

Unit 8 (Primary school, Class 8)

Children's rights - thoroughly researched

A Lesson plan

	Key questions/lesson topics	Main activity	Resources
Lesson 1	Do we understand the articles on children's rights?	The pupils select articles from the Convention for further criteria-guided study during the following two lessons.	Copies of the children's rights convention (see appendix).
Lessons 2 and 3	Does everyone understand the criteria? How can the teacher give support without intervening too much?	The pupils work at their own pace in small groups. They analyse articles from the children's rights convention and design diagrams that appeal to the viewer.	Magazines, paper, glue, scissors.
Lesson 4	What have we learned? How demanding was our task? How have we made use of our liberty?	The pupils reflect on their work and learning and they discuss how to exhibit their products.	The finished posters.

B Background and educational objectives

Human rights and children's rights will remain a mere vision on paper if they do not become meaningful for a person's real life. They need to be understood and related to concrete experience. That is to say, they need to be applied to everyday life and violations of these rights must be identified. If pupils are to understand the rights of the child, which is our focus here, they must become active and work with them. Listening or reading alone will not suffice. A critical understanding and application of children's rights is not only the aim of this unit, but of this entire handbook.

A remark should also be made here (and communicated to the pupils) about the term "children's rights", as this occasionally causes considerable irritation among adolescents. Quite rightly, they might not want to be called "children". Still, the rights of the child are also applicable to them, at least up to the age of 18.

Adolescents should realise that children's rights (regardless of the use of the word "children") provide them with an instrument that may help them to identify cases of injustice and to claim justice. By ratifying the Convention on the Rights of the Child, every state accepts the obligation to implement these rights by all possible means. This in turn implies high priority to the process of implementa-



tion and includes support for children and young people to make use of and enjoy their rights.

In the teaching project for the 8th class, we suggest that the pupils should deal with the children's rights convention in depth by researching cases of implementation and, conversely, violation of children's rights in the spheres of their everyday lives. As a possible and meaningful additional aim of the project, we would advise an exhibition of posters on various children's rights. Each poster is composed of different elements: a description of con-

tents, analysis, examples and illustrations of the children's right in question. This approach encourages an analytical as well as a creative approach to the theme.

From a pedagogical perspective, this exhibition provides an occasion and an incentive to deal with a specific article from the convention. Perhaps teachers from other classes could perform as a jury who select the most beautiful poster for which a small prize is awarded (e.g. tickets to the cinema, book vouchers).

The examples from local life or an international context should be taken from different print media that the pupils have brought to school. Reading newspapers and magazines will therefore be a core element of preparation. Without engaging in co-operative learning (working in small project groups), the pupils will not achieve their objectives. This is a further teaching aim of the project.

The project should cover approximately four lessons. Not every lesson is complete in itself: rather, all lessons belong together. Within the groups, the pupils should be given the opportunity to work out reasonable schedules for themselves.

With a view to holding the exhibition on Universal Children's Day (20 November), it is advisable to begin the project at the end of October/beginning of November.

C Key questions for reflection on Unit 8

Experiencing children's rights	Getting to know children's rights	Implementing children's rights
Teacher		
In what way have the principles of children's rights been observed in the classroom and school community?	What do the children now know about children's rights?	Learning how to take action outside school: What have the pupils learned for their future lives?
The pupils perceive the classroom and the school as a stimulating learning environment. Daily newspapers are turned into material for work. In this way, school becomes a place where the pupils can analyse their everyday lives.	The pupils learn how to analyse children's rights by using a systematic approach.	By learning how to present a product (here, a poster), pupils become capable of observing and presenting important issues outside school.
Pupils		
How did I experience children's rights in class?	What have I learned about children's rights?	What kind of action am I able to take now?
I have experienced how my fellow pupils and my teacher have both encouraged and challenged me. Both ways of interaction are ways of support for me.	I have become aware of how accurately the articles of the children's rights convention have been phrased and how many aspects are hidden in them. I have learned to analyse them and to think about them.	I am prepared to take part in public debates on issues I understand. I am willing to argue my opinion on children's and human rights, and I am also willing to listen to other people's opinions.

Material

- large sheets of paper (A2 for posters)
- paper in various colours
- felt pens
- scissors
- glue
- old magazines and newspapers
- pictures and photographs
- text of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (see appendix), one copy per pupil
- task description, one copy per group (see lesson 2)

D Procedure

Lesson 1

The teacher presents the complete plan of the following four lessons to the pupils. The class should have understood that they are to deal with the topic of children's rights, to conduct research and finally to create posters that show the children's rights, in order (perhaps) to enter a competition. It could be wise to begin with reactivating pupils' prior knowledge on children's rights.

The teacher hands out copies of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (see appendix). Of the 54 articles, the first 41 - perhaps 42 at the very most - are the most meaningful for the pupils.

Task: Read through the whole text (perhaps to be completed as a homework task). Choose three articles, that you find particularly meaningful.

On a list that has been prepared by the teacher with the numbers of the various articles, the pupils mark the articles they find particularly important. The results are counted, and a list is made and ordered according to the most frequently chosen articles.

A class discussion is held (moderated by the teacher). As a stimulus:

- How did these priorities emerge, what were the motives behind choosing them?
- How does this choice of priorities reflect the

real situation of children and adolescents here?

- Can you identify a pattern or underlying principle?
- Which elements have been left out?

Lessons 2 and 3

The pupils should work in groups of three. The teacher could form these groups by:

- a) selecting randomly (e.g. by counting 1 - 2 - 3);
- b) allowing the pupils to choose, though class dynamics and inclusion need to be taken account of;
- c) using transparent criteria decided upon by the teacher.

The pupils give their group a name and distribute three tasks. Each group needs a time manager, a manager for the materials and a coordinator. They write down what each member is responsible for at the top of an A2 sheet of paper and these planning sheets are then hung up in class. Later, the groups will use them to document the steps they have taken to complete their work. Meanwhile, the teacher has taken the 10 most frequently chosen articles from the board and laid them out on a table, face down. The group coordinators will now select an article from the children's rights convention at random. They are then provided with the task description (see below):

Task

Each group prepares a poster on a children's right. The poster will consist of the following:

- the title of the children's right,
- the text of the article from the Convention on the Rights of the Child,
- a picture that symbolises the right,
- a text (article, story, report) found and taken from a newspaper, magazine or the Internet, that refers to this right. The text should be an example of an incident, in which the particular right has been violated or defended. Your teacher can help you and give you tips on how to search!

After having finished the poster - and if there is enough time left - the group will choose another article from the remaining ones and produce a second poster in the same way.

The groups study their task and decide on who is responsible for what (according to the functions mentioned above).

For now (lesson 2) they set up a list of materials required and note down any questions that may have arisen, decide on their plan of action and set up a time schedule. Important points: What needs to be done? What must be collected? Are there things that group members can bring along from home? Where will the material be stored?

It is important that the teacher checks each group towards the end of the lesson, to see whether the work and the tasks are divided optimally amongst the group members. A short dialogue about the following questions could be useful: Where are we up to in our work? Where do we need help? Are we ok with the distribution of tasks within the group? Is everyone clear on what they have to research and/or collect at home?

Then (as a homework task between lessons 2 and 3, as well as during lesson 3), the children look at their research (images and text), and find the things that present the main challenges and may warrant the teacher's support. In lesson 3, the pupils bring all their research and the things they have collected to school. Another important point in lesson 3 is the design and creation of the poster, which should be made to look appealing. The teacher can also be called upon for advice for this task.

Clarification of the logistics of the exhibition: Where should it be held, and when (perhaps in a public building)? Who will take part (only our class, or do we suggest the project to a partner class)? Who will open the ceremony? Who will be invited to the opening ceremony? Should there be an award ceremony for the best poster? Who will be the members of the jury panel?

Lesson 4

Presentation of the finished posters in class, followed by a discussion.

Clarification of questions in connection to the exhibition (if planned).

Review of the work done on this project (distribution of tasks, problems with research and collecting information, what was helpful/useful advice, good/bad experiences, group dynamics etc.).

Concluding review on the theme of children's rights: What have we achieved in order to perhaps improve the situation? What else could be done? Which concrete steps could be taken? When is the involvement of authorities needed? Etc.