the children or child achieve their rights?
- What did they have to overcome to achieve their rights?
 - Examples: Changing negative attitudes, getting community or government support, using teamwork or educating others.

Post these drawings as a rights mural in the community or school to raise awareness.

Facilitator's note: If students are having trouble finding examples, ask them to think of things they do everyday. Do they play? Go to school? Live at home? Go to the doctor if they are sick? Remind them that these are rights that they have and that some people are denied these rights. Ask them to draw some of these examples.

Key points

- Children and young people with disabilities should have these rights guaranteed all around the world.
- Be prepared to answer questions and give examples of the practice of rights across diverse groups (rights of elderly, children, women, etc.).

B. Diagrams illustrating the interdependence of rights

Brief description of the session

This session aims to build on the understanding that human rights are related.

Objective:

By the end of the session participants will understand how rights are based on human needs and the negative effect of being denied human rights.

Duration:

1 hour

Session method:

Large group discussion

Materials:

Rights diagrams drawn on chart paper or the blackboard

Process

STEP 1: Introduction (*5 minutes*)

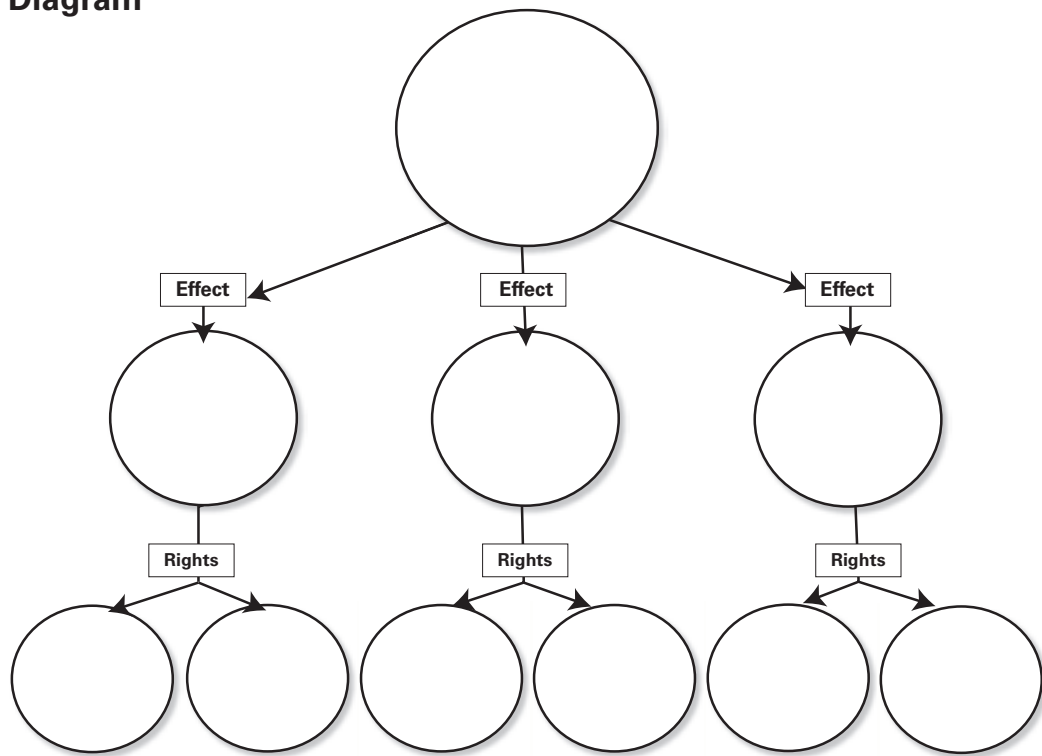
Introduce the activity by observing that human rights are based on human needs and that everyone is entitled to and needs all of their human rights. Explain that this activity will help everyone understand how rights are related and that denying one right can have many negative effects.

STEP 2: Demonstration (*40 minutes*)

Demonstrate how the diagram works:

1. Write down a human right from the UNCRPD in the centre of the big circle at the top of the diagram (e.g., right to education).
2. Ask, "If this right is denied, what are three possible effects?" Write any three effects mentioned in circles labeled "effect".
3. Take each of the three effects (e.g., not able to read) and ask "What human rights would be denied by this effect (e.g., right to work due to inability to read and fill out a job application)?" Fill in each human right in a circle that extends from the effect.
4. Complete two or three rights diagrams.

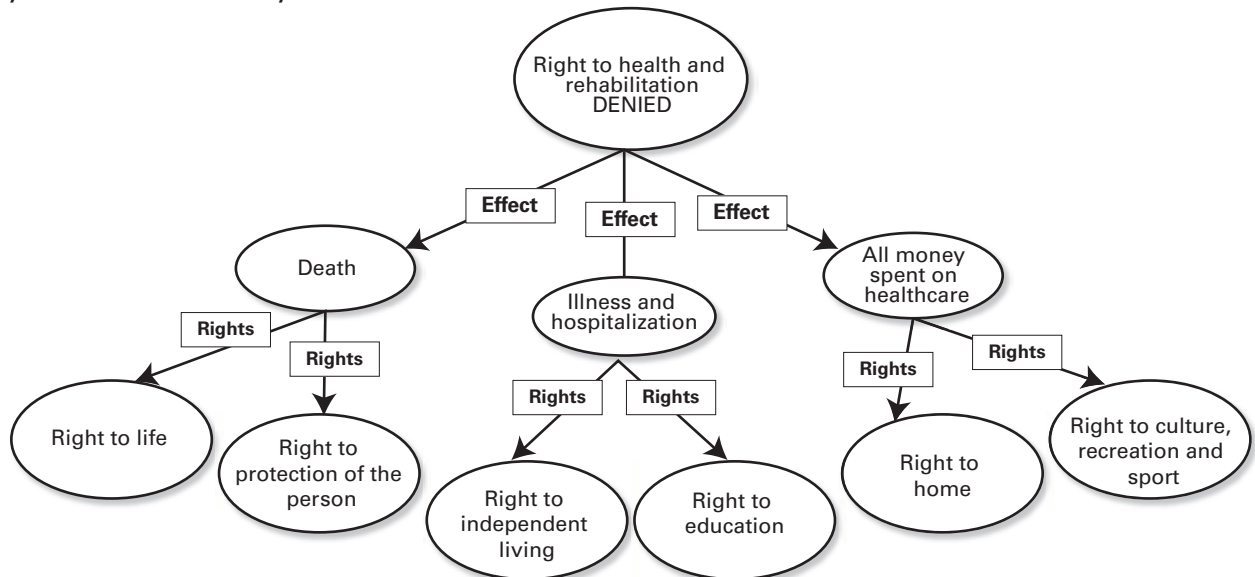
Rights Diagram



Example:

Health and rehabilitation

You have the right to the same range and quality of free or affordable health care as provided to other people. You also have the right to specific health services needed if you have a disability.



STEP 3: Large group discussion (15 minutes)

Discuss the examples and ask the following:

- What happens when one right is denied?
- What is the most negative effect?
- What does this activity show us about the interdependence of rights?

Source: Human Rights.YESI, Action and advocacy on the rights of persons with disabilities, Human Rights Resource Center, 2007; for details see <www.humanrightsyes.org>.

Key points

- All rights are related.
- Denying one right can lead to the denial of other rights.

C. Social model of disability

Brief description of the session

This session aims to introduce participants to past views about persons with disabilities and the social model of disability that the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is based on.

Objective:

By the end of the session participants will be able to explain the social model of disability.

Duration:

45 minutes

Session methods:

Large group presentation and discussion

Materials:

Blackboard and chalk or chart paper and markers

Process

STEP 1: Large group discussion (40 minutes)

Begin with the following statement:

Everyone is different, whether that difference relates to your color, if you are a girl or boy, your size, shape or anything else. A disability is no different. It may limit a person's ability to hear or walk or affect how a person understands things. But regardless of our differences we are all human beings. Disability does not change the rights a person has as a human being. It is just one of many differences that everyone has.

Post the following terms on three pieces of chart paper and discuss:

- Medical model of disability (2 to 5 minutes)
- Charity model of disability (2 to 5 minutes)
- Social model of disability (10 to 12 minutes)

Use a table with three columns giving a few examples of each model and let the children complete the table with their own examples.

Facilitator's note: Make sure to spend more time on the discussion of the social model of disability and less time on the other two models.

Ask participants what those terms mean. Discuss using definitions below what the terms actually mean. Emphasize that the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is based on the social model of disability and that by removing social and physical barriers all people can participate actively in life and be welcomed and contributing members of society. It is important to remember the past models related to disability to learn from the mistakes of the past and move towards an equitable world.

Medical model of disability

The view that disability is a medical problem that needs to be solved or an illness that needs to be "cured". This model implies that a person with a disability is broken or sick and that they need to be fixed or healed. Many people try to fix disability using medical interventions as the solution. They do not see disability as a barrier between society or the physical environment. Instead, the burden is on the person's "problem" and fixing it.

- Disability is bad.
- Disability is a personal problem – the disability is in you, and it's your problem.
- What will make problems better is curing the person or making them seem as least disabled as possible.
- Only professionals can help the disabled person fit in and be accepted in society.



Ask participants the following:

- How is the medical model of disability harmful to persons with disabilities?
- How does the medical model support the rights of persons with disabilities?
- Does the medical model promote respect?

Charity model of disability

The view that people with disabilities are helpless and need to be cared for. It is much easier for people to feel pity or charity for persons with disabilities instead of trying to overcome their fear or discomfort. People with disabilities are like everyone else they do **NOT** need charity. They have the right to be treated equally.



Ask participants the following:

- How is the charity model of disability harmful to persons with disabilities?
- How does the charity model support the rights of persons with disabilities?
- Does the charity model promote respect? empowerment?

Social model of disability

This model focuses on eliminating barriers created by society or the physical environment that limit a person from enjoying their human rights. This includes promoting positive attitudes, changing the environment to be accessible for all and providing information in a way that everyone can understand.

- Disability is only a difference, such as gender (being a girl or a boy) or race.
- Having a disability is neither good nor bad, it is just part of who you are.
- Rights are denied when person with a disability lives in an inaccessible society.
- For persons with disabilities to be fully included, we need to change our societies, including existing rules, attitudes of people toward disability and even buildings (to make them accessible).
- These changes are a responsibility of government, but can also be triggered and promoted by, for example, adults and young people with disabilities themselves, the parents of children with disabilities, other disability advocates and child rights organizations.

- Accessible design can benefit many people, including pregnant women, very small children, elderly persons and people who deliver items or are carrying heavy loads.

Ask participants the following:

- How is the social model of disability different from the medical and charity models?
- How does the social model support the rights of persons with disabilities?
- Does the social model promote respect? empowerment?



Source: *Human Rights. YES! Action and advocacy on the rights of persons with disabilities*, Human Rights Resource Center, 2007 and Kids As Self Advocates; for details see < www.humanrightsyes.org> and < www.familyvoices.org/fvkasa_org/resources/files/history-model.html>.

STEP 2: Summary (5 minutes)

Review briefly the three models towards disability. Emphasize the social model of disability and that everyone can change attitudes and everyone can help to make the physical environment more accessible. State that participants will learn more about attitudes and accessibility in upcoming activities.

Key points

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is based on the social model of disability.
- Disability is part of human diversity.
- Society needs to adapt to make life more inclusive for all.
- We can change our and other people's view towards disability.

Additional resource: In The Picture; for details see < www.childreninthepicture.org.uk/au_socialmodel.htm>.

Unit II: Respect for the individual



Lea Noemí Hernández, 25, Nicaragua

Equality and non-discrimination

Article 4: General obligations

There should be no laws that discriminate against people with disabilities. If necessary, governments should create laws to protect the rights of persons with disabilities and put these laws into action. If old laws or traditions discriminate against people with disabilities, governments should find ways to change them. Your government should consult with organizations of children with disabilities as it changes such laws and policies.

Source: *It's About Ability*, UNICEF, April 2008.

Articles 5 and 6: Equality, non-discrimination and gender

Governments recognize that all people have the right to be protected by the law and that the laws of a country apply to everyone who lives there.

Governments know that women and girls with disabilities face many different types of discrimination. They agree to protect their human rights and freedoms.

Source: *It's About Ability*, UNICEF, April 2008.

Rationale and overview

The following sessions are designed to introduce participants to the value of equality and non-discrimination. The activities are designed to gain a basic understanding of the concepts and interrelation of equality, non-discrimination, and respect.

Overall objectives

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- understand the concept of discrimination
- understand common myths and stereotypes related to disability
- understand the principles of equality
- understand the concept of respect for all in achieving inclusive principles
- identify ways to create conditions for all persons to live full lives with dignity

Suggested time

4 hours and 10 minutes

An example of equality

Everyone is allowed the right to education. If textbooks are used in school, governments must provide people with visual impairments the text in large font or Braille depending on their needs. This will allow each person to have equal access to the information in textbooks. A low cost way to provide equal access to texts is to have a peer read the text aloud or record short stories or texts on tape.

Sessions

- A. Discrimination
- B. Myths and stereotypes
- C. Respect
- D. Equal inclusion

A. Discrimination

Brief description of the session

In this session participants will explore the concept of discrimination and the feelings associated with discrimination.

Objective:

By the end of the session participants will be able to identify different types of discrimination. They will discuss the root of discrimination (misinformation and stereotypes) and the resulting mistreatment. Participants will understand that they have a responsibility to not discriminate and to prevent discrimination against others in a safe manner.

Duration:

1 hour and 20 minutes

Session methods:

Small group activity and large group discussion

Materials:

None required

Process

STEP 1: Introduction (*5 minutes*)

Explain to the group that “discrimination on the basis of disability” means that people are not treated fairly or are excluded because they have a disability. Discrimination promotes a cycle of abuse and mistreatment that can result in a group of people being oppressed.

Inform the group that many people have felt discriminated against because of gender, age, race, religion, ethnicity, language, sexual preference or disability and that this activity will explore some of the feelings associated with discrimination. Explain that people can belong to several groups and that groups are not closed categories that define a person. This activity is to identify common misperceptions when people are only identified by a group. It is important to remember that we are all unique individuals during this activity and that treating people as individuals and as equals combats discrimination.

STEP 2: Small group activity (*45 minutes*)

Ask participants to form groups of four or five people. Ask the groups to do the following:

1. Think of a group that you belong (if you would like to discuss belonging to many groups this is okay to). Are you a male or female? Do you have a disability? Do you belong to a religious group?
2. What do you feel when you think of belonging to that group? (Pride, hardship, uncertainty?)
3. Share with your small group the positive qualities about your group. What do people not usually know about your group?
4. Share with the small group some ways that your group is discriminated against or mistreated.
5. Think about how this treatment affected you. What were others believing when they mistreated you and your group? How were they misinformed?
6. What do you wish never to have happen again to the people in your group?
7. How can you show people the positive qualities of your group?

STEP 3: Large group discussion (*30 minutes*)

Have participants return to the large group for a discussion. Ask them to share a few of the stories shared in the small groups. Point out the following:

- What was something positive you learned about the other groups?
- People with disabilities are a group that is discriminated against.
- People often discriminate against people because they are misinformed or have stereotyped views.
- Tell the group that they are now responsible for themselves, to not discriminate and to think of safe ways to prevent others from discrimination.

Key points

- People with disabilities are often discriminated against.
- Denying someone his or her human rights is discrimination.
- Encourage responsibility in preventing discrimination, but always emphasize safety in action not violence.

B. Myths and stereotypes

Brief description of the session

This session aims to help the group understand stereotypes that exist towards persons with disabilities and how this affects their lives.

Objective:

By the end of the session participants will understand some of their own myths and stereotypes about persons with disabilities.

Duration:

1 hour

Session methods:

Large group discussion and small group activity

Materials:

Photograph, blackboard and chalk or chart paper and markers

Process

STEP 1: Introduction and small group activity
(25 minutes)

Discuss what discrimination is and that people are often discriminated against because of mistaken ideas or expectations that we have about people. Have a group member read the “discrimination on the basis of disability” box to the group.

Get into small groups of four or five people and ask participants to collect both negative and positive stories or images on discrimination from the media (newspapers, magazines), from comic books, school books, etc.

Facilitator’s note: The stories and images can include examples of discrimination towards anyone in society (children, adults, persons with disabilities, the elderly, etc.).

Ask groups to consider the following discussion points:

- Think of the different groups that are part of your school or community.
- Think of the different positive and negative myths and stereotypes that exist in your school or community.
- Discuss examples where being different or part of a minority group has led to discrimination or violence in your school or community.
- Discuss examples of which being different or part of a minority group has led to positive discrimination or privileges in your school or community.
- Discuss how these situation impact individuals and the group as a whole.

STEP 2: Large group discussion (25 minutes)

Introduce the concept of equal opportunities, which means that all people would have equal rights.

“Discrimination on the basis of disability” means that people are not treated fairly or are excluded because they have a disability or a diverse way of functioning.

Facilitator's note: You could discuss a situation of different animals (an elephant, seal, monkey, cat and fish, for example) having to climb a tree to bring out issues of diversity, equity and equality. It is clear that the task given to all animals is the same but their individual attributes may vary. Some animals may find it easy to climb and others may be unable to. It is important when we think of inclusion to be sensitive to other people's needs and abilities in order to provide equal opportunities.

Other examples can be used to facilitate an understanding of the concept. If you are using graphics, and the group includes children that are blind or have low vision, remember to describe the image. You may ask children to discuss other examples of equalization of opportunities that they have collected from their life experience.

Examples:

- A baby needs his/her mother to be fed, so he/she can live and grow up to be independent.
- A child needs to use glasses so he/she can read like the others and get the same opportunity to learn.

Ask for other examples of diverse ways of functioning and point out how these could be provided so people can have equal rights and opportunities.

STEP 3: Summary (5 to 10 minutes)

Discuss how the myths and stereotypes behind discrimination impacts the rights of all discriminated against, including persons with disabilities. Emphasize that social views need to change or have changed. It is our personal responsibility to not promote stereotypes and to treat everyone with respect as equal members of society.

C. Respect

Brief description of the session

In this session participants will explore the concept of respect and its relationship with equality.

Objective:

By the end of the session participants will be able to identify what respect means and how to treat people with respect. The concept of respect as a foundation of equality will be introduced.

Duration:

35 minutes

Examples of myths and stereotypes about people with disabilities

People with disabilities:

- cannot live on their own
- are to be pitied
- are helpless
- are cursed/disability is evil
- cannot learn or go to school
- are better off staying at home
- will never be able to work
- need to be cured
- cannot play sports
- will never get married or have children
- are stupid
- are not sexually active
- are children forever

Source: Human Rights. YES!, Action and advocacy on the rights of persons with disabilities, Human Rights Resource Center, 2007; for details see <www.humanrightsyeyes.org>.

Session methods:

Brainstorm and large group discussion

Materials:

Blackboard and chalk or chart paper markers

Process

STEP 1: Introduction (5 minutes)

Explain to the group that in order to achieve an equal world free of discrimination all people need to treat each other with respect.

STEP 2: Brainstorm (25 minutes)

Tell the group that you are going to explore the concept of “respect” and what that means to the group. Explain that you are going to create a diagram of the word respect, which is just a way to record visually what respect means.

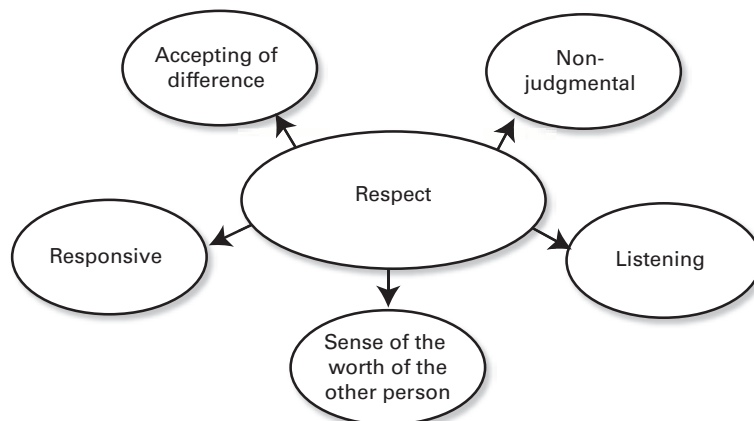
Ask participants to think of someone (a family member, friend, leader, etc.) they respect. What is it about them that you respect?

Draw a circle on the board or chart paper with the word “respect” in it and record answers to the following questions.

- What does it mean to respect someone?
- What words came to mind when you thought of the person you respected?
- How do we treat persons with disabilities with respect?

Example of a respect diagram:

Explore with the group characteristics or similarities that all children – with their personal abilities and different ways of functioning – have in common, for example, capability to love and to be loved, to relate and to interact to each other, to help others, to teach their own skills to others and to be friends.



Respect for one another means being willing to accept other people's differences even if they look different from you, have a different religion or come from a different land. It also means treating other people the way you would want to be treated.

Source: *Defining diversity, prejudice and respect*, The Children's Hospital, 2004; for details see <www.thechildrenshospital.org/wellness/info/kids/20760.aspx>.

STEP 3: Large group discussion (*5 minutes*)

Ask the group how they feel when they are treated disrespectfully. What do they do when someone does not respect them?

Explain that everyone deserves to feel respected by his or her family, friends, the community and government. Respect must be mutual. It related to fairness and justice and serves as a foundation for equality.

Key points

- Respect for each others differences/personal characteristics is a foundation for equality.
- Everyone deserves respect.
- Everyone can contribute to society.

D. Equal inclusion

Brief description of the session

This session aims to introduce participants to inclusion in everyday life and the importance of awareness and removing barriers in the environment in achieving equality.

Objective:

By the end of the session participants will gain an awareness of barriers in the environment and the ability and importance of creating inclusive environments for all.

Duration:

1 hour and 15 minutes

Session methods:

Large group discussions, brainstorm and small group activity

Materials:

Chart paper and markers or paper and pencils

Process

STEP 1: Introduction (*15 minutes*)

Introduce the concept of “design for all”: create a picture(s) like the one below, showing situations like these suggested below, making it not specific of only one culture, race, gender or any other demographic group)

People in our society have different ways of functioning:



Is our environment (home, school, streets, parks, city) prepared to offer same opportunities of participation for everyone?

Use each one of the situations in the images above asking:

What could be done differently so:

- an elderly person can get up to the house with steps more safely, comfortably and independently
- a person in a wheelchair can use the lavatory
- a blind person can find his/her way

Who else would benefit from each one of these accommodations?

Can we find examples of easy possible solutions in our school or community, so all persons can fully participate in society life?

STEP 2: Large group discussion (*5 minutes*)

Introduce and discuss the concept of assistive devices, using examples from a simple magnifying glass or a ramp to a computer screen reader for a blind person or other examples appropriate to the context of your community.

STEP 3: Brainstorm (*5 minutes*)

Review with participants the notion that all people have different abilities. Then have them get into groups to brainstorm ways to make our programme inclusive for all.

Show or distribute Handout 2 on different types of ability and explain that the handout shows different ways that people with disabilities can learn using sign language and Braille.

STEP 4: Small group activity (*25 minutes*)

Have participants form groups of four or five people. Ask groups to create a list of ways their group can be inclusive for everyone. Review the following questions:

- What supports are needed to include everyone?
- Does the physical environment need to be changed?
- Do attitudes need to be more accepting/respectful?
- Are the activities presented in a way that includes everyone?

- How can we change them to include all?
 - Examples: Change attitudes, be willing to assist, ask for help when needed, rearrange the room or activity, use teamwork.

STEP 5: Large group discussion (*25 minutes*)

Ask each group to present its list of inclusive practices and adopt a group agreement for inclusion throughout the programme.

Review the different experiences of groups and how teamwork and adapting the activity can create equality.

Key points

- Activities can and need to be accessible for all.
- Disability is part of human diversity. We can all learn and fully participate in life with the appropriate supports.
- Solutions can be simple and easy to build.

Freedom from violence and abuse

Article 16: Freedom from violence and abuse

Children with disabilities should be protected from violence and abuse. They should not be mistreated or harmed in their home or outside. If you faced violence or maltreatment, you have the right to get help to stop the abuse and recover.

Source: *It's About Ability*, UNICEF, April 2008.

Rationale and overview

The following activities were designed for participants to gain an understanding of situations of violence and abuse for people with disabilities. The session aims to teach participants what it means to feel safe and ways to avoid or prevent abuse.

Overall objectives

At the end of the activities, participants will be able to:

- identify different types of violence and abuse
- describe the importance of safety
- understand the role of bystanders and how can they act to discourage or stop violence
- understand the importance of a *zero tolerance to violence and abuse* policy and practice in school and community
- understand that people with disabilities, including young people and children are especially vulnerable to violence and abuse
- identify ways to stop situations of violence or abuse without using violence

Suggested time

3 hours and 45 minutes

Sessions

- A. Safety
- B. Violence and abuse
- C. Freeze! Stopping violence and abuse

A. Safety

Brief description of the session

In this session participants will gain an understanding that people with disabilities may be more vulnerable to violence and abuse than others and explore what it means to feel safe and ensure conditions of security.

Objective:

By the end of the session participants will be able to identify what it means to be safe and pinpoint some ways to make the group a safe place to be. Participants will gain an understanding that some people do not always feel safe and that people with disabilities are at risk of experiencing abuse and violence. They will also understand the critical role of bystanders and how can they act to avoid and stop violence.

Duration:

45 minutes

Session methods:

Visualization and large group discussion

Materials:

Blackboard and chalk or chart paper and markers

Process

STEP 1: Introduction (5 minutes)

Explain to the group that everyone has a right to safety and freedom from violence and abuse. This means that everyone should feel safe at home, at school, in the community and elsewhere. Some people are more vulnerable to abuse because they may not be treated equal or able to get help. Children, for example, may have difficulty in defending themselves or in reporting abuse. For children with disabilities, it may be even more difficult to protect themselves against an offender. Even if they are able to make a report, their accounts may be dismissed or not believed. It is important that everyone feels safe and leads a life free of violence. The Convention protects and ensures that persons with disabilities have the conditions necessary to feel safe, such as legal representation in a court of law when reporting abuse.

STEP 2: Visualization (30 minutes)

Ask the group to visualize (create a picture in their mind) a time when they felt completely safe, without being scared or yelled at, where every part of them was relaxed and safe. For some of them this could be at home, at a friend's house, at church or at school. For some people it will be a place in their mind or a place where they are all alone.

Real-life story

Michel was born with a disability. He had a hard time learning, speaking and using his hands; he often knocked things over. Michel spoke slower than everyone else because he had difficulty finding the right words to use. Michel's family was not very nice to him. His father used to punch him in the head and yell at him a lot. Michel was only allowed a little bit of food and very little time to eat. He had to eat as much as he could before his food was taken away. Because of this Michel was often tired and a lot smaller than everyone else his age. Michel had a hard time because his way of being was not respected and accommodated and because it was aggravated by the abuse he suffered.

Source: Anonymous story told to author.

Visualize:

- Where was this place?
- Who was there?
- What was happening?
- How did you feel?

Ask everyone to bring their attention back to the group and to volunteer what they were thinking of when they heard the questions.

Ask the group what does it mean to be safe? Write the responses on the board or chart paper.

Examples of being safe:

- No one is yelling at you or hitting you.
- You feel comfortable.
- People listen to you.
- You are respected.
- Encouraged to speak up or express yourself.
- You are not forced to do anything that you do not want to do.
- You are happy.
- You are not afraid.

STEP 3: Large group discussion (10 minutes)

Ask participants if it is important to feel safe during our group activities? Come up with a few reflections that will be important to remember during group activities. Point out that sometimes it will take people longer to share and participate in group activities. Some people have difficulties with speaking or writing. Encourage participants to follow these reflections and keep the group a safe place to share and learn that is respectful for all.

Key points

- Everyone has the right to feel safe where they live, work and play.
- People with disabilities are among the more vulnerable to violence and abuse.
- Reflections from this activity should be carried over into other sessions and activities.

B. Violence and abuse

Brief description of the session

In this session participants will identify different types of abuse or violence and identify ways to overcome situations that are abusive or violent.

Objective:

By the end of the session participants will be able to identify the four types of abuse and examples of each type. They will explore why certain people are more vulnerable to abuse and discuss ways to prevent or avoid violence and abuse in non-violent ways.

Duration:

1 hour and 30 minutes

Session methods:

Large and small group discussions

Materials:

Blackboard and chalk or chart paper and markers

Process

STEP 1: Introduction (*15 minutes*)

Write the words “violence” and “abuse” on a blackboard or piece of chart paper. Ask participants to define the words. What do they mean?

Ask:

- What is a violent relationship? What is an abusive behavior?
- Why are some persons more vulnerable to experience violence and abuse?
- What makes children vulnerable to violence? (See child-friendly version of the Violence Study)
- Why are children and young people with disabilities particularly vulnerable?
- What examples do we know of violent/abusive relationships? How did we deal with it?

Examples:

- Children and young people are more at risk because they have not fully grown up yet; they cannot easily defend themselves.
- Many children and young people are afraid to report violence because it’s committed by someone who has power over them.
- Some people rely on the person who abuses them for food or shelter or a job.
- Some people do not have anywhere to turn to change their situation.
- Some people are more vulnerable because of their gender, race, ethnic origin or disability.

Source: *United Nations Secretary-General’s Study on Violence against Children Adapted for Children and Young People*, United Nations, 2006.

Explain to the group that this activity will explore different types of violence or abuse. The best way to learn how to avoid, to mediate or take control of a situation of violence is to understand first its causes and dynamics. It is never a good idea to respond to violence and abuse with more violence. In this activity, participants will learn non-violent alternatives to end abuse.

STEP 2: Large group discussion (30 minutes)

Explain to the group that violence and abuse can lead to hopelessness and fear. It undermines self esteem and makes people feel like they have no power. In order to take back power or be empowered we have to recognize when abuse is happening. Violence against children is never right. Governments and communities should protect children, including children with disabilities from violence and abuse. If your country has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child or the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities your government should take action to end violence against all children.

Child abuse is any kind of harm done to children, including neglect, physical, sexual or mental violence by someone who is responsible for them or has power or control over them and who they should be able to trust.

Violence takes place when someone uses her or his strength or position of power to hurt someone else on purpose, not by accident. Violence includes threats of violence and acts which could possibly cause harm, as well as those that actually do. The harm involved can be to a person's mind and her or his general health and well-being, as well as to her or his body.

Examples of violence and abuse:

- (child-to-child) bullying in school settings
- violence between siblings
- father-mother physical/verbal aggression
- child-spanking and mistreatment
- sexual abuse

Facilitator's note: For an additional activity on bullying, see Unit III's education activity B on page 60.

Where can violence or abuse take place?

- at home
- in school or other educational settings
- in institutions such as orphanages; in prisons or other detention facilities, such as police lock-ups
- in the workplace
- in the community

Source: *United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children Adapted for Children and Young People*, United Nations, 2006.

Write the following on the board or chart paper:

Types of abuse:

1. Physical violence
2. Verbal/emotional/psychological
3. Not being treated equally
4. Using/exploiting

Facilitator's note: Some participants may be interested in sharing their stories of abuse. If this happens, encourage sharing and keep the environment safe and respectful for all participants. If participants want to continue sharing, invite them to discuss their experience with you at a later time (e.g., at the end of the day or during a break).

Point to the words physical violence and ask the group:

- What is physical abuse or violence?
- What are some different types of physical abuse?
 - Examples: Hitting, pinching, slapping, rape or sexual abuse.

List the examples on the board or paper next to physical. State that many times in life, children experience abuse from other children and from adults. In many cases, children with disabilities are more likely to experience violence, including being abandoned.

Point to the words "verbal/emotional/mental". Explain that abuse does not always have to be physical. Words and threats can also be abuse. Ask the following and record:

- What are some types of verbal/emotional/mental abuse?
 - Examples: Insults, yelling, putting someone down, threatening to hurt someone, bullying, teasing, neglecting/ignoring, etc.

Point to the words "not being treated equally". Point out the previous activities where stereotypes were identified about people with disabilities and people were treated unequally. Ask the group:

- What are some examples of unequal treatment?
 - Examples: Not allowing children with disabilities to go to school, picking students with disabilities last on a sports team, not being friends with someone because they have a disability, having stairs to a building that does not allow people using wheelchairs to enter, etc.

State that equality is each person receiving the same respect, treatment, opportunities and rights, irrespective of, for example, their colour, country of birth, religion, political beliefs or disability status.

Point to the words "using/exploiting" on the board. Explain that this type of abuse is where someone takes advantage of another person for his or her own benefit. Ask the group:

- What are some examples of using/exploiting?
 - Examples: Taking a person's money or paying someone less money for work, asking someone repeatedly for favors and not returning the good deed.

- Note: An historical example of exploitation occurred during the Holocaust when persons with disabilities were used for medical experimentation and then killed (Evans, Suzanne E., *Forgotten Crimes: The Holocaust and People with Disabilities*, Disabilities Rights Advocates, 2004).

STEP 3: Small group discussion (*25 minutes*)

Get into small groups of four or five participants. Ask the small groups to discuss the following and record their answers:

- What happens to someone who is mistreated?
- How does it make them feel? (Examples: Powerless, unworthy, stupid)
- Can abuse go on forever if someone does not get help?
- How do we prevent violence and abuse?

Explain that bystanders have an important role in the prevention of violence and abuse. Consider the following acronym NICE, which identifies four critical choice points in bystanding.

NICE stands for:

- **Notice** that something is happening
- **Interpret** if the situation is one in which help is needed and can be given
- **Choose** a form of assistance
- **Engage** with the problem

Ask small group to relate the NICE acronym to a real-life experience for the large group discussion.

STEP 4: Large group discussion (*20 minutes*)

Ask the groups to share what they discussed. How would they prevent abuse and violence? How does the NICE acronym relate to prevention? Write the answers on the board or paper.

Facilitator's note: Listen to and reflect on answers. Encourage non-violence and safe ways to prevent abuse. If violent solutions are given, tell the group that violence can lead to more violence and abuse. It is best to get out of a situation and get help than to have a fight or confrontation. Encourage children to mediate and look for help, and specially protect those who cannot defend himself or herself properly.

State that one way to prevent violence and abuse is to hold yourself responsible to never mistreat or abuse in anyway.

Others ways to get help or prevent abuse are:

- to go to someone safe for help and tell them what is happening
- get legal advise or use the law to protect yourself and your rights
- advocate for your government to protect against abuse and promote programmes that help people overcome inequality

Key points

- Violence and abuse should not be tolerated. Report to those that can help: parents, teachers, psychologists and even police.
- No one should be subject to violence or abuse.
- People with disabilities, especially children are more vulnerable to abuse.
- A violent response to abuse is not the answer. It is better to seek help or avoid the situation than to use violence as a reaction to abuse.

Sources: *United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children Adapted for Children and Young People*, United Nations, 2006; *Making Allies, Making Friends* curriculum inspired the outline for some of the thoughtful participatory learning sessions for young people; Education Development Center's Health and Human Development Program at <http://main.edc.org/newsroom/features/bullying_HHD.asp>, Sue Ball at Birmingham City Council at <www.bgfl.org/services/stopbullying/default.htm>; and Teaching Expertise at <www.teachingexpertise.com/articles/bullying-and-the-bystander-1615>.

B. Freeze! Stopping violence and abuse

Brief description of the session

In this session participants will portray situations of violence and abuse and identify different ways to overcome the situations.

Objective:

By the end of the session participants will be able to identify different situations of abuse and ways to stop or overcome violence and abuse through teamwork.

Duration:

1 hour and 30 minutes

Session methods:

Small group activity and presentations

Materials:

None required

Process

STEP 1: Introduction (5 minutes)

Explain to the group that many people with disabilities experience violence and abuse and that this activity will identify ways to help stop those situations. Review the last activity and the different types of abuses.

Facilitator's note: For participants with visual impairments be sure to explain the scenes in detail out loud.

STEP 2: Small group activity (20 minutes)

Ask participants to form groups of four to six people. Explain that each group needs to identify a situation where an abuse is happening or a human right is being denied to a person with a disability (physical, verbal/emotional/mental, inequality or not being treated equal, using/exploiting).

Remind groups to think of the previous activity and the different types of abuse. Tell the groups that they must portray this scene visually and that they will be asked to “freeze” the scene. Freezing is when you stay perfectly still. The scene is not to be acted out, it is frozen like a photograph.

Explain that while the scene is frozen, other group members will try to guess what is going on in the scene.

Give an example of a scene to help the group understand the activity.

Examples:

- Someone being denied entrance to an elections/voting facility because the entrance has stairs.
- A teacher hitting/exposing/expelling a student who is having a hard time completing their work.
- A child with a disability being teased on the playground, during gym class, after school, or at recess.

STEP 3: Small group presentations (*55 minutes*)

Bring the groups back together and ask one to volunteer to be first. Have the group go to the front of the room and “freeze” their scene. Once the group is frozen ask the larger group what is happening in the scene.

Facilitator’s note: Only require freezing for one or two minutes. If participants are still volunteering answers give the group a 10-second break then ask them to “re-freeze”.

After everyone has been able to guess what is happening (what right is being denied), have the large group members enter the scene and try to stop the abuse or violence. Have them freeze in place to stop the abuse.

Example: For the scene of the teacher hitting a student who is slow at his or her work, other participants could enter the scene and do the following:

- Sit next to the student to help them with their work like a peer helper.
- Bring in a principal or other teacher and point to the teacher.
- Move the teacher’s hand away from the child.

Once everyone has frozen in place with their solutions in the scene ask the group to “unfreeze”. Have the small group explain what was actually happening in the scene and have other participants explain how they were stopping the abuse. Ask participants to identify which type of abuse was portrayed (physical, verbal/emotional/mental, inequality or not being treated equal, using/exploiting) and which human right was being denied.

Have all of the groups present their scenes.

STEP 4: Summarize (*10 minutes*)

After every group has presented their examples and solutions to abuse, review the situations presented and the solutions given. Tell the group that everyone has done a good job and that they have identified good ways to get or give help and to stop violence and abuse.

Key point

- A violent response to abuse is not the answer. It is better to seek help or avoid the situation than to use violence as a reaction to abuse.

Source: Advocating Change Together; for details see <www.selfadvocacy.org>.

Home and family

Article 23: **Respect for home and family**

People have the right to live with their families. If you have a disability, your government should support your family with disability-related expenses, information and services. You should not be separated from your parents because you have a disability! If you cannot live with your immediate family, the government should help provide care within the wider family or community. Young people with disabilities have the same rights as other young people to reproductive health information and the same rights as others to marry and to have a family.

Source: *It's About Ability*, UNICEF, April 2008.

Rationale and overview

Participants will explore the right to home and family. The focus is on understanding the importance of the right to home and family in relation to enjoying other rights. Participants will also explore the importance of family supports for children with disabilities.

Overall objectives

Participants will be able to:

- understand the right to home and family
- understand why it is better for children to grow up in a family or family-like environment in the community than in an institution
- interrelate the right to home and family to other rights
- brainstorm ideas for enabling children with disabilities to remain with the families to avoid placement in institutional care
- brainstorm support for families (parents, siblings, and children with disabilities) to promote living at home and in the community

Suggested time

1 hour and 55 minutes

Sessions

A. Right to home and family

B. Family support

A. Right to home and family

Brief description of the session

In this session participants will explore the right to home and family and discuss institutionalization.

Objective:

By the end of the session participants will be able to understand the right to home and family and how being denied that right will deny other rights.

Duration:

45 minutes

Session method:

Large group discussion

Materials:

None required

Process

STEP 1: Large group discussion (*45 minutes*)

Review Article 23 – Respect for home and family. State that all children and young people have a right to live at home with their family and that the government is required under the Convention to provide services and support to allow children with disabilities to live at home.

Give the following example of the right to family and home being denied.

Example:

In many countries there are no services to support people with disabilities in the home and community. Sometimes when a child is born with a disability parents are told to give the child up or put them in an institution. When people are put in institutions they do not get to live with their family anymore. Read the following quotes out loud.

Example: Many children miss their families

“I need more love and affection...I see my parents rarely.”

–Eva, 12, living in an institution.

Example: Children and young people who are institutionalized do not get a chance to socialize and mature as independent adults

“They are not ready for an adult, independent life...They do not have something to call home...so many go nowhere. What they need is family...”

–Petr, doctor, Russia.

Ask the group the following:

- What other rights are often denied if a child is institutionalized?

Examples: Community inclusion, education, freedom.

- Why do you think it is better for a child to grow up in a family environment rather than an institution?

Examples: Warmth and affection, peer interaction, siblings, real-life learning.

- Can you think of circumstances where separation from the family may be in the best interest of the child?

Example: Child is being abused.

- Brainstorm some ways to help keep children at home with their families.

Examples: Siblings or peers helping the child with a disability, raising community awareness and acceptance, making local services, such as kindergartens, schools and day care centres, accessible to children with disabilities, advocating for doctors to provide care in the community, create family support groups.

Facilitator's note: In some instances, for example, where children experience violence at home, it is in their best interest to be separated from their family and placed with extended family or community foster care. If no other option exists, children may be placed in institutional care. Institutionalization must be considered a short-term solution while an alternative plan for community placement is made. It should always remain a last resort.

Key point

- Families with a disabled family member (whether it is a child or a mother or father) have the right to receive support to stay together. If families are not appropriate, children should stay with extended family or in community foster care programmes.

Institutionalization

Institutions are places where a group of children (or adults) live together and are looked after by adults who are not part of their real family. Orphanages are types of institutions. An institution is the last place that a child should have to grow up in.

Source: *United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children Adapted for Children and Young People*, United Nations, 2006.

B. Family support

Brief description of the session

In this session participants will explore needs and supports that can be provided for families and communities that include people with disabilities

Objective:

By the end of the session participants will be able to understand ways families can be supported through teamwork and community help.

Duration:

1 hour and 10 minutes

Session methods:

Large group discussion, brainstorm and presentations

Materials:

Blackboard and chalk or chart paper and markers

Process

STEP 1: Large group discussion (*20 minutes*)

Discuss the following with the large group and ask for comments and questions throughout the discussion:

- Having a disability has an impact on the person and it can have an impact on the family.
- Typically, parents have to problem-solve ways to care for their child, for example, how to get proper medical treatment, equipment and access to community and schools.
- Siblings sometimes have to help parents in providing assistance to an older or younger sibling with a disability.
- As our group and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities have adopted the social model of disability, we know that disability is a result of barriers created by society that limit people with disabilities from enjoying their human rights.

Explain to the group that sometimes the family can feel stress and pressure juggling the needs of the entire family and the work with society to get the services they need. It is our job today to figure out what can be done at the community level to support families with a disabled family member.

In some countries, for example, families that have members with disabilities have formed support groups where parents or even sibling support groups can get together to brainstorm solutions to common problems, get advice from others or just to socialize.

The **social model** of disability focuses on eliminating barriers created by society or the physical environment that limit a person from enjoying his or her human rights. This includes promoting positive attitudes, changing buildings to be accessible to all and providing information in a way that everyone can understand.

STEP 2: Brainstorm (*20 minutes*)

Ask participants to form groups of three or four people and brainstorm ways that families have been or can be supported.

What can siblings do? What can this group do? What can the community do?

STEP 3: Large group discussion and presentations (*30 minutes*)

Ask groups to present their ideas for supporting families and siblings and discuss these issues with the larger group. Present some of the examples below throughout the presentations.

Examples of family support:

- Create a support group for parents.
- Create a support group for siblings.
- Design a resource list for new parents of a child with a disability. Think about what your family has found useful and share that information.
- Create a sibling mentoring programme or a parent mentoring programme. Pair new parents up with parents who have older children. Even better, have the children meet too and show what can be done for persons with disabilities.
- Create a list of positive contributions people with disabilities will make to the community and share this information with new parents and the community.
- Start a weekly walking group. Have siblings and people with disabilities meet in the town center and take a short walk around the community. If you know of someone with a disability at home, invite them to join the walk.

Facilitator's note: If some people are not able to walk far, just create a community meeting in the town center and sing songs or just talk. Being out there helps raise awareness too!

- Encourage community members to jointly build a ramp to allow better access for elders and people with motor disabilities.
- Invite your parents to the last day of this training so that everyone can see what you have been working on!

Key points

- Families, including sibling need support.
- Educating or mentoring new parents can help find helpful resources much easier.
- Role models with disabilities can help parents set high expectations for their children.
- Small supports, such as group discussion, community meetings, and helpful neighbors, can make a big difference.

Unit III: Inclusion in the community



Pedro José Rivera, 14, Nicaragua

Accessibility and independent living

Article 9: Accessibility

Governments agree to make it possible for people with disabilities to live independently and participate in their communities. Any place that is open to the public, including buildings, roads, schools and hospitals, must be accessible by persons with disabilities, including children. If you are in a public building and need help, a guide, reader or professional sign language interpreter should be there to assist you.

Source: *It's About Ability*, UNICEF, April 2008.

Article 19: Independent living

People have the right to make choices about where they live, whether or not they have a disability. When you grow up, you have the right to live independently if you prefer and to be included in your community. You must also have access to support services if you need help to live in the community, such as care in your home and personal assistance.

Source: *It's About Ability*, UNICEF, April 2008.

Article 27: Work and employment

People with disabilities have an equal right to work at a freely chosen job without discrimination.

Source: *It's About Ability*, UNICEF, April 2008.

Rationale and overview

The following activities are designed for participants to gain an understanding of the many communities in which they live, to understand the right to independent living in the community and to examine support services needed for equal access to community independence. Sessions aim to connect human rights for persons with disabilities to work, accessibility and achieving independent living within the community.

Overall objectives

At the end of these activities, participants will be able to:

- understand independent living
- evaluate accessibility of the community
- understand the role of human rights in supporting independent living

Suggested time

2 hours and 40 minutes

Sessions

- A. Project access
- B. Independent living tree

A. Project access

Brief description of the session

In this session participants will identify different community groups and evaluate accessibility of the groups and locations.

Objective:

By the end of the session participants will gain an understanding of accessibility for all and how to evaluate if a community group is accessible for all. Groups will conduct an accessibility analysis and brainstorm ways to assure access for all.

Duration:

1 hour and 25 minutes

Session methods:

Brainstorm, large group discussion and small group activity

Materials:

Blackboard and chalk or chart paper and markers

Process

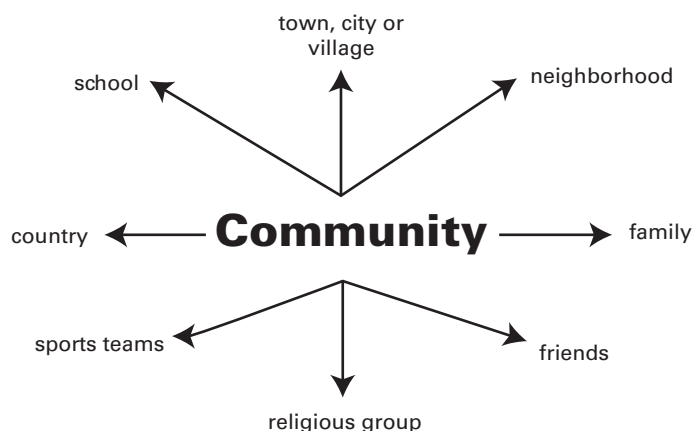
STEP 1: Introduction (*5 minutes*)

Remind the group what has been learned from previous activities: that everyone should be treated equally and that human diversity is part of human life. Everyone has differences. Accepting and valuing those differences not only enriches our lives, but it also takes a necessary step toward achieving equality. Explain that the activity will start with a group brainstorm, then participants will get into small groups for an accessibility activity.

STEP 2: Brainstorm (*20 minutes*)

Write the word "community" on the board or chart paper. Draw a circle around the word and ask participants to volunteer as many kinds of communities – gatherings of people – that they can think of. Give some examples from the word diagram below.

Word diagram of "community"



STEP 3: Small group activity (*30 minutes*)

Break participants into groups of four or five people. Ask them to pick a type of community to analyze accessibility.

Facilitator's note: If available, have groups pick the location, such as a school, and visit the location to analyze its accessibility. If this is not possible, have small groups brainstorm the community location and analyze the accessibility through discussion.

Have the small groups review the following questions for accessibility (*see accessibility checklist below*) and create an "accessibility report" to present to the large group. Remind participants that an accessible environment is helpful for all, for example, elevators give access to people using wheelchairs and is helpful for people carrying heavy items, or water fountains at an accessible height can allow children to reach them too. Information that is adapted to be easy to understand or visual can help people who cannot read as well as those who have cognitive disabilities.

The accessibility report should include the description of physical, informational and attitudinal access and what changes should be made to make it fully accessible.

Accessibility checklist:

Attitudinal access

- Do people display positive attitudes toward persons with disabilities?
- Are people – whether teachers, health workers, sports trainers, local government employees, etc. - supportive? What do they do to promote inclusion of persons with disabilities in their different fields of work? Are they aware of the different ways in which to adapt local environments to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities?
- Are persons with disabilities comfortable enough to ask for help if needed? Or assertive enough to advocate for their rights?
- Is inclusion (in the community, home, school) supported?
- Do persons with disabilities feel safe?

Physical access

- Is there a form of transportation or assistance available to reach the location?
- Does the building have stairs? Are ramps available to enter the building?
- Are the doorways wide enough for wheelchair or crutches to enter?
- Does the building have an elevator or lift if it has more than one level?
- Do rooms have Braille labels at the entrance (bathrooms, elevators, cafeterias, etc.) or markings on the floor to signify doorway and stairway entrances? If not, is peer support available to guide persons with visual impairments?
- Are the bathrooms accessible? Do they have a stall wide enough for a wheelchair and a handrail?
- Are the tables high enough for a wheelchair to fit? Are aisles wide enough to fit a wheelchair or someone using crutches?

- Are items needed within reach of someone using a wheelchair?
- Are sports programmes provided for students with disabilities?

Informational access

- Are students with disabilities included in regular education classes?
- Are books provided in Braille or on tape to students that need them?
- Are audio or visual devices equipped with captions for students with hearing impairments?
- Are books with large text provided for students with visual difficulties?
- Is information provided in a format that is easy to understand?
- Are supports and services provided to students with disabilities as needed?
- If information is not available in Braille, are peer supports available to read/describe materials?
- Is digital/computer equipment accessible (physical facilities, hardware, software, Internet)?

Facilitator's note: Adapt these checklists according to the local context.

STEP 4: Large group discussion (*30 minutes*)

Have the groups share their accessibility analysis reports with the large group. Ask groups how they might overcome barriers or inaccessible communities. Identify some small steps that can be taken to remove barriers today.

Examples:

- A ramp can be built for wheelchair access benefiting others in society, including bicycle users, parents with baby carriages, shoppers with grocery carts, elders, people using crutches, etc.)
- Readings or information can be explained in a way that is easier to understand.
- If water fountains are not at an accessible height, water bottles can be provided on tables.
- If tables are too low for wheelchairs, they can be raised by placing wooden blocks underneath the legs.
- Furniture in rooms can be rearranged to create wider aisles.
- Information is made available about the inclusion of people with disabilities; children and young people can be encouraged to discuss the support needed to make inclusion possible.
- Teachers and staff are trained in issues related to accessibility and inclusion.
- Programmes adopt inclusive policies.

Key points

- Accessibility barriers can be removed if people work together as a team.

- Everyone has a right to an accessible community.
- Accessible communities create equal access and promote equality for all.

B. Independent living tree

Brief description of the session

In this session participants will gain an understanding of independent living and the human rights needed to support community independence.

Objective:

By the end of the session participants will be able to identify different values and perspectives on independent living and the supports needed (human rights) to achieve independent living in the community.

Duration:

1 hour and 15 minutes

Session methods:

Large group discussion and small group activity

Materials:

Chart paper and markers for small groups

Process

STEP 1: Introduction (*5 minutes*)

Explain to the group that everyone has a right to live independently. This includes the right to make choices about where to live and where to work. Everyone has the right to be included in his or her community!

Independent living is not just about living a life independent of everyone. It is about having the autonomy and independence to make decisions and having control over the choices and shape of your life. If support is needed to live in the community, they should be provided.

This activity will include creating an independent living tree and thinking about what we value for our future.

STEP 2: Small group activity (*30 minutes*)

Ask participants to form groups of four or five people. Give each group a piece of chart paper and markers.

Draw on the board or a piece of chart paper an outline of a tree with roots and branches. Ask each group to draw a tree of its own. Explain that we are going to create a tree of independent living with roots and branches.

Ask groups to think about the following:

- What do you want to be someday?

- What do you value in life?
- What does an independent/autonomous life mean?

Examples: Good job, money to have a house, friends, children, to make decisions for yourself, to have and enjoy respect.

Have groups write their responses on the branches of their trees.

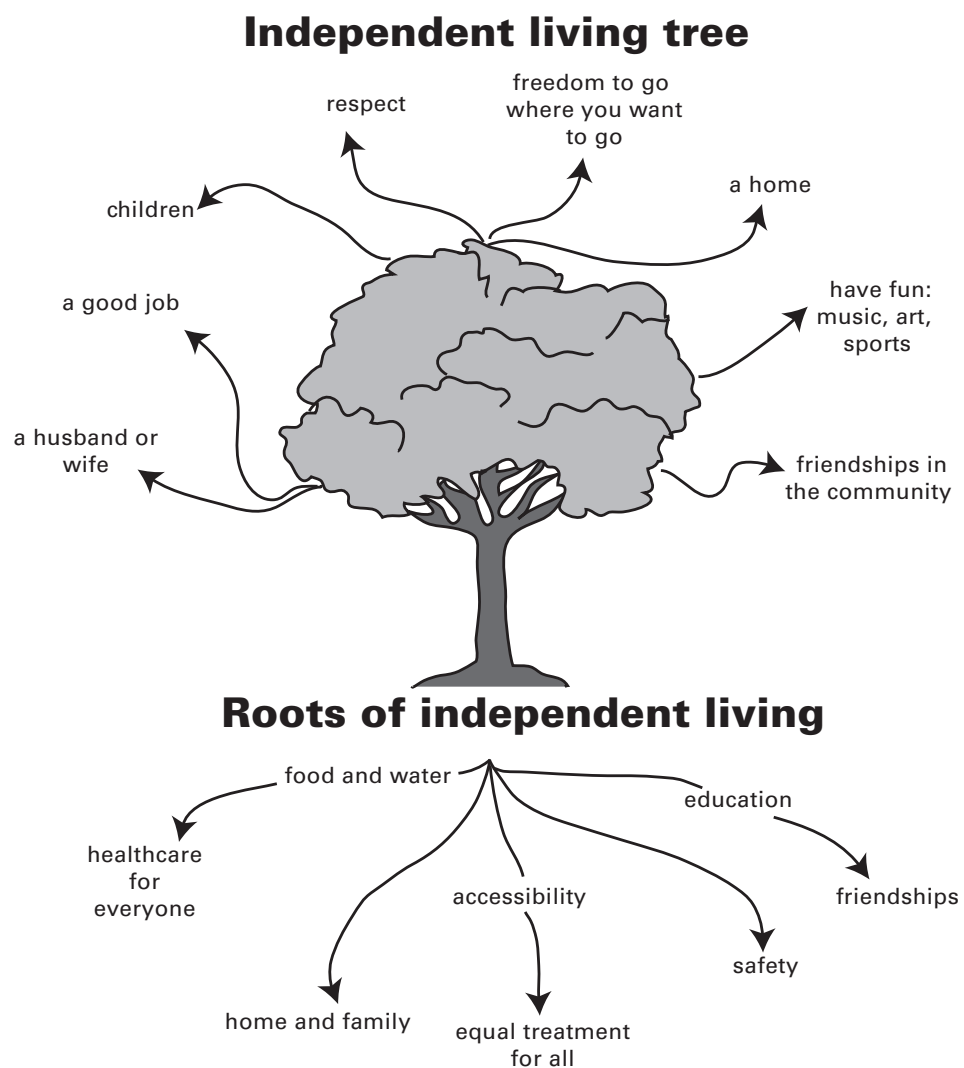
When groups finish outlining their branches, ask:

- If the branches are what a good independent life is, what are the roots?
- What does everyone need as a foundation (what support services are needed) for persons with disabilities to achieve an independent life?
 - Examples: Inclusive education, adapted materials, food, equipment to access community (wheelchair), medical care, friends/social network.

Facilitator's note: If participants have a difficult time thinking of roots, remind them that human rights are roots to a good life. Refer them to the child-friendly version of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Example: Independent living tree

Ask groups to post their trees at the front of the room when they are finished.



STEP 3: Large group discussion (*40 minutes*)

Allow participants to go around the room and look at the independent living trees from all of the other groups.

Ask participants to volunteer to tell the class what a good and independent way of life means to them and what roots are needed to achieve that life. Explain that these activities are to help build a society where everyone can experience a tree of independent living.

Key points

- Everyone has a right to live independently in the community and to have a job of their choice.
- Communities need to be accessible to all and provide supports for people with disabilities to live independently.
- The key to achieving independent living is a human right (the roots).

Education

Article 24: **Education**

People have the right to go to school. If you have a disability, you cannot be excluded from education because of it. You should not be educated in segregated schools. You have the right to the same education and curriculum as other children, and your government must give you the help you need to make this happen. For example, it must provide suitable ways for you to communicate so that your teachers understand how to respond to your needs.

Source: *It's About Ability*, UNICEF, April 2008.

Article 30: **Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport**

People with disabilities have the same right as others to participate in and enjoy the arts, sports, games, films, and other fun activities. So, theatres, museums, playgrounds, and libraries should be accessible by everyone, including children with disabilities.

Source: *It's About Ability*, UNICEF, April 2008.

Rationale and overview

The following activities are designed to gain an understanding of barriers to education for students with disabilities, including bullying. Participants will problem-solve situations in schools to promote inclusion for all students in every school activity and build a safe school community.

Overall objectives

At the end of these activities, participants will be able to:

- identify diverse learning needs and barriers to education
- understand bullying and identify ways to prevent bullying and to create a safe school environment
- create plans for including all students in school routines and activities

Suggested time

4 hours

Sessions

- A. Reaching for the stars
- B. Bullies
- C. Our class

A. Reaching for the stars

Brief description of the session

In this session participants will gain an understanding of diverse learning styles and the right to education.

Objective:

By the end of the session participants be able to identify barriers to the right to education. They will learn ways to work as a team to overcome those barriers.

Duration:

45 minutes

Session method:

Large group discussion

Materials:

Blackboard and chalk or chart paper and markers

Process

STEP 1: Introduction (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions to the group:

- How many of you are in school or went to school?
- What is important about school? Why do we go?
 - Examples: To get an education, learn to read and be able to inform ourselves, learn math, prepare for work, etc.

State that everyone has the right to go to school. Children with disabilities cannot be excluded from education or put in separate schools. All children should receive the same content of education, though it may be communicated in different ways. Administrators, teachers and peers should make classrooms accessible and equal for all. Governments should implement policies that support inclusive education. The following activities will help us understand the right to education and how everyone can enjoy this right.

STEP 2: Large group discussion (30 minutes)

Draw three large stars on the board or on chart paper (make them large enough to write 10 to 15 words in each). Explain to the group that everyone has a right to education and that schools should be accessible for all. Point to the stars on the board and state that students are a diverse group of people, everyone has different strengths and abilities. Children with disabilities face barriers to education (*see UNESCO quote on the next page*). You can read the UNESCO quote to the class. These barriers can be overcome through awareness-raising among parents, peers, teachers, principals and local government. In addition, barriers can be surpassed by governments creating

the conditions to ensure inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools (supporting teacher training, supporting changes in physical layout of schools, etc.).

Write the following titles in each star:

- Diverse learners
- Barriers to education
- Teamwork

Ninety per cent of children with disabilities in developing countries do not attend school, says UNESCO.

Source: United Nations Enable ; for details see www.un.org/disabilities/convention/pdfs/factsheet.pdf.

Example: Reach for the stars



Ask the group the following and write the responses in the appropriate star:

- What are some words that can be used to describe diverse learners? Students with and without disabilities.

Examples: Hard working, good listener, difficulty reading, good at math, willing to help others, pays attention, asks questions.

- What are barriers to education for children with disabilities?

Examples: Parents won't allow child to go to school, no way to get to school, school will not allow child to attend school, teachers do not want to or do not have the skills to teach children with disabilities, students are teased, books are not available in Braille, sign language interpreters are not available, materials are not explained in a way that is easy to understand, students with disabilities are put in the back of the classroom and ignored.

- How can we work to overcome these barriers?

Examples: Identify children with disabilities in your community that are hidden away by their parents or not allowed to go to school and join in community life; talk to parents about the benefits of attending school (improving quality of life, friendship, skills for work, etc.), ask teachers or school administrators about children with disabilities, encourage groups to meet and advocate for schools to accept students with disabilities, create handouts or fact sheets about the benefits of having persons with disabilities attend school (learn living skills, job skills, make money, support community economy), assign peer helpers to assist with reading, writing, re-explaining concepts or instructions, treat everyone with respect, document cases of children with disabilities that were denied the right to education and use these to lobby your local government to make schools more inclusive.

STEP 3: Summarize (*5 minutes*)

Ask participants to identify one idea or thought that they will take with them to apply or change at their school. Have a few participants volunteer to share their thoughts with the large group.

Key points

- Everyone has different learning styles.
- Awareness and advocacy can help overcome any barriers to education.
- Education is a human right for all.

B. Bullies

Brief description of the session

In this session participants will gain an understanding of bullying and how it makes others feel.

Objective:

By the end of the session participants be able to identify different types of bullying and ways to intervene and prevent bullying. Participants will understand that they have a responsibility to help someone who is being bullied in a safe manner.

Duration:

2 hours

Session methods:

Role-play, large group discussion, small group activity and small group presentations

Materials:

None required

Facilitator's note: For more activities discussing situations of violence and abuse see Unit II: Violence and abuse (*pages 34-43*)

Process

STEP 1: Introduction (*5 minutes*)

Tell the group that this activity will explore bullying. Ask for a volunteer to describe what bullying is.

Bullying occurs when someone is less powerful than another person and is deliberately hurt. Bullying is a form of abuse and can be physical (hitting, shoving) or verbal/mental (threats, teasing, insults) and commonly occurs in school. In studies around the world, between 20 to 60 per cent of children reported that they had been bullied in the past month. Children with disabilities are especially vulnerable to bullying.

Source: *United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children Adapted for Children and Young People*, United Nations, 2006.

STEP 2: Small group activity (*15 minutes*)

Ask participants to form groups of four or five people and write down five examples of bullying.

Ask the group for two volunteers to role-play a situation of bullying. Take the volunteers aside while small groups create their lists and review the following role-play script.

Role-play script

Student 1: (walking down hall using crutches)

Student 2: (walking down hall and bumps into Student 1) Hey, watch where you're going!

Student 1: I'm sorry, you bumped into me.

Student 2: No, I didn't. Learn how to walk why don't you. (steps towards Student 1). Who do you think you are?

Student 1: Leave me alone. I didn't do anything.

Student 2: What's in your bag? Do you have any lunch? Give it to me!

Student 1: No, it's my lunch. You can't have it! (scared)

Student 2: (grabs lunch out of bag) This is mine now. Why don't you chase me! (walks away)

Student 1: (sad, watches Student 2 walk away)

STEP 3: Role-play (*30 minutes*)

Bring the groups back together and ask each group to volunteer two of their examples of bullying. Then state that two participants will now role-play a bullying situation.

Read the following:

- This scene takes place in a school hallway in between classes before lunch. One student has polio and uses crutches for walking.

Ask volunteers to act out their role-play script.

Ask the following discussion questions:

- What did you see that was bullying?
- How did it make you feel?

- Who was bullying whom?
- Have you seen this happen before?

Finally, explore the following questions:

- Why do you think bullying happens?
- What does the bully get out of it?

STEP 4: Small group activity (*20 minutes*)

Ask participants to return to their groups and create a role-play from one of their examples. Instead of just role-playing the bullying, ask the groups to role-play solutions to the bullying. For example, having another peer speak up for the bullied student or getting the attention of another student.

STEP 5: Small group presentations (*45 minutes*)

Explain that children and young people can also be encouraged to change the role bystanders have by thinking of examples of how they could act differently and help when they see someone being bullied:

- choosing not to watch and walking away (taking away the audience)
- being kind to the person being bullied at another time
- telling the person being bullied that you don't like the bullying and asking them if you can do anything (tell someone or go with them to tell someone)
- 'rescuing' the student by taking them by the arm and saying something such as 'come on, we need you for our game' (only if it feels safe to do so)
- witnessing and validating the bullied student's experience after the event and reassuring them that they were supported
- contributing to the anti-bullying culture of a school through creating posters, stories or films against bullying

Source: Material for this session has been drawn from a paper by Sue Ball at <www.bgfl.org/services/stopbullying/default.htm> and Teaching Expertise at <www.teachingexpertise.com/articles/bullying-and-the-bystander-1615>.

Ask the small groups to present their role-plays to the large group and discuss their solutions to bullying.

Review the following questions after each role-play:

- What did you see that could be termed 'bullying'?
- How did it make you feel?
- Who was bullying whom?
- What was the solution to the bullying?
- Do you think you could be the person that helps someone being bullied?
- Would the suggestions for bystanders to stop bullying actually work in your situation?

Volunteer a few examples for how bullying can be stopped:

- Ask schools to adopt a code of conduct or a set of rules for staff and students that should include treating everyone equal. Make sure the code of conduct is known to everyone in the school and that students can report incidents of bullying to teachers and staff.
- Promote respect for all, including teachers treating and promoting respect in school.
- Raise awareness about bullying as a form of violence and abuse. Make posters for the school halls that state bullying is serious and is considered abuse. Write at the bottom a line such as “respect for all”.

STEP 6: Summarize (*5 minutes*)

Review that everyone has a right to education and that includes feeling safe. Bullying is a form of abuse and is considered discrimination. We are all responsible to prevent bullying.

Key points

- Bullying is a form of abuse.
- Everyone should feel safe at school.
- Children are more likely to be bullied when they are vulnerable in some way. Having a disability does not necessarily mean increased vulnerability to bullying, but much depends on the way schools and youth groups include disabled children in the school community.

Source: United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children Adapted for Children and Young People, United Nations, 2006.

C. Our class

Brief description of the session

In this session participants will identify ways to make the school day more inclusive for persons with different types of disabilities.

Objective:

By the end of the session participants be able to problem-solve different school activities, including lunch and play, for the inclusion of all students. Participants will gain an understanding of the benefits of inclusion in education for all.

Duration:

1 hour and 15 minutes

Session methods:

Large group discussion, small group activity and small group presentations

Materials:

Blackboard and chalk or chart paper and markers

Process

STEP 1: Introduction (*5 minutes*)

Tell the group that this activity will explore inclusive classrooms.

Inclusive classrooms refer to classrooms or schools where students of all abilities are welcomed. Students with and without disabilities learn together in a supportive environment that promotes learning for all.

STEP 2: Large group discussion (*15 minutes*)

Ask participants the following and create a list on the blackboard or chart paper:

- What does a typical school day look like?
- What are your routines throughout the day?

Remember to point out routines such as getting to school, lunch, clubs or sports and recreation.

STEP 3: Small group activity (*20 minutes*)

Ask participants to get into groups of four or five people. Tell each group to pick one routine from the school day (try to have groups pick a range of different routines, like getting to school, a class, recess, music class, etc.).

Ask each group to pick a type of disability (visual, physical, hearing, intellectual) and design their chosen class or routine to include the student with a disability. Groups can draw pictures, role-play, or write a paragraph about their class.

Remind groups that the physical space has to be accessible and the information must be accessible (*see page 52 for an accessibility checklist*).

STEP 4: Small group presentations (*35 minutes*)

Have groups present their inclusive activities to the large group. Point out the positive and creative inclusive techniques and make suggestions where appropriate. Encourage other participants to do the same.

Key points

- All students benefit from an inclusive classroom.
- Students with disabilities should be included in all activities including class, lunch, sports/physical education, and arts.

Unit IV: Change in society



Valeria D'Avola, 13, Italy

Advocacy and action

Rationale and overview

The following activities are designed for participants to identify areas where social change is needed in order to achieve rights and improve the quality of life of all. Participants will identify the characteristics of effective advocates and create plans for raising awareness and taking action against exclusion. Connections will be made between advocacy and the monitoring of human rights of persons with disabilities.

Article 8: Awareness raising

Governments should educate everyone about the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities and their achievements and skills. They agree to combat stereotypes, prejudice and activities that might harm people with disabilities. Your school, for example, should promote an attitude of respect towards people with disabilities, even among very young children.

Source: *It's About Ability*, UNICEF, April 2008.

Article 33: Monitoring

Every government that has ratified the Convention must review its progress towards keeping the promises of the Convention. Civil society organization must be involved in monitoring the implementation of the Convention.

Source: *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, United Nations, 2006.

Article 34: Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

A special Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities will be elected by governments that have ratified the Convention. It will meet regularly to make sure that the Convention is followed, and to answer questions and guide countries and communities in protecting the rights of persons with disabilities.

Source: *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, United Nations, 2006.

Articles 35: Reports and committees

Every country that is a member to the Convention will provide the special Committee with written reports about what they have done to protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

Source: *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, United Nations, 2006.

Overall objectives

At the end of these activities, participants will be able to:

- understand advocacy and raising awareness as basic components of making change happen
- identify attributes of effective advocates
- identify changes children and adolescents have been able to make in their home, school or community environments

- identify tangible entry points for change and concrete opportunities to improve access and inclusion in their communities
- create action plans for creating social change
- commit to taking action

Suggested time

4 hours and 15 minutes

Sessions

- A. Raising awareness
- B. What is an advocate?
- C. Action planning

A. Raising awareness

Brief description of the session

This session aims to empower participants to take action and brainstorm concrete ideas for raising disability awareness.

Objective:

By the end of the session participants will be able to give concrete ideas for raising disability awareness.

Duration:

45 minutes

Session method:

Brainstorm

Materials:

Chart paper

Process

STEP 1: Brainstorm (30 minutes)

Ask the group the following:

- Does society (our community) need to change its views towards disability?
- How do we change society?
- How do we raise awareness on the right of persons with disabilities to be fully included in our communities?

Brainstorm a list of ideas for raising disability awareness.

STEP 2: Summary (15 minutes)

Summarize and reaffirm the ideas presented for raising disability awareness. Ask participants to choose one idea and develop a strategy to achieve tangible change.

Key points:

- Be positive and empowering in your statements. Use encouraging phrases such as:
 - We can do this!
 - As a group anything is possible!
 - We can create social change. It's up to us!
- Be flexible and follow the ideas of the group. Try to brainstorm some simple ideas along with some more advanced ones.
- Emphasize that some ideas can be acted on individually (e.g., treating all people with respect) and some ideas may benefit from group taking action (e.g., speaking to a board of education to allow a student with a disability to attend school).
- Seek out for allies and partners.
- Have a plan. Define specific outcomes you want to achieve.
- Be specific in what can be changed through your action. Pick some easier tasks to accomplish first to create a positive trend and enthusiasm among others.

Raising disability awareness

- Create posters of people enjoying human rights that include people with disabilities. Post them around your community. Add a slogan such as "Inclusion for All!" to the bottom of your posters.
- Speak to your families and friends about the rights of persons with disabilities, including children, and what you have learned from the programme.
- Demonstrate awareness through action. If you hear anyone talking disrespectfully of a person with disabilities say something to them. Remember always to educate others respectfully.
- Approach store owners, schools, community buildings and ask that they put in a ramp or make their buildings accessible.
- Create an organization or group that includes people with disabilities.
- Document rights violations that you witness in your community in a safe manner (e.g., by keeping the names of the victims anonymous) and use these to raise awareness and to bring about change.
- Approach your local or national newspapers and ask them to report on a story on the rights of persons with disabilities and the value of inclusion.
- Create a newsletter or column in the local newspaper about disability rights.
- Stand up for your rights! Self-advocacy can be the most powerful means of raising awareness. Achieve your rights, be independent, live in the community, participate in school and lead by example.
- Speak out against barriers in your community and propose alternatives to remove them.
- Create partnerships with decision-makers to get allies for your cause.

B. What is an advocate?

Brief description of the session

In this activity participants will understand the basic definition of advocacy and characteristics of an advocate.

Objective:

By the end of this activity participants will be able to identify the core elements of advocacy, including awareness of rights, awareness of self and action. Core characteristics of advocates will be explored and participants will be asked to identify ways they are advocates.

Duration:

1 hour

Session method:

Large group discussion

Materials:

Blackboard and chalk or chart paper and markers

Process

STEP 1: Introduction (*15 minutes*)

Tell the group that this activity will explore advocacy and its importance for change. Without advocacy and action, all of the activities and things learned will be useless. For equality to be achieved everyone must take responsibility to become advocates and create change.

Ask participants to volunteer something they learned in the past few activities. Write these remarks down for the next activity: Action planning.

STEP 2: Large group discussion (*30 minutes*)

Define advocacy for the group, have it written on the board or chart paper and read it out loud.

Advocacy is action to create positive change. It usually involves many people and/or organizations working together toward a shared vision for change.

State that the United Nations worked together with many countries and organizations to achieve the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Ask participants to volunteer what their shared goals were. Record the answers on the board or chart paper.

Shared goals: To create an equitable world for persons with disabilities to enjoy the same human rights and fundamental freedoms as everyone else. To provide a legal framework for advocating and achieving those rights.

State that people can advocate for themselves (self-advocates) or for their friends, family and the community. Advocacy can be individual or collaborative including people with disabilities and their allies. Advocates should know their rights, know themselves, and be committed and willing to take action to achieve those rights.

Source: *Human Rights. YES!, Action and advocacy on the rights of persons with disabilities*, Human Rights Resource Center, 2007; for details see <www.humanrightsyes.org>.

Ask participants to visualize or think of their advocacy efforts or someone who has been an advocate with them, someone who has stood up for his or her rights and changed things.

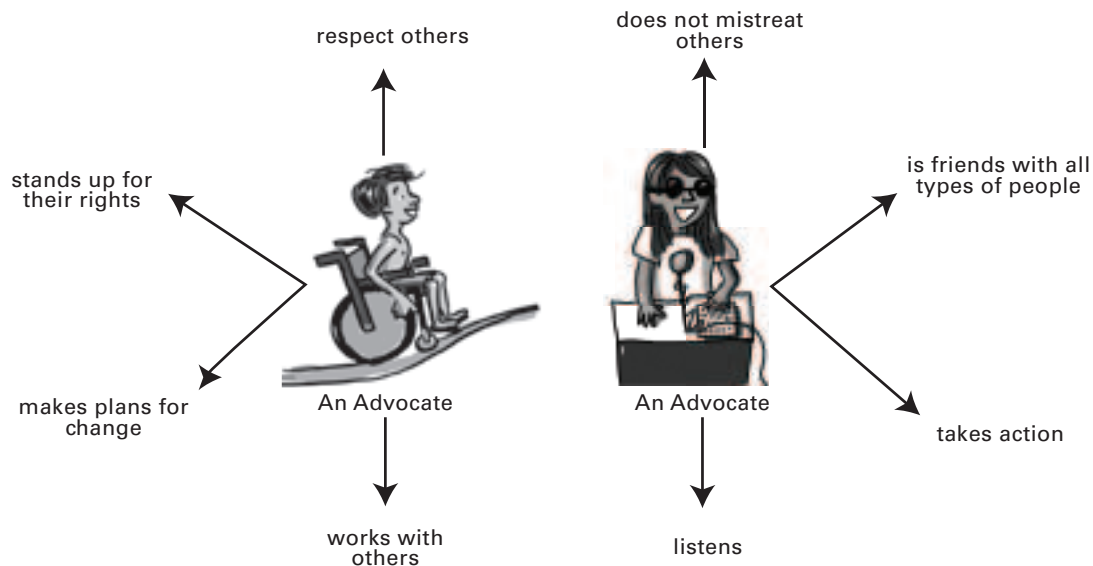
Write the word “advocate” on the board or chart paper and circle it.

Ask the group and record answers on board or chart paper:

- What does an advocate do?
- What are the characteristics of an advocate?
- How can people be advocates?

Examples: Advocates

- do not tease or make fun of people with disabilities
- stand up for themselves and/or others when they see or experience mistreatment
- stand up for human rights
- take action
- organize groups to take action
- listen
- are friends with all kinds of people



STEP 3: Commitment (15 minutes)

Ask participants to write or draw on the board and tell the group:

“One way I am an advocate is _____.”

Summarize the responses and state that this group is an advocacy group. Together everyone can create change and make our world a better and more equitable world for all, including people with disabilities. The next activity will discuss steps to taking action.

Key points

- Everyone can be an advocate.
- Advocacy is about creating change and making a commitment to taking action.
- You can be an individual advocate in everyday life and you can work as a team or organization to advocate.
- To create an equitable world we need to speak up and advocate!
- Everyone needs to work together.

C. Action planning

Brief description of the session

In this session participants will identify areas where advocacy is needed, where tangible change is possible and how to create action plans to achieve change.

Objective:

By the end of this session participants will be able to identify the steps for action planning including identifying areas for change, gathering information, creating steps for action, taking action and following-up. Participants will be asked to role-play explaining and justifying the area for change and asked to commit to taking action.

Duration:

2 hours and 30 minutes

Session methods:

Large group discussion, small group activity and small group presentations

Materials:

Blackboard and chalk or chart paper and markers

Process

STEP 1: Introduction (*15 minutes*)

Refer to the list you made of what was learned (STEP 1) of the last activity and review what participants said they learned throughout the activities of this guide. State that this activity is about taking action. That everyone has already taken action by participating in these activities and learning about themselves and others. It is now time to apply what was learned in the group to take action in your daily life!

After reviewing the list of what was learned, ask participants to identify topics that need changing. For example, the topic should be related to a human right for a person with a disability, for example, education, healthcare, sport or recreation. Participants can identify barriers such as getting an accessible ramp into a store or allowing children with disabilities to go to school.

Record statements on the board or chart paper.

STEP 2: Steps to action (*30 minutes*)

Remind groups that advocacy starts with an awareness of equal human rights for all and awareness of self. Advocacy also includes taking action at different levels (home, school, community, government).

Explain to the group that governments that ratify that Convention must review their progress towards keeping the promises of the Convention. Governments must submit a written report on progress towards implementing the Convention. Persons with disabilities, including children, have the right to participate in this report and a committee at the United Nations will review these reports. This committee will help guide your country in protecting the rights of persons with disabilities.

Tell participants that they will learn the steps to action planning and then have them form small groups to make an action plan on a topic of their choice (point to the statements on the board).

Action plans:

1. What do you want to change?

- a. Identify an issue or barrier you or your group wants to change.
- b. Analyze the area where change is needed. Are you changing:
 - i. Attitudes?
 - ii. Physical barriers?
 - iii. Informational barriers?

Where will change happen? At the level of:

- iv. Government (e.g, laws, policies)
- v. Society

- vi. Healthcare
- vii. Educational systems
- viii. Individuals or families

2. Speak it out!

- a. Describe the problem or barrier
 - i. How does it affect your human rights?
 - ii. Who does it affect?
 - iii. What are the possible causes?
- b. Relate this problem or barrier to the rights of persons with disabilities using the human rights mentioned in the Convention.
 - i. What rights are being violated?
- c. How does this problem affect the lives of people with disabilities?
- d. How does addressing the problem improve the lives of people with disabilities?
- e. What specific actions can be done to address the problem?
- f. Who needs to be involved to take those actions?

Facilitator's note: Small groups will role-play at this time. Ask them to appoint two group members to be in charge of the problem, such as a teacher, community member or local government official. Have remaining group members summarize answers to the above questions and explain the problem to the people in charge.

3. Gather information

- a. What laws protect you and support the right denied?
- b. What statistics or information do you have on this right being denied?
- c. Identify potential allies (people that will help and support you in resolving this problem).
 - i. How can you work together to achieve your goals?
- d. What are the steps needed to take action?
- e. Who will complete those steps?
- f. When will the steps be completed?

4. Plan for action

- a. Use the action plan handout or questions from the handout at the end of this activity.

Facilitator's note: The action plan can be done in images (e.g., drawings) for young people that do not write. Questions can be read out loud to the group.

5. Taking action

- a. Now is the time to follow the action plan and take action. Implement the steps you identified and create social change!

6. Follow-up

- a. All advocacy action needs follow-up. If we do not follow through then our goal will not be accomplished. Review the following questions to follow-up on action:
 - i. Did you complete the action plan? What was successful? What was challenging?
 - ii. If you met your goal:
 1. What helped you be successful?
 2. Can you use the same strategies for other goals?
 - iii. If you did not meet your goal:
 1. What changes need to be made to the action plan to achieve your goal?
 2. Do you need more resources? Group members? Allies? Do you need to gather some more information?
 3. What are your next steps for action? Does anything else need to be done? How do you maintain your goal?

Source: *Human Rights. YES!, Action and advocacy on the rights of persons with disabilities*, Human Rights Resource Center, 2007; for details see <www.humanrightsyes.org>.

STEP 3: Small group activity (*45 minutes*)

Ask participants to form groups of four to five and complete steps one to four of the taking action plan (outlined above).

Remind groups that they can start with the first step to a larger problem and that action happens one step at a time.

Walk around the room and help groups complete steps one to four.

STEP 4: Small group presentations (*1 hour*)

Ask that everyone rejoin the larger group and present their action plans. Have the group discuss each action plan created.

- Is the action plan reasonable? Is it moderate enough to be accomplished?
- Is the action plan feasible? Does the plan have a sufficient amount of resources (time, money, allies, information) to be accomplished?

Key points

- Action happens one step at a time.
- Teamwork and collaboration are important for creating change.
- Everyone should commit to taking action, even a small step creates change.
- Remember that your part/step is important to the bigger picture.

ADVOCACY ACTION PLAN

We recommend completing one Action Plan per meeting per group

Action Group: _____

Date: _____

Change needing to be made	Actions	By whom	By when	Resources needed	Date action taken	Follow-up
What type of change needs to be made for rights and equality to be achieved?	What type of actions are necessary to make this change?	Who will take action?	By what date will the action be done?	What financial, material and human resources are needed to take action?	When was the action taken?	What happened as a result of the action?

Unit V: Your feedback is important!

Now that you have had a chance to learn about human rights and different abilities, you can help make the world a place where everyone is valued for their differences. Everyone has rights, including people with disabilities!

Please tell us five things you have learned from this guide:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____




5) _____

What did you like most about this guide?

What didn't you like about this guide?

How can we make this guide better?

Tell us! What did you think of the guide?

	Excellent 	Okay 	Bad 	Is there anything else you would like to say about this?
On the whole (overall)				
Group activities				
Advocacy section				
Pictures				
Language/ words used				

You can mail this to:

UNICEF
 Gender and Rights Unit
 3 UN Plaza, H7A
 New York, NY 10017, USA

Key terms used in this guide

Accessibility is having access to transportation, places and information, and not being refused access because of a disability.

Advocacy is action to create positive change. It usually involves many people and/or organizations working together toward a shared vision for change.

Assistive technologies help you do things you otherwise could not do, for example, get around on a wheelchair or see larger print on a computer screen.

Bullying occurs when someone is less powerful than another person and is deliberately hurt. Bullying is a form of abuse and can be physical (hitting, shoving) or verbal/mental (threats, teasing, insults) and commonly occurs in school. Children with disabilities are more vulnerable to bullying.

Child abuse is any kind of harm done to children, including neglect, physical, sexual or mental violence by someone who is responsible for them or has power or control over them, and who they should be able to trust.

Committee is a group of people who are chosen to work together and is a body established to help make sure that a convention is followed by governments.

Communication can mean sharing information but it also means a way to read, speak or understand using multi-media, large print, Braille, sign language or having someone read aloud.

Community is a group of people who may live in the same area. It also means people with shared interests or concerns.

Convention is an agreement between countries to obey the same law. When a country signs and ratifies (approves) a convention, it becomes a legal promise and guides the actions of the government. It often leads the government to adapt and change its own laws to support the goals of the convention.

Design for all is used to make buildings, programmes and products useable by the greatest number of people possible, no matter what their abilities or disabilities.

Dignity is your own self-respect as a human being. To be treated with dignity means to be treated with respect by other people.

Discrimination means unfair treatment of a person or group because of their race, religion, gender, other differences or because they have a disability. It also includes the denial of reasonable accommodation.

“Discrimination on the basis of disability” means that people are not treated fairly or are excluded because they have a disability.

Human rights means that everyone in this world has legal protection to make sure they have the respect, the freedom and the opportunities they deserve as human beings. No one is excluded. Every human being has a right to life and dignity. Children everywhere have the right to food and health care, the right to go to school and to be allowed to say what he or she feels without being afraid.

Inclusion is not about inserting persons with disabilities into existing structures, but about transforming systems to be inclusive of everyone. Inclusive communities put into place measures to support all children at home, at school and in their communities. When barriers exist, inclusive communities transform the way they are organized to meet the needs of all children.

Inclusive classrooms refer to classrooms or a school where students of all abilities are welcomed. Students with and without disabilities learn together in a supportive environment that promotes learning for all.

Inequality is the state of being unequal. Inequality means that there is a difference, but also that the one is or has more or less than the other. Power inequality means the one has more power over the other.

Institutions are places where a group of children (or adults) live together and are looked after by adults who are not part of their real family. Orphanages are a type of institutions. An institution is the last place that a child should have to grow up in. Children should only be put into institutions if there is not other way of caring for them. When children do have to go into institutions these places must be safe and protective.

Language is a means of communication used by a group of people. It is used through speech, words, signs or other means.

Preamble refers to the first introductory paragraphs of a convention. It explains the need for the convention.

Ratification occurs when a signed convention or agreement is officially approved by a country and becomes the law in that country.

Reasonable accommodation means making a change so that you can do something more easily, for example, entering a building through a ramp or accessing an upper or lower level with an elevator.

Respect for one another means being willing to accept other people's differences even if they look different from you, have a different religion or come from a different land. It also means treating other people the way you would want to be treated.

Social model of disability focuses on eliminating barriers created by society or the physical environment that limit a person from enjoying his or her human rights. This includes promoting positive attitudes, changing buildings to be accessible to all and providing information in a way that everyone can understand.

UNICEF is the United Nations Children’s Fund. It is a part of the United Nations system and it works for children’s rights, their survival, development and protection in order to make the world a better, safer and friendlier place for children – and for all of us.

United Nations is an international organization formed by the governments of 191 member countries working together to bring peace and justice into the world. The UN was created in 1945 to prevent future wars, to protect human rights and to provide a place for all the countries in the world to come together and discuss important questions and problems that affect everyone.

Universal Declaration on Human Rights was signed on 10 December 1948 by all member states of the United Nations to make sure that the rights of all people are protected. Although it is not a convention, it is now considered to be international law.

Violence takes place when someone uses her or his strength or position of power to hurt someone else on purpose, not by accident. Violence includes threats of violence and acts which could possibly cause harm, as well as those that actually do. The harm involved can be to a person’s mind and her or his general health and well-being, as well as to her or his body.

Handout 1:

Child-friendly version of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Source: *It's About Ability*, UNICEF, April 2008.

The Convention makes many promises. Its 50 articles clearly explain what these promises are. Where we say 'government' in the following pages, we mean the governments that have ratified the Convention (also called 'States parties').

Article 1: Purpose

This article summarizes the Convention's main objective, which is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and freedoms by all people with disabilities, including children.

Article 2: Definitions

This article lists words that have a particular definition in this Convention. For example, "language" includes spoken words and also signed or other non-spoken languages. "Communication" includes languages, text displays, Braille (which uses raised dots for letters and numbers), communication through touch, large print and accessible multimedia (such as websites or audio).

Article 3: General principles

The principles (main beliefs) of this Convention are:

- a. Respect for everyone's inherent dignity, freedom to make their own choices and independence.
- b. Non-discrimination (treating everyone fairly).
- c. Full participation and inclusion in society (being included in your community).
- d. Respect for differences and accepting people with disabilities as part of human diversity.
- e. Equal opportunity.
- f. Accessibility (having access to transportation, places and information, and not being refused access because you have a disability).
- g. Equality between men and women (having the same opportunities whether you are a girl or a boy).
- h. Respect for the evolving capacity of children with disabilities and their right to preserve their identity (being respected for your abilities and proud of who you are).

Article 4: General obligations

There should be no laws that discriminate against people with disabilities. If necessary, governments should create new laws to protect the rights of persons with disabilities and put these laws into action. If old laws or traditions discriminate against people with disabilities, governments should find ways to change them. To develop new laws and policies, governments should seek advice from people with disabilities, including children.

Article 5: Equality and non-discrimination

Governments recognize that all people have the right to be protected by the law, and that the laws of a country apply to everyone who lives there.

Article 6: Women with disabilities

Governments know that women and girls with disabilities face many different types of discrimination. They agree to protect their human rights and freedoms.

Article 7: Children with disabilities

Governments agree to take every possible action so that children with disabilities can enjoy all human rights and freedoms equally with other children. They also agree to make sure that children with disabilities can express their views freely on all things that affect them. What is best for each child should always be considered first.

Article 8: Awareness raising

Governments should educate everyone about the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities and their achievements and skills. They agree to combat stereotypes, prejudice and activities that might harm people with disabilities. Your school, for example, should promote an attitude of respect towards people with disabilities, even among very young children.

Article 9: Accessibility

Governments agree to make it possible for people with disabilities to live independently and participate in their communities. Any place that is open to the public, including buildings, roads, schools and hospitals, must be accessible by persons with disabilities, including children. If you are in a public building and need help, a guide, reader or professional sign language interpreter should be there to assist you.

Article 10: Right to life

Every human being is born with the right to life. Governments guarantee that this is equally true for people with and without disabilities.

Article 11: Situations of risk and emergencies

People with disabilities have the same right as everyone else to be protected and safe during a war, an emergency or a natural disaster, such as a storm. You cannot legally be excluded from a shelter or left alone while others are rescued because you have a disability.

Article 12: Equal recognition before the law

People with disabilities have the right to enjoy 'legal capacity' in the same way as other people. This means that, when you grow up, whether or not you have a disability, you can do things like get a loan to study or sign a lease to rent your own apartment. And you can own or inherit property.

Article 13: Access to justice

If you are harmed by a crime, have seen others harmed or are accused of doing something wrong, you have the right to be treated fairly when your case is being investigated and dealt with. You must be given help to express yourself in all legal processes.

Article 14: Liberty and security of the person

Governments should make sure that people with disabilities have their freedom protected by law, the same as all other people.

Article 15: Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

No one should be tortured or humiliated or treated cruelly. And everyone has the right to refuse medical or scientific experiments.

Article 16: Freedom from violence and abuse

Children with disabilities should be protected from violence and abuse. They should not be mistreated or harmed in their home or outside. If you have faced violence or maltreatment, you have the right to get help to stop the abuse and recover.

Article 17: Protecting the person

No one can treat you as less of a person because of your physical and mental abilities. You have the right to be respected by others just as you are!

Article 18: Liberty of movement and nationality

Every child has the right to a legally registered name, a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents. And people cannot be stopped from entering or leaving a country because they have disabilities.

Article 19: Living independently and being included in the community

People have the right to make choices about where they live, whether or not they have a disability. When you grow up, you will have the right to live independently if you prefer and to be included in your community. You must also have access to support services if you need help to live in the community, such as care in your home and personal assistance.

Article 20: Personal mobility

Children with disabilities have the right to move about and be independent. Governments must help them do so.

Article 21: Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information

People have the right to express their opinions, to seek, receive and share information and to receive information in forms that they can understand and use.

Article 22: Respect for privacy

Nobody can interfere in people's private affairs, whether they have disabilities or not. People who know information about others, such as their health status, should keep this information private.

Article 23: Respect for home and the family

People have the right to live with their families. If you have a disability, your government should support your family with disability-related expenses, information and services. You should not be separated from your parents because you have a disability! If you cannot live with your immediate family, the government should help provide care within the wider family or community. Young people with disabilities have the same rights as other young people to reproductive health information and the same rights as others to marry and start a family.

Article 24: Education

People have the right to go to school. If you have a disability, you cannot be excluded from education because of it. You should not be educated in segregated schools. You have the right to the same education and curriculum as other children, and your government must give you the help you need to make this happen. For example, it must provide suitable ways for you to communicate so that your teachers understand how to respond to your needs.

Articles 25 and 26: Health and rehabilitation

People with disabilities have the right to the same range and quality of free or affordable health care as provided to other people. If you have a disability, you also have the right to health and rehabilitation services.

Article 27: Work and employment

People with disabilities have an equal right to work at a freely chosen job without discrimination.

Article 28: Adequate standard of living and social protection

People with disabilities have a right to food, clean water, clothing and access to housing, without discrimination. The government should help children with disabilities who live in poverty.

Article 29: Participation in political and public life

People with disabilities have the right to take part in politics and public life. Once you reach the age set by the laws of your country, you have the right to form a group, serve the public, access voting booths, vote and be elected to a government position, whether you have a disability or not.

Article 30: Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport

People with disabilities have the same right as others to participate in and enjoy the arts, sports, games, films and other fun activities. So, theatres, museums, playgrounds and libraries should be accessible by everyone, including children with disabilities.

Article 31: Statistics and data collection

Countries must collect data about disabilities to develop better programmes and services. Persons with disabilities who contribute to research on disability have the right to be treated in a respectful and humane way. Any private information they share must be kept confidential. The statistics collected must be made accessible to persons with disabilities and others.

Article 32: International cooperation

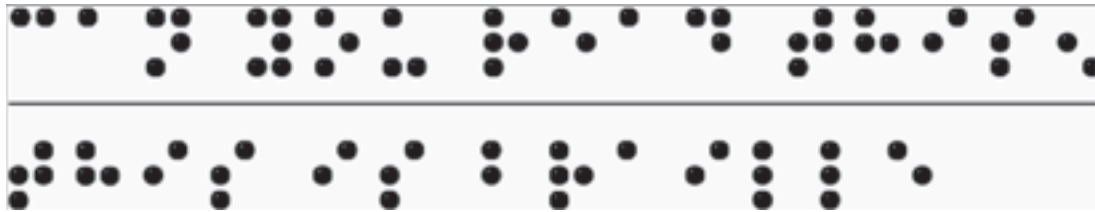
Countries should help each other fulfil the articles of this convention. This includes countries with more resources (such as scientific information, useful technology) sharing with other countries, so that more people in the world can enjoy the rights of the convention.

Articles 33 to 50: Rules on cooperation, monitoring and implementation of the Convention

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has 50 articles in all. Articles 33 to 50 are about how adults, especially people with disabilities and their organizations, and governments should work together to make sure all persons with disabilities get all their rights. See the text of these articles at <www.un.org/disabilities>.

Handout 2: Different types of ability

Source: *The Able Crew*; for details see <www.theablecrew.org/interactive/blur.htm>.



Can you read this?

This is Braille, a method widely used by blind people to read and write. When you first look at something written in Braille, all you see (or feel) is a jumble of dots! The Braille characters (an arrangement of 1–6 raised dots) make up the letters of the alphabet, punctuation marks, numbers, and everything else you can write in print.

This is a message the way that you would see it if you have correct vision.



This is sign language.



Annex I:

Tips for inclusion

Developmental/cognitive/learning disabilities

These disabilities vary tremendously and can sometimes be difficult to see. A person with a learning disability usually has average to above average intelligence but also has difficulty learning, remembering and communicating information. Learning disabilities come in many different forms and usually affect a person's ability to complete school-related tasks. Some cognitive disabilities can be more severe and impact a person's understanding. Developmental disabilities can also include sensory disorders, including autism.

Tips for inclusion:

- Simplify language or restate and summarize information in a variety of ways.
- Use visuals to represent abstract ideas.
- Check in to make sure that the person understands the topic or activity to be completed.
- Incorporate hands-on learning activities into routine.

Hearing and visual impairments

Other types of disability include people who have partial or complete loss of hearing or sight. Some people are born with the impairment (congenital) and others get it later in life (acquired). Another term for hearing impairment is deafness and for visual impairments is blindness.

Tips for inclusion:

- Provide information in a variety of formats. For example, some people with hearing impairments use sign language, read lips or prefer information presented in written form.
- When speaking to a person with a hearing impairment make sure to gain their attention first and use gestures when speaking.
- Provide additional explanations for people who have visual impairments. If you are showing a picture, describe what it looks like. If you are handing out text, see if it can be provided in Braille. Or have the text read out loud.

Mobility impairments

Mobility or physical disabilities often mean a person uses assistive equipment such as a wheelchair, cane or prosthetic limb. Persons with physical disabilities may have difficulty with movement or self-care.

Tips for inclusion:

- Make sure the facility that you are using is accessible. Avoid stairs and ensure doorways are wide enough to fit wheelchairs.
- During hands-on activities check for any physical difficulties. Pair people up if they need help.
- Check with the person to see what their needs are. Remain flexible and willing to adapt an activity for different abilities.

Psycho-social disabilities

An example of an invisible disability is a psycho-social disability. This category includes conditions such as bipolar disorder, depression and many others.

Tips for inclusion:

- Treat the person with respect at all times and include their opinions and thoughts in discussions.
- Allow for choice and autonomy during the programme, flexible participation and discuss what their needs are ahead of time.

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