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# IMPACT OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN OUR EVERYDAY LIFE



**Title:** Take a step forward



## Objectives

- Raising awareness about inequality of opportunity
- Developing imagination and critical thinking
- Fostering empathy with others who are less fortunate



## Methods (discussion, role play, etc.):

- Role play
- Discussion
- Reflection



**Time format:** 40 to 60 minutes



## Democracy skills addressed:

- Self-knowledge
- Critical thinking
- Human rights
  - Right to equality in dignity and rights
  - Right to education
  - Right to a standard of living adequate for good health and well-being



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**Age group:** 14 years or older



**Number of participants:** 10 to 30 participants



**Necessary materials/software:**

Role cards, an open space (a corridor, large room or outdoors), a hat or box



**Sources:**

Slightly adapted from “Compass: Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People” (updated version 2020, p. 283-287) [www.coe.int/en/web/compass](http://www.coe.int/en/web/compass)



**Preparation:**

Read the instructions carefully. Review the list of “situations and events” and - if necessary - adapt it to the group you are working with, cut out the strips of the role cards, fold them and put them in a hat or box.



**Description (process):**

1. Create a calm atmosphere and tell participants that you will start an experiment as part of which they have to step into a different role.
2. Ask participants to take a role card out of the hat or box. Tell them to keep the cards to themselves and not to show them to anyone else.





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### **Description (continued):**

3. Invite them to sit down in a comfortable sitting position and to read their role card carefully.

4. Now, ask them to begin stepping into their role. In order to assist, read out some of the following questions, pausing after each one, giving them time to reflect and to build up a picture of themselves and their lives:

- a. What was your childhood like?
- b. What sort of house did you live in?
- c. What kind of games did you play?
- d. What sort of work did your parents do?
- e. What is your everyday life like now?
- f. Where do you socialise?
- g. What do you do in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening?
- h. What sort of lifestyle do you have?
  - i. Where do you live?
  - j. How much money do you earn each month?
  - k. What do you do in your leisure time or holidays
  - l. What excites you and what are you afraid of

5. Now, ask participants to line up next to each other (like on a starting line). If there is not enough space, you may be able to move outside.

6. Tell participants that you are going to read out a list of situations or events. Every time that they can answer “yes” to the statement, they should take a step forward. Otherwise, they should stay where they are and not move.

7. Read out the situations one after another. Pause for a while between each statement to allow people to think if they want to take a step forward or not. and to look around to take note of their positions relative to each other.

8. At the end, invite everyone to take note of their final positions. Then, give them a couple of minutes to come out of the role before debriefing.

### **Debriefing and evaluation**

If the group is not too big, participants stay at their position and the facilitator may start the debriefing, because in that way participants still see the different positions. After a while, participants can sit down in a circle. You have to decide about the right time to do so.



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## **Description (continued):**

If the group is too large and you need to talk very loudly, then it is recommended to sit in a circle for the discussion right away. Start by asking participants about what happened and how they feel about the activity, and then go on to talk about the issues raised and what they learnt.

- How easy or difficult was it to play the different roles?
- How did people feel stepping forward - or not?
- For those who stepped forward often, at what point did they begin to notice that others were not moving as fast as they were?
- Did anyone feel discriminated, were there moments when their basic human rights were being ignored or they didn't have access to them?
- Can people guess each other's roles? (Let people reveal their roles)
- Does the exercise mirror society in some way? If yes, in which ways?
- Which human rights are at stake for each of the roles?
- What first steps could be taken to address the inequalities in society?

## **Tips for the facilitator**

- If you do this activity outdoors, make sure that participants can hear you, especially if you are doing it with a large group! You may need to use your co-facilitators to relay the statements.
- In the imagining phase at the beginning, it is possible that some participants may say that they know little about the life of the person they have to role-play. Tell them that this does not matter and that they should use their imagination and do it as best they can. If they feel uncomfortable with their role, let them draw another card.
- The power of this activity lies in the impact of actually seeing the distance increasing between participants, especially at the end, when there should be a big distance between those who stepped forward often and those who did not.
- During the debriefing and evaluation, it is important to explore how participants knew about the character whose role they had to play. Was it through personal experience or through other sources of information (news, books, and jokes)? Are they sure the information and the images they have of the characters are reliable? In this way, you can introduce how stereotypes and prejudices work.
- This activity is particularly relevant to making links between the different generations of rights (civil/political and social/economic/cultural rights) and the access to them.



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## Role Cards

<p>You are the president of a party-political youth organization (whose “mother” party is now in power).</p>	<p>You are an unemployed university graduate waiting for the first opportunity to work.</p>
<p>You are the daughter of the local bank manager. You study economics at university.</p>	<p>You are the son of a Turkish immigrant who runs a successful fast-food business.</p>
<p>You are an Arab Muslim girl living with your parents who are devoutly religious people.</p>	<p>You are the daughter of the American ambassador to the country where you are now living.</p>
<p>You are a soldier in army, doing compulsory military service.</p>	<p>You are the owner of a successful import-export company.</p>



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<p>You are a disabled young man who moves in a wheelchair.</p>	<p>You are a retired worker of a print shop with a low pension.</p>
<p>You are a member of the Roma Community” and you are not going to school since 4 years.</p>	<p>You are the girlfriend of a young artist who is addicted to heroin.</p>
<p>You are an HIV positive, middle-aged civil servant who works in an environmental organisation.</p>	<p>You are a 24-year-old refugee from Afghanistan.</p>
<p>You are a fashion model of African origin.</p>	<p>You are an unemployed single mother.</p>
<p>You are a homeless young man, 27 years old.</p>	<p>You are an immigrant and considered illegal by authorities. You have lost touch with your family.</p>
<p>You are the 19-year-old son of a farmer in a remote village in the mountains.</p>	<p>You are a 22-year-old transsexual.</p>



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## Situations and events

Read the following situations out loud. Allow time after reading out each situation for participants to step forward and also to look to see how far they have moved relative to each other.

You have never encountered any serious financial difficulty.

You have decent housing with a phone and electronic devices.

You feel your language, religion and culture are respected in the society where you live.

You feel that your opinion on social and political issues matters.

Other people consult you about different issues.

You are not afraid of being stopped by the police.

You know where to turn for advice and help if you need it.

You have never felt discriminated against because of your origin.

You have adequate social and medical protection for your needs.

You can go away on holiday once a year.

You can invite friends for dinner at home.

You have an exciting life and you are positive about your future.

You feel you can study and follow the profession of your choice.

You are not afraid of being harassed or attacked in the streets, or in the media.

You can vote in national and local elections.

You can celebrate the most important religious festivals with your relatives and close friends.





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You can participate in an international seminar abroad.

You can go to the cinema or the theatre at least once a week.

You are not afraid for the future of your children.

You can buy new clothes at least once every three months.

You can fall in love with the person of your choice.

You feel that your competence is appreciated and respected in the society where you live.

You can use and benefit from the Internet.

You are free to use any site on the Internet without fear of censorship.

You are not afraid of the consequences of climate change.



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