



WE HAVE RIGHTS

AUTHOR: **JAN DĄBKOWSKI**

Description: Workshop strengthening the youth group and expands its activist actions. When a group of young, active people, who feel their rights or the rights of others are violated, is formed, it needs knowledge and tooling support to enable them to take further effective action. This workshop builds the basic legal awareness of the state's obligations towards citizens (including, but sometimes especially, minors), shows a number of possible actions and points out where to turn for support and help.



ANIMATORS

1



PARTICIPANTS

10-15
(teenagers, high school level)



PREPARATIONS

1
hour



EQUIPMENT/ MATERIALS

flipchart, markers,
Information printout
and question bars.

Step 1. Youth rights.

Ask the youth if they have any rights. If so, what? Write your ideas on the flipchart. Then divide the group into 3-5 subgroups and assign each an excerpt of an international document that guarantees and describes their rights as children, adolescents and citizens (Information 1). Include a printed question bar:

Read the materials you have received and think together:

- What areas of life / topics are described in the documents?
- What can be done based on them? What can you ask for? What to react to?
- Against what are you protected?

Prepare to share your conclusions with other groups.

Step 2. Issues to solve

Ask the group if read rights and information were clear. You can ask how the group understands, for example, the right to dignity (or other rights if necessary)? You may find it worth taking a moment to discuss this and other rights. Definitely worth it, because there are not many such opportunities. Ask how the documents they have just read have are used in the real life - how many people feel that these assurances are respected, that they are free to fulfil their needs, that they are protected.

On the flipchart, list the areas, specific rights or freedoms that the group considers unfulfilled or not accepted. Then, let the group choose the most important topics, those they want to address. Let everyone vote on the subject they want to discuss - you can give each person one vote, a few or an unlimited number, but suggest not to vote for everything. You have to start with just one matter. Take care of the topic or topics that have won the most votes.

Step3. Preparing the action

Show the group (or groups, if more topics have been chosen) printed question bars:

- What exact problem do you want to solve? What change do you expect? For starters, pick a very specific thing, not a system change!
- Who do you turn to? Local community, school, service, office, media, local politicians or parliamentarians from the region, city president or state? Remember that the representatives of the Polish state are obliged to protect your human rights.
- What do you want to achieve? Show your needs, feelings or views at a topic, change the narrative, raise awareness.
- What methods will you use? Providing information about a distressing situation, trying to exert pressure, showing support (a meeting, letter, blog, petition, reporting to a city watchman, police, prosecutor or other appropriate office, happening, publicity or demonstration), integration around a topic, information on rights and obligations. During meetings in person,

you can get to know the arguments of the other side, throughout many attractive public actions you can involve many people.

- Who can help you? You will need support - look for allies - educators, lawyers (there are those who work free of charge), local leaders or institutions such as the Ombudsman or NGOs (Polish or international) or perhaps famous people who will advise you and will strengthen your activities, including speaking up alongside yourselves.

VARIANT

If the group wants to act but lack ideas or inspiration, you can show two short films: "Think about it" ("Przemyśl to") (<https://vimeo.com/207037171>, password: polskalab_2), and "Anonymous" ("Anonim") (<https://vimeo.com/207008747>, password: polskalab_1) that treat about relations between Poles and the Ukrainian minority. The films were created by young people from Przemysl - both people from the Ukrainian minority and a Pole - based on their experiences and reflections. Movies encourage discussion about stereotypes, prejudices and their consequences for the community. See **Minority neighbours** scenario.

Information 1

- a) Intercultural documents on the rights of children, youth and citizens:
 - Human rights are listed in the European Convention on Human Rights (Council of Europe) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations). There is also the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by the United Nations. The resulting rights of a child, like human rights, are divided according to the following categories:
 - Personal, enabling the development of the child. These include: the right to life, the right to an identity, the right to development, the right to education, the right to living in the family, the right to express one's views, the right to information;
 - political or public, through which the child expresses its views and participates in the life of its group, community, state. These are: the right to express one's views, the right to participate in associations;
 - social, which are the responsibility of the state and adults to create the right conditions for mental and physical development of a child. These are: the right to decent living and adequate living standards, the right to health care, the right to rest;
 - economical, allowing the child to prepare for economic independence from others. The most important one is the right to learn. In addition, the protection of labour law, whether in the context of compulsory education or holiday job.
- b) International youth oriented strategies:
 - The EU youth strategy envisages, inter alia, that young people are actively involved in social activities and that the governments of Member States like Poland should listen to them and take into account their proposals for the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of strategies and actions, especially those related to education, health, and prosperity. The entire state system should prevent exclusion. (see more: https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth-strategy_en).
 - The Council of Europe's youth policy priorities include:
 - > ensuring young people's human rights and dignity, and young people's involvement in this area,
 - > ensuring equal opportunities for all young people in all areas of everyday life,
 - > supporting young people to promote cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and cooperation in everyday life,
 - > preventing and combating all forms of discrimination on any basis,
 - > supporting youth initiatives in conflict prevention and conflict management, as well as reconciliation through instruments of intercultural dialogue, including its religious dimensions,
 - > supporting the integration of excluded youth.

The script was created as a part of Polska Lab project carried out in collaboration with Association of Creative Initiatives "e", Evens Foundation and Association of Ukrainians in Poland. More about the project: www.polskalab.e.org.pl