

ABOUT THE TOPICS

CARD 1: CONSEQUENCES OF DISCRIMINATION

At the core of international human rights, we find the non-discrimination principle. Article 2 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) reads: *Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.*

Still, discrimination and racism are big challenges in society. The consequences are serious both for the society as well as for the individuals. Being exposed to racism and discrimination can negatively affect mental and physical health.

Relevant articles in the Universal Declaration: 1, 2, 7, 10, 16, 18, 21, 26

More information:

- Discrimination (Amnesty International): <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/discrimination/>

CARD 2 AND 3: PREJUDICE AND RACISM + ALL DIFFERENT – ALL EQUAL

When we categorize, we simplify. We often tend to think that the people in the group are more similar than they really are. Often the differences within one group will be larger than between the groups. It is also important to be aware that at the same time that we establish groups, we establish borders against ‘the others’. The result can be the ‘us’ and ‘them’ dichotomy. We create groups and they function for good and bad.

To get support, politicians and other leaders often tend to define some groups as ‘the others’. In all wars and conflicts the ‘us and them’ dichotomy has been used for political purposes. Often ‘the others’ have been ‘labeled’ to influence what ‘we’ think about them. Stereotypes and prejudices, discrimination and human-rights abuses can be obvious next steps.

It is important to be aware of these mechanisms. Even if we share one or more characteristics, all human beings are complex and unique with a mixture of characteristics, features, qualities and experiences. Always try to see the individual instead of only the group.

Relevant articles in the Universal Declaration: 1, 2, 7, 10, 16, 18, 21, 26

More information:

- Prejudices explained: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IzEdSdvFLU0>
- Fight racism: <https://www.un.org/en/fight-racism>

CARD 4: FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

There are many good reasons for freedom of expression, but also that this freedom sometimes should be restricted. This duality is reflected in international human rights documents. The treaties protect freedom of expression but give the states possibilities to restrict this freedom in some situations and under certain circumstances.

For example, Article 10 in the European Convention on Human Rights recognizes that freedom of expression cannot be absolute, but that there can be good reasons for restricting expressions that have harmful and destructive effects. This may refer, for example, to expressions that compromise other peoples’ privacy and family life; that discriminate against vulnerable groups; that encourage violence and terrorism, that are pornographic and can harm

children and young people; that disclose state secrets; or that have other negative impact on individuals, the state, or the society at large. According to the Article, however, any restrictions must be according to the law and must be necessary in a democratic society. The underlying argument is that since freedom of expression is such a fundamental democratic value, the states' restrictions cannot be arbitrary but well considered.

Relevant articles in the Universal Declaration: 19

More information:

- Freedom of expression (Council of Europe): <https://www.coe.int/en/web/freedom-expression>.

CARD 5: PARTICIPATION

Article 12 in the Children's Convention says that a child who can form its own views must have the right to express these views in all matters that concern the child. The child's views must be given due weight in accordance with its age and maturity. Article 12 is often called the Convention's democracy article. The child is gradually developing, and therefore should "practice" in expressing its views and being listened to from an early age.

Even if young people don't have the right to vote they can write articles, participate in organizations, and school parliament. Examples on young people having an impact: Greta Thunberg, Claudette Colvin, and Louis Braille

Relevant articles in the Universal Declaration: 19, 20, 21

More information:

- Five child activists you need to know (Unicef): <https://www.unicef.org.au/stories/five-child-activists-you-need-to-know>
- Democratic participation (Council of Europe): <https://www.coe.int/en/web/civil-society/democratic-participation>

CARD 6: LGBTQI + -RIGHTS

LGBTQI stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex. Many sexual minorities experience discrimination and hate-motivated violence.

United Nations human rights treaty bodies have confirmed that sexual orientation and gender identity are included among prohibited grounds of discrimination under international human rights law. Still, 64 countries criminalize same sex relationships.

Some rights and freedoms may clash with conservative traditions in some countries and cultures. It takes time for us to get used to change. But if we look back in history, it is easier to see cultural changes. There are many examples showing that discrimination and harmful traditions are no longer practiced because of new knowledge and new attitudes. This shows that we are able to change societies.

Relevant articles in the Universal Declaration: 1, 2, 16, 20

More information:

- International Human Rights Law: <https://www.unfe.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/International-Human-Rights-Law-English.pdf>
- LGBTQI – Free and equal, not criminalized (UN): <https://www.un.org/en/fight-racism/vulnerable-groups/lgbtqi-plus>

CARD 7: GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Authorities are obliged to prevent and combat gender-based violence through, among other things, the European Convention on Human Rights, The Women's Convention and the Istanbul Convention. The UN Women defines gender-based violence as "harmful acts directed at an individual or a group of individuals based on their gender. It is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power and harmful norms". Examples are domestic violence, rape, human trafficking, child marriage, female genital mutilation, honor killings and online/digital violence.

It is estimated that one in three women will experience sexual or physical violence in their lifetime. The immediate and long-term physical, sexual and mental consequences for women and girls can be devastating, and in the worst case, lead to death.

Relevant articles in the Universal Declaration: 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 16, 25

More information:

- Gender-based violence (UNHCR): <https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/protect-human-rights/protection/gender-based-violence>
- Types of violence against women and girls (UN Women): <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/faqs/types-of-violence>

CARD 8: REFUGEE RIGHTS

A refugee is defined as “someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. (The 1951 Refugee Convention)” According to the UN, more than 110 million people are displaced (May 2023). The journey to safety can be dangerous, and many people risk their health and lives.

The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol (expanding the Convention to apply universally and protect all persons fleeing conflict and persecution) are key legal documents protecting refugees.

Relevant articles in the Universal Declaration: 13,14

More information:

- What is a Refugee? (UNHCR): <https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/what-is-a-refugee/>

CARD 9: IMPRISONMENT

Prison inmates and detainees have basically the same human rights as everyone else.

Prolonged solitary confinement can amount to torture, inhuman or degrading treatment, and thus a violation of the UN Torture Convention. According to the UN, isolation is being locked in a cell for 22 hours or more.

The right not to be tortured is absolute, and applies to all countries. Torture cannot be allowed under any circumstances, even if it could potentially prevent a terrorist attack.

Relevant articles in the Universal Declaration: 5

More information:

- Amnesty International: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/01/iceland-abusive-use-of-solitary-confinement-must-end-immediately/>
- Death penalty. The international framework: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/topic/death-penalty/international-framework>

CARD 10: BULLYING

«Bullying, cyber-bullying and violence in schools are human rights violations, which infringe on the rights of children and young people to live a life free from violence» (Council of Europe). Everyone has a responsibility to prevent bullying in their local surroundings. The consequences of bullying are severe, and being bullied can lead to depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems.

The last years there has been an increased focus on mental health issues in schools and workplaces. Such problems are recognized as human right issues that governments must take seriously.

Relevant articles in the Universal Declaration: 1, 25, 26

More information:

- Council of Europe: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/campaign-free-to-speak-safe-to-learn/preventing-bullying-and-violence>

CARD 11: GENDER PAY GAP

Globally, women get paid 23 per cent less than men (UN Women). This is gender discrimination.

In 1979 the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (The UN Women's Convention) was adopted. The aim is to ensure equality between men and women across the world. Each state must ensure that women are not discriminated against in the family, in the education system, in working life and on the political arena. Women have also the right to good health care, the right to control their own finances and equal legal rights as men.

Relevant articles in the Universal Declaration: 2, 23

More information:

- UN Women: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw61/equal-pay>

CARD 12: THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY

«The European Convention on Human Rights protects the right to respect for private life, the home and correspondence. This includes protecting the privacy of messages, phone calls, and emails. Governments can only interfere with these rights when it is specifically allowed by law, and done for a good reason – like national security or public safety» (Council of Europe).

The right to privacy also applies to children. The Children's Convention (art. 16) reads: "No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honor and reputation".

Relevant articles in the Universal Declaration: 12

More information:

- Council of Europe: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/impact-convention-human-rights/right-to-privacy>

CARD 13: CLIMATE CHANGE

Burning fossil fuels such as coal and petroleum is the main source of greenhouse gas emissions. A consequence of these emissions is climate change. Global warming and extreme weather have serious consequences for people all over the world, and affect the realization of several human rights such as the right to life, food, health, housing, culture and development.

In 2015, world leaders agreed on 17 global goals to build a greener, fairer, better world by 2030. Everyone can play a role in achieving them.

Relevant articles in the Universal Declaration: 3, 22, 25, 28

More information:

- OHCHR and climate change: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/climate-change>
- How to combat climate change (UN Global Goals): <https://www.globalgoals.org/goals/13-climate-action/#things-to-do>