

UNIT 2
RESPONSIBILITY
Upper secondary level

Taking part, taking responsibility
Liberty carries responsibilities

"Quidquid agis, prudenter agas, et respice finem."
[Whatever you do, do wisely, and consider the outcome.]
Latin proverb; origin unverified

2.1 Risk losing a friend – or break a rule?

We face dilemmas everywhere

2.2 and 2.3 What would you do?

We take responsibility for our decisions

2.4 What values must we share?

Taking responsibility in a human-rights-based community

Unit 2

Responsibility

Taking part, taking responsibility

Introduction for teachers

Taking responsibility – a perspective that affects everything

We permanently make decisions, both big ones and small ones. What shall we have for lunch today? Will we take the car, or the bus? What party will I vote for? What do I want to do after finishing school?

In every decision that we make, we pick certain options and turn down others. And whether we are aware of it or not, our decisions affect others. Whatever we decide and do can be questioned, as there are alternatives that we could have chosen.

Taking responsibility means considering these alternatives, and the consequences of our decisions. In this respect, taking responsibility is a perspective that literally affects everything we do in life – in our personal sphere, in our relationships and links to our family, friends, colleagues, and the community as a whole.

Taking responsibility – a human right and a challenge

When we make decisions, we exercise our human right to liberty. Liberty carries responsibility, but we can and must decide for ourselves what principles and guidelines we want to follow. Liberty means that we are alone in our decision, and therefore taking responsibility can be very difficult. To a certain extent, there are skills involved that can be trained, and this is what the students will do in this unit.

The students will communicate with each other what in practice we often have to decide on our own – attempting to understand dilemmas of varying complexity, making choices, and defining priorities.

A constructivist concept of responsibility

Taking responsibility is best learnt and understood in concrete situations that demand a decision to be made. Dilemmas are particularly interesting in this respect, as they require particularly careful consideration of the consequences of a decision.

In an open, secular and pluralist society, we cannot take for granted that there is a framework of values that everyone will immediately agree to – but for the stability of a community, such a framework is essential. We must therefore communicate and negotiate the basic principles that we share in taking responsibility.

Taking responsibility is a challenge, and a permanent process of learning; in this respect, this unit adopts a constructivist concept of responsibility.

Traps in teaching responsibility – and how they are to be avoided

There are two traps in teaching responsibility – abstract moralising and indoctrination.

Moralising means talking about being “a good citizen” without looking at a concrete issue. The students are given the message that taking responsibility is only a matter of wanting to or not. They

never learn how difficult this task can be, and how important it is to share their reasons for making a choice.

The trap of indoctrination refers to teachers who attempt to impose a certain set of values. They have no mandate to do so, and whatever set of values they choose, it can be questioned and deconstructed.

To avoid these traps, this unit is designed around a key task that gives the students the opportunity to make decisions on their own. The teacher is their coach and facilitator.

The students discuss how to solve dilemmas. The case stories refer to the students' everyday experience, which puts the students in the role of experts.

Preparation of the unit

We recommend that the teacher perform the same task as the students (see ✎ student handouts 2.1-2.4, and 📖 materials for teachers 2.1-2.3). In this way, the teacher will best understand the learning opportunities and become aware of the difficulties for his/her students. The result itself – the decision how to solve a dilemma – is not the “right” answer, as there is a strong element of subjective choice involved that the students may, or may not share.

Competence development: links to other units in this volume

What this table shows

The title of this manual, *Taking part in democracy*, focuses on the competences of the active citizen in democracy. This matrix shows the potential for synergy effects between the units in this manual. The matrix shows what competences are developed in unit 2 (the shaded row in the table). The strongly framed column shows the competences of political decision making and action – strongly framed because of their close links to taking part in democracy. The rows below indicate links to other units in this manual: what competences are developed in these units that support the students in unit 2?

How this matrix can be used

Teachers can use this matrix as a tool for planning their EDC/HRE classes in different ways.

- This matrix helps teachers who have only a few lessons to devote to EDC/HRE: a teacher can select only this unit and omit the others, as he/she knows that some key competences are also developed, to a certain extent, in this unit – for example, analysis, reflexive use of the media, and responsibility.
- The matrix helps teachers make use of the synergy effects that help the students to be trained in important competences repeatedly, in different contexts that are linked in many ways. In this case the teacher selects and combines several units.

Units	Dimensions of competence development			Attitudes and values
	Political analysis and judgment	Methods and skills	Political decision making and action	
2 Responsibility	Understanding dilemma issues Analysing consequences of a decision Defining priorities and giving reasons	Careful consideration and thinking Sharing reasons and criteria for a decision	Making decisions with incomplete information Awareness of the risk of failure	Switching perspectives Recognition of the interests and rights of others Human-rights-based community
1 Identity	Understanding the impact of our choices on others			Switching perspectives
4 Conflict	Sustainability dilemma	Negotiation strategies	Conflict resolution	
6 Government and politics	Politics – a process of solving problems and resolving conflict			
7 Equality	Appreciation of the cultural dimension of democracy		Balancing majority and minority rights	Mutual recognition

UNIT 2: Taking part, taking responsibility

Liberty carries responsibilities

Lesson topic	Competence training/learning objectives	Student tasks	Materials and resources	Method
Lesson 1 Risk losing a friend – or break a rule?	Competence in political decision making and action: making choices and giving reasons. We are responsible for the choices that we make in our everyday lives. Concepts of dilemma and responsibility.	The students think of the choices they make in everyday dilemma situations and share their reasons.	📄 Materials for teachers 2.1 and 2.2. ✍ Student handouts 2.1 and 2.2.	Plenary discussion, lecture, group work.
Lessons 2 and 3 What would you do?	Competence in making decisions and taking action: handling dilemmas. We make different choices in dealing with dilemmas. In doing so, we exercise our human right to liberty.	The students discuss dilemma case stories and reflect on their personal experience.	✍ Student handouts 2.1–2.4. 📄 Materials for teachers 2.2. Flipcharts, markers.	Group work.
Lessons 2 and 3 What would you do?	Taking responsibility involves handling dilemmas – collecting information, considering the consequences, defining priorities, making decisions.	The students discuss dilemma case stories and reflect on their personal experience.	✍ Student handouts 2.1–2.4. Flipcharts, markers.	Group work.
Lesson 4 What values must we share?	Judgment: reflecting on criteria and values. A democratic community relies on a shared set of values. Human rights provide a set of values that we can agree on.	The students select dilemma case stories, report on their decisions, compare and discuss their priorities.	📄 Materials for teachers 2.2. Flipcharts (prepared in the previous lesson), markers. ✍ Student handout 2.5; alternatively, UDHR, Article 1 on a flipchart or overhead transparency.	Joint planning discussion. Presentations. Discussion.

Lesson 1

Risk losing a friend – or break a rule?

We face dilemmas everywhere

This matrix sums up the information a teacher needs to plan and deliver the lesson.



Competence training refers directly to EDC/HRE.

The learning objective indicates what students know and understand.

The student task(s), together with the method, form the core element of the learning process.

The materials checklist supports lesson preparation.

The time budget gives a rough guideline for the teacher's time management.

Competence training	Competence in political decision making and action: making choices and giving reasons.	
Learning objective	We are responsible for the choices we make in our everyday lives. Concepts of dilemma and responsibility.	
Student tasks	The students think of the choices they make in everyday dilemma situations and share their reasons.	
Materials and resources	 Materials for teachers 2.1 and 2.2.  Student handouts 2.1 and 2.2.	
Method	Plenary discussion, lecture, group work.	
Time budget	1. The students deal with an everyday dilemma.	10 min
	2. The students are introduced to the tool for dilemma analysis.	20 min
	3. The students share their decisions in the school test dilemma.	10 min

Information box

This lesson introduces the students to the importance, and the necessity, of taking responsibility. In a trial run, so to speak, they apply the tool to reflect on their decisions in taking responsibility, and they are introduced to the key concept of dilemma.

All the students are immediately actively involved through the inductive approach. Within a few minutes, all students in class are thinking about how to solve a dilemma that is familiar to them from their experience in school.

The first lesson deals with the key theme – facing dilemmas, making choices, reflecting on the priorities involved in those choices. Rather than adding additional topics, the following lessons explore this theme of dilemma resolution. Like all the units in this manual, this unit also follows the didactic principle of thorough treatment of a selected piece of subject matter – “Do less, but do it well”. The reason for selecting so little, and omitting so much, is abundant experience. It is the intensity of the learning effort that yields the richest results, not the extensive coverage of ground.

Lesson description

Stage 1: The students think of their choices in everyday situations

 Materials for teachers 2.1

The teacher announces the beginning of a new unit and, as an introduction, tells the following case story.

Imagine the following situation. In your class, a written history test is being held. You are one of the best students in the class in history, and even you think that this test is quite difficult.

Your friend whispers from behind and asks you to show him your test paper. You know that cheating in tests is forbidden, and both you and your friend could be severely punished if you do it.

What would you do? Would you risk losing a friend – or break a rule?

The teacher writes down the dilemma question – the topic of this lesson – onto the blackboard or flipchart.


He/she makes the students aware that their answer must be either yes or no – there is no alternative or intermediate solution, nor can the students communicate – and then asks for a show of hands. The students vote, and the teacher records the results on the blackboard or flipchart.

A discussion round follows. The students give their reasons, and after some minutes the teacher sums up the points on the board. We may expect arguments like the following:

Would you risk losing a friend – or rather break a rule?	
Yes (vote x)	No (vote y)
<p>Good friends always help each other.</p> <p>I will need help from friends too one day.</p> <p>We need help from each other. It would be a cold unfriendly world in which no one cares for the other.</p> <p>...</p>	<p>Cheating is unfair on those who stick to the rules.</p> <p>By cheating I risk being punished myself. Friends should not expect that from each other.</p> <p>It depends on the friend how big the risk is. I can talk to a good friend, and he/she will respect my decision.</p> <p>...</p>

Stage 2: The students are introduced to the tool for dilemma analysis

 Student handouts 2.1 and 2.2

The teacher distributes  student handouts 2.1 and 2.2 to the students and introduces the dilemma concept (handout 2.1) in a brief lecture. The arguments that the students have used outline a conflict of loyalties: either I stay loyal to my friends when they ask me for help, or I follow the rules because they guarantee equal chances for everyone in a school test. The reasons that the students have given – and may be expected to give – refer to values: my understanding of friendship, loyalty, willingness to help others, fairness, respect for rules and law.

Now I face a situation in which I am going to violate one of these ties of loyalty, and the values underlying it – either I risk losing a friend and my reputation may suffer, or I risk punishment, and I may have a bad conscience because I broke a rule that I actually support. This type of situation, in which you can only choose what to do wrong, rather than doing everything right, is called a dilemma. This example is typical for many dilemmas:

- No compromise is possible. You must define your priority.
- Time pressure forces you to act immediately, which makes it difficult to consider your decision carefully.

- You cannot change your decision later, so its effects are irreversible.
- You take responsibility – both you and others must cope with the consequences.

In our everyday lives, just as in political decision making, we constantly face dilemmas. Handling such dilemmas is difficult, because the issues are often complicated, and we must act under time pressure.

However, solving dilemmas and reflecting on our responsibility is, to a certain extent, a skill that can be trained. Training takes place in a slow motion mode, as it were. We spend a few lessons on the consideration of dilemmas that must be settled immediately in real life situations.

✍ Student handout 2.2 offers a tool to help deal with dilemmas. The students are given the task of applying this tool to the school test issue. Taking approximately 5 to 10 minutes, the students should therefore select between one and three questions that they think are relevant and useful, and consider these carefully. They should make a decision and share their reason(s) in the plenary round which will follow. They work in groups of three or four.

Stage 3: The students share their decisions on the school test dilemma

In the concluding plenary round, the group speakers present their groups' decisions and the priorities that led to them. The teacher chairs the session and pays particular attention to the students' choices of questions and criteria.

To conclude the lesson, the teacher comments on this point, making the students aware of their shared, or different, priorities. By thinking about the priorities that guide their decisions, the students are taking responsibility.

Lessons 2 and 3

What would you do?

We take responsibility for our decisions

This matrix sums up the information a teacher needs to plan and deliver the lesson.

Competence training refers directly to EDC/HRE.

The learning objective indicates what students know and understand.

The student task(s), together with the method, form the core element of the learning process.

The materials checklist supports lesson preparation.

The time budget gives a rough guideline for the teacher's time management.

Competence training	Competence in making decisions and taking action: handling dilemmas.	
Learning objective	We make different choices in dealing with dilemmas. In doing so, we exercise our human right to liberty. Taking responsibility involves handling dilemmas – collecting information, considering the consequences, defining priorities, making decisions.	
Student tasks	The students discuss dilemma case stories and reflect on their personal experience.	
Materials and resources	✎ Student handouts 2.1-2.4. 📄 Materials for teachers 2.2. Flipcharts, markers.	
Method	Group work.	
Time budget	1. The teacher introduces the key task of the unit.	10 min
	2. Key task: the students discuss dilemmas.	70 min

Information box

Taking responsibility in secular democratic communities has a constructivist dimension: we must find out how to take responsibility in a given situation. Taking responsibility in dilemma situations, often under time pressure, is difficult, but it is something that can be developed.

The key task of this unit serves this goal. The students share and discuss the problems and choices of priorities in given dilemma situations. Taking responsibility is a concrete matter, and therefore the students deal with four dilemma case stories that differ in content (see ✎ student handout 2.3): taking responsibility for something that someone else should have taken care of, a conflict of loyalties to a teacher and a friend, a conflict between loyalty to a friend and the obligation to obey the law, deciding whether or not to support a project without being completely informed.

The students prepare presentations of their choices, in which they are to focus on their reasons (see ✎ student handout 2.4). To support these presentations, the teacher prepares flipcharts based on this handout, with an adapted layout (see 📄 materials for teachers 2.2).

Extended project-type tasks offer the teacher the opportunity to assess the students' levels of competence development (see stage 3 below).

Lesson description

1. The teacher introduces the key task of the unit

The purpose of this exercise is to analyse the ways to solve dilemmas and the criteria used for this. Under real life conditions, we often have to make these decisions in seconds, and may regret them later if we cannot correct them. In politics, decision-making processes also often deal with dilemmas – with conflicting goals.

In this key task, the students can study this complex decision-making process in slow motion, as it were, and reflect on the responsibility they take when settling a dilemma one way or the other.

They should record their decisions and their reasons on *✓* student handout 2.4. If they cannot agree on a certain decision within their group, both views should be recorded and presented.

The students form groups of four to six. They appoint a group manager, a presenter and a writer who will support the presenter. They discuss the four dilemmas on *✓* student handout 2.3 by selecting some questions and criteria from the toolbox (*✓* student handout 2.2). The groups are free to discuss further dilemmas from their personal experience or from politics.

2. Key task: the students discuss dilemmas


The students work in groups. They are responsible for their work, including any decision on breaks, homework tasks, research for materials, etc.

3. Teacher's activities

The teacher observes the students at work. The students' activity is an opportunity for the teacher to assess their level of competence development – co-operation and team work, time management, understanding of dilemmas, level of reflection, analysis and political judgment.

He/she does not support them unless the students ask for help; in such cases, the teacher should not give a solution, but rather assist the students in finding an appropriate approach.

Preparation of lesson 4:

- The teacher prepares a set of six presentation charts (see  materials for teachers 2.2). Each of these is prepared on a separate sheet of flipchart paper. On four of them, the teacher enters the titles of the dilemma case stories and the alternative options.
- The teacher observes the students, and perhaps also asks them how they are coping with their task. If they find it difficult, or even feel they are being taken to their limits, the teacher should address this problem in the reflection phase (lesson 4, stage 3).

Lesson 4

What values must we share?

Taking responsibility in a human-rights-based community

This matrix sums up the information a teacher needs to plan and deliver the lesson.

Competence training refers directly to EDC/HRE.

The learning objective indicates what students know and understand.

The student task(s), together with the method, form the core element of the learning process.

The materials checklist supports lesson preparation.

The time budget gives a rough guideline for the teacher's time management.


Competence training	Judgment: reflecting on criteria and values.						
Learning objective	A democratic community relies on a shared set of values. Human rights provide a set of values that we can agree on.						
Student tasks	The students select dilemma case stories, report on their decisions, compare and discuss their priorities.						
Materials and resources	<p>📄 Materials for teachers 2.2.</p> <p>Flipcharts (prepared in the previous lesson), markers.</p> <p>📄 Student handout 2.5; alternatively, Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on a flipchart or overhead transparency.</p>						
Method	Joint planning discussion, presentations, discussion.						
Time budget	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>1. Joint planning decision.</td> <td>10 min</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Presentations and discussion.</td> <td>15 min</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Reflection on the unit.</td> <td>15 min</td> </tr> </table>	1. Joint planning decision.	10 min	2. Presentations and discussion.	15 min	3. Reflection on the unit.	15 min
1. Joint planning decision.	10 min						
2. Presentations and discussion.	15 min						
3. Reflection on the unit.	15 min						

Information box

The key task gave the students the opportunity to produce a lot of material, and it is quite likely that this is more than can be properly discussed in one lesson. Therefore a choice must be made. The students should participate in this decision, as the problem and responsibility is theirs as much as the teacher's. A quick decision saves time for the following lesson sequences.

However, if the students question the need to select some of their work for the follow-up discussion, their objections have priority. To avoid disappointment among the students, it is important for them to understand that they will learn more from a thorough discussion of a few choices than from hearing brief inputs on everything that was discussed. The class must solve a dilemma, as time and public attention are scarce resources – not only in class management, but also in public life. Gatekeeping and agenda setting are a necessity, as well as an exercise of power (see unit 9 for an extensive treatment of this issue).

This is an important learning opportunity in class management – in teaching in the spirit of democracy and human rights. The sooner the students can choose what issues to focus on the better, but no one should feel overruled. The students must find a balance between efficiency and fairness of participation. In the end, the majority will decide (see unit 8 on the problem of outvoting minorities).

In the final stage of reflection, we suggest focusing on one of two key issues that are always involved in taking responsibility in open societies: the dilemmas of complexity and stability (see  materials for teachers 2.3, lecture module Nos. 2 and 3).

The **complexity dilemma** refers to the experience that taking responsibility is a difficult task, and that these difficulties increase the more complex our social systems become. If the students articulate this experience, the teacher should choose this topic. The students may well need encouragement to accept the risk of fallacy, rather than trying to avoid taking decisions.

The **stability dilemma**, on the other hand, refers to the experience that we are very much on our own when making decisions, and we cannot take for granted that we all adhere to the same basic values. To what extent is such an agreement necessary, and how can we achieve it? Human rights offer a set of values that is confined to the principle of respect for human dignity, which is acceptable to all major religious beliefs. In this respect, this is an important lesson in human rights education (HRE).

Lesson description

Preparation

The teacher has hung up the presentation charts in the classroom in advance of the lesson.

Stage 1: Joint planning decision

The teacher chairs the first stage of the lesson. He/she goes to each of the four flipcharts with the dilemma case stories in turn and refers to the two alternative options. The students vote for one of the options by a show of hands, and the teacher enters the results on the flipchart.

The groups which have reflected on their personal experience give a briefing on the issue and present the students' decision. They hang up their additional flipcharts.

The teacher points out that the students will not have sufficient time to discuss all their decisions in detail and they must therefore make a choice by a show of hands. If the students agree, no further discussion is necessary.

If the students have difficulty in agreeing on what issues to choose, the teacher suggests one or two. Criteria for such a choice could be:

- a discussion on an issue that the students found particularly interesting;
- a unanimous decision – do the students share certain values or priorities?
- a controversial decision – do the students agree on certain values or priorities?
- a preference for students' personal experience.

The criteria that apply depend on the choices recorded on the flipcharts.

Stage 2: Presentations and discussion

The presenters come forward and explain the reasons for their group's decision. A second group member supports the presentation by making brief notes on the flipchart.

The students compare their criteria, guided by the teacher, and discuss their choices. The teacher chairs the discussion.

The result of the discussion cannot be anticipated. The students may or may not agree on their principles for taking responsibility in a given situation. The bottom third of the flipchart can be used to record the result of the discussion.

Stage 3: Reflection

The teacher chooses one of the following issues based on observing and talking to the students during the key task, for example. A joint decision with the students is not appropriate, as the teacher would need to explain the options in a lengthy lecture.


Option 1: The complexity dilemma:

The students reflect on the difficulties in taking responsibility

The plenary session begins with a feedback round. What went well, what was difficult?

We may expect the students to point out that taking responsibility in this way is difficult and time-consuming. The requirement to understand the consequences of what we are doing – consider the outcome, *respice finem*, is often unachievable.

The teacher's response is that this objection is perfectly justified – but what are the alternatives? To stop making decisions and taking responsibility? To insist on complete information first?

Of course, life will go on, and we will have to run the risk of making mistakes in our decisions. But it makes a difference if we are aware of our risk of fallacy, and the challenge of complexity in modern society (see  materials for teachers 2.3, lecture module No. 2). That is why education and training of the kind offered in this unit are so important.

Option 2: The stability dilemma:

The students reflect on their experience in the light of human rights

The teacher refers to the values and priorities that the students agreed or disagreed on in their previous discussion, which give rise to the following question:

⇒ What values do we share?

This is the topic of the lesson; the teacher writes it down as a headline above the flipcharts on the blackboard; otherwise a strip of A3 size paper is pinned up on the wall.

The students review their discussion as it has been recorded on the flipcharts.

This line of reflection leads to further questions:

⇒ What values do we disagree on? Do they mutually exclude each other?

⇒ What values should we agree on?

The teacher explains why this question is so important: we depend on each other to take responsibility along the same lines. What could such guidelines be?

The students will know, or realise, that there is no religious belief or philosophy of ethics that we all accept, and no one will accept any set of values that is imposed upon him or her. The only source that provides a set of rules or values that we may agree on are human rights.

The teacher refers to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 1:

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (10 December 1948), Article 1;

full text in  student handout 2.5.

The students look up this article in  student handout 2.5, or the teacher presents it to the class.

This article alone can take us very far:

- We are born with human rights; they are unalienable, no one can take them away from us.
- We are free.
- We are equal.

The teacher has just demonstrated how to read such an article – slowly, word by word. The students continue:

- We have human dignity: we should treat each other with respect.
- We have certain rights.
- We are “endowed with reason”: we can think for ourselves.
- We are “endowed with conscience”: we can take responsibility.
- We “should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood”: we should take responsibility for one another, which includes caring for those who depend on support by others.

The teacher points out that human rights not only have a vertical dimension – the relationship between state authority and the individual citizen – but also a horizontal dimension – the

relationship between individuals as members of a community. We can allow ourselves a lot of liberty and pluralism in a human-rights-based civil society that gives us the framework of basic values that we can all agree on.

Options for more extended study

Both options in the reflection phase are worth discussing. In an extension to this unit, the second key issue can be discussed.

The perspective of responsibility can be linked to literally every other unit in this manual. See the section on cross-references at the beginning of this chapter.

Materials for teachers 2.1

How to use the tool for dilemma analysis

(✍ student handout 2.2): a model demonstration

The instruction advises the students to choose a few questions and think about them carefully. Therefore this model demonstration discusses some selected questions, but the reader should feel free to make different choices, or to answer the questions differently. In this demonstration, the method is more important than the line of thinking. That is one reason why no decision is suggested.

Case story No. 4: Which bananas shall I buy? (✍ student handout 2.3)

1. Collect information.

Who is involved?

What do they want? (What are their needs, goals or interests?)

Who is involved?	Goals, interests
Me as a customer	Buy cheap food. Buy good quality food.
Supermarket	Attract customers. Make a profit.
Fair Trade	Support small banana producers.
Banana producers	Make a living to support family. Sell good products. Increase production.

What is the problem/dilemma?

Buy the cheaper bananas?	Buy the more expensive bananas?
Buying the cheaper bananas helps me save money for other purposes. Not helping people in need who, to a certain extent, also depend on my decisions gives me a bad conscience.	Buying the more expensive bananas will help small banana farmers. Buying expensive food has its limits.

What does this case have to do with me?

I am directly involved in the globalised market. My decision what to buy has a direct impact on the lives of others.

What do we not know – what do we not understand?

I am directly involved in the globalised market. My decision what to buy has a direct impact on the lives of others. We do not know each other, but we know a bit about each other, and we are linked by what we do.

I do not know how urgently the farmers depend on my help. Perhaps other customers have already bought kilos of Fair Trade bananas, but the opposite may also be true.

How big would the effort be to find the missing information?

Under conditions of everyday life, I must make up my mind now. I need something to eat, so I must decide without knowing the full picture; this is the rule rather than the exception.

2. Consider the consequences.

What are the alternative choices?

What effect would each of these choices have, and for whom ...?

Alternative choices	Alternative 1: Buy cheap bananas	Alternative 2: Buy expensive bananas
Me as a customer	No matter how big or small my income is, I won't notice the difference. If necessary, I can easily compensate by saving on one hamburger or a bar of chocolate. The matter might be different if I am in debt and have to cut expenses wherever possible.	
Banana producer	No support.	Modest support, with considerable effect (Fair Trade information).
Supermarket	We do not have any accurate figures, but we may presume that the supermarket will earn a profit as long as we buy some bananas – be they cheap or Fair Trade.	
Fair Trade	No success for Fair Trade.	Success for Fair Trade.

3. Define your priorities.

To what extent do I understand the consequences of my decision?

I do not have the full picture, and cannot undertake the effort to obtain it – unless I make it one of my few top priorities. Therefore I must decide whether to rely on the information given to me by others, in this case Fair Trade. They tell me that even a small donation would mean a lot for the banana farmers in a developing country.

What religious or moral principles are important for me?

This question is clearly of particular importance. We are free to answer it as we think right.

Is my decision irreversible (“point of no return”), or can I correct it later?

This kind of decision can be made many times. I can make one choice today, and the opposite choice tomorrow. I can think over my decision, but I cannot revise a decision made in the past.

4. Make your decision.

Must I opt for one goal and violate the other?

Yes. You usually buy cheap or expensive bananas, but not both. A compromise – buying some of each – is not very convincing.

Under the given conditions, what does my intuition tell me? With what decision can I identify most?

Under conditions of daily life, our intuition is probably our most important guideline, and is often more reliable than a big effort of thought. We do what we feel is best. Taking responsibility thus means trying to understand, and sometimes revise, what our intuition tells us.

Materials for teachers 2.2

Flipchart layout for the comparison of dilemma solutions (lesson 4)

One flipchart is required for each dilemma case story. For suggestions on how to phrase the alternative options, see [↗ student handout 2.4](#).

Dilemma case story:

(Add title from [↗ student handout 2.3](#)).

Alternatives	Reasons
<p><i>(Enter first dilemma option here)</i></p> <p>Group No.</p>	
<p><i>(Enter second dilemma option here)</i></p> <p>Group No.</p>	
<p><i>(leave empty for additional entries)</i></p> <p>Group No.</p>	

Materials for teachers 2.3

Liberty and responsibility – three lecture modules

This is a set of lecture modules to choose from in response to the students' learning needs – both within the four-lesson unit, or in an optional extension of the unit. The modules explore the conditions of taking responsibility in our modern societies:

Module No. 1: Learning how to take responsibility is impossible without taking risks.

Module No. 2: How do we succeed in taking responsibility in modern, increasingly complex societies that stretch most of us to our limits?

Module No. 3: The stability of democratic communities has a cultural dimension – a shared set of values among its members that cannot be enforced, but that must be agreed on.

1. The risk–responsibility dilemma

Making choices freely is a human right, but this liberty carries responsibilities. We must always be aware of the impact and consequences that our decisions and actions have for ourselves or for others, today and in the future, here or elsewhere in the world. (See the sustainability model in \approx student handout 4.2).

On the other hand, we only learn how to take responsibility under conditions of liberty, which includes the liberty to fail. For example, young people want to go out at night and at weekends, as the students will know very well. Their parents expect them to be back at home at a certain time, and it is the young person's responsibility to keep to the agreement. Without the liberty to move freely, and to run all the risks involved, no one can learn how to take responsibility.

2. The complexity–democracy dilemma

In this unit, the students reflect on how to take responsibility in everyday situations. We must often decide in seconds how to solve a dilemma. The key task (lessons 2 and 3) allows the students to analyse the dimensions of responsibility in slow motion, and in this way, they train their intuition. Taking responsibility requires the skill to run through complex situations in seconds and then intuitively make a decision that will stand critical reflection. In our everyday experience, this is “normal”, and we are all aware of the risk of making mistakes when we must decide on difficult matters under time pressure. Training and experience helps to improve intuition, but the problem remains.

Complexity takes on a different quality on a social or global level. For example, we often have the choice how to travel from A to B, for instance from our homes to school. Driving by car is the most convenient option, while taking the bus or cycling takes longer, not to mention possible delays, getting wet in rainy weather, etc. What choice do we make? One criterion could be the consequences of driving for climate change. But would my car alone make such a difference, particularly if only a minority takes the bus or bicycle? The issue is too complex for an individual to handle (see unit 4). The same applies when we have to take part in political debates on such an issue – are we doing enough, or the right things, to avert climate change?

This increase in complexity is typical for modern societies. They are linked through globalised markets and depend on each other in the way they deal with global issues like climate change. Having to cope with complexity makes it more difficult to take responsibility. This is, in a way, the price we have to pay for the increase in our standard of living in modern societies, due to their achievements in science, technology, and education.

Intuition no longer helps us in taking responsibility in complex issues such as dealing with climate change. We need advice from experts. In democracies, citizens and politicians who must rely on experts to understand the world they are living in are in danger of slipping into a kind of modern, post-democratic oligarchy, a rule by experts whom the citizens can no longer control. This is the complexity–democracy dilemma.

Democracy stands and falls with the promise that every interested citizen can take part in decision making. To do so with responsibility requires educated citizens. Education is the only chance that we have to resolve the complexity dilemma. The expansion of education has not only been a driving force of increasing complexity in modern society, but is also the key to overcoming the complexity–democracy dilemma.

3. The liberty–stability dilemma: liberty, pluralism and our need to share certain values

Article 18

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (10 December 1948); full text in ↗ student handout 2.5.

Individuals who exercise these rights produce pluralism in many forms (see unit 3). One effect is that people adhere to different religious beliefs and value systems – even more so if immigrant communities are present. Modern societies are secular and pluralist – their members develop individual standpoints and identities (see unit 1). Responsibility has a constructivist dimension.

On the other hand, every community relies on a set of values that all members agree on. Democracy equally depends on a strong state and a supportive political culture.

This is the liberty–stability dilemma: a democratic and secular state depends on cultural conditions that its institutions and authorities cannot produce or enforce. A set of collectively accepted and appreciated values, rules and goals cannot be taken for granted. Rather, it is the citizens' responsibility to (re)negotiate and (re)define their values, rules and goals. Education, and EDC/HRE in particular, play a key role in meeting this challenge. Human rights offer perhaps the only set of rules and principles that may be universally accepted (see lesson 4 of this unit, which focuses on Article 1, UDHR). Human rights emphasise the principle of mutual recognition – the golden rule – but do not promote any particular religious belief or philosophy of ethics and morals. From this perspective, human rights are not only at the source of the problem, but also the key to the solution.