Section II:
Guidelines and Teaching Tips

Colega for the Facilitator

- Educational Approach of Colega
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As a **facilitator**, it is essential to consider how you can create an environment that respects and promotes a culture of human rights, one that becomes a living example of what you teach. This is necessary in order for students to learn about human rights.

This part of the manual supports the **facilitator** with practical information about using the Colega manual to do exactly that.

Take what you can from the manual and these instructions. Use whatever is helpful. You may have to adapt and innovate, and that is fine!

The important thing to remember is that when you create an environment that promotes and respects human rights, students will be learning about human rights.

Unlike lesson plans for classroom use in a formal school curriculum, Colega is designed to be adaptable for more informal settings.

Educational Approach of Colega

Colega uses a **participatory, transformative** learning model to teach students about human rights.

The lessons were designed to create an awareness of human rights values and ideas based on personal experiences and critical reflection. Students are then challenged to look for ways to **integrate human rights values** into their lives and that of their families.

1. **Experiencing** the human right through lesson activity or story
2. **Thinking** about the right through discussion
3. **Acting** or reflecting the human right behavior or change

Effective Facilitators

What is the role of the facilitator? Facilitator (or teacher) is used to refer to a person who works with students in formal or non-formal classrooms or other educational settings. Different organizations use terms such as counselor, facilitator, monitor or teacher to denote this role. For reasons of clarity, **facilitator** was selected because it appears to be the most widely understood and commonly used term in this context.

- **Facilitators accompany and guide** the students in their learning.
- **Facilitators are role models.** They set an example for students, integrating human rights values into their own behaviors and attitudes, while constantly aware of their influence on the students.
- **Facilitators create a positive environment** conducive to learning. This is perhaps the most important role of the facilitator.
- **Key responsibilities:** leading games, encouraging participation, facilitating discussion, and giving students the opportunity to critically think about their own behaviors.

(Adapted from *Play It Fair! Human Rights Education Toolkit for Children,* 2008 Equitas – International Centre for Human Rights Education, Reference 07.)

Best Practices for Facilitators

Best practices are teaching strategies and methods that have been carefully researched and have been shown to help facilitators become more effective in their teaching.

We all learn in different ways. This section offers facilitators a variety of approaches and techniques that result in good overall outcomes, where students learn what is being taught.

At the beginning of class, review or summarize ideas or skills from a previous lesson.

Use energetic and enthusiastic speech or obvious interest in the subject matter. When facilitators are enthusiastic, students pay attention and develop enthusiasm of their own.

Encourage reluctant learners. Effective facilitators call on students whose hands are not raised to check their understanding and gently encourage their participation.

Allow wait time after questions. After asking the question, wait at least five seconds for someone to answer before calling on another student.

Apply learning to a student's personal experience, future life, or potential work situation. A student's background knowledge plays an important role in all types of learning; what students already know influences what and how much they'll learn in the future.

Reinforce desired behavior. Small, frequent rewards are more effective than large, infrequent ones. Praise is a particularly powerful reward, especially if delivered in a natural tone of voice to students for specific achievements.

"Thanks so much for sharing your ideas, Bao."
"I love the way Asha lined up quickly."
"This group followed my directions exactly!" is more effective than pointing out which group didn't do it right.

End on the right note. At the conclusion of the lesson, it is important to give the students an opportunity to sum up what they've learned individually and collectively. How you do this depends on the objectives and the mood or tone of the class.

Keep a record. A good facilitator learns from experience. Briefly record what happened at each session, including adaptations and changes that occurred, new ideas, particular successes and difficulties.

(Source: *Jordan Performance Appraisal System Domains Document*, JPAS, Version 5.0, 2008, Jordan School District, Utah, USA.)

Best Practices for the Classroom

Create a positive learning environment
One of the main elements in developing a positive classroom is creating a warm, supportive environment in which students feel safe and are willing to participate.

A critical environment, such as hitting, harsh words, threats, nagging or demeaning comments and negative attitudes, discourages participation and prevents learning.

Use three or four praise statements for every negative statement so that the students hear positive encouragement most of the time.

> "Ali, I love the way you raised your hand to talk."
> "Oh, look! Marta is sitting quietly."
> "I love the way Thomas did what I asked."
> "Thank you, Sofia, for quickly putting away your pencil and paper."

Students will believe what you tell them simply because you are the facilitator. It helps to say things such as, "This is going to be your best time ever!" because they will leave class and tell others that this is going to be their best time just because you said it would be.

Rules and Consequences
It is important to create rules and consequences, and to consistently and kindly and patiently enforce them.

Be strict but be nice. It is possible to be strict, or in other words, to be consistent in requiring that the students do what you ask, without being mean. Make this your motto—and smile.

Create a list with the students for group behavior. Post the rules and devote time to discuss them so that everyone knows what they are and agrees to them.

Respond consistently to behavior
Recognize and stop disruptive behavior immediately. Do not allow social talk, excessive noise, or interruptions during the facilitator's instruction time.

When facilitators and students establish fair rules together and enforce them consistently, rule breakers can be unhappy only with themselves.

If students can depend on what facilitators say, they will be less likely to test them and more able to accept responsibility for their own behavior.

Evaluate and adjust teaching activities
When necessary, adjust the lessons and activities based on the needs and participation of the students, thinking about ways to improve the teaching.

Teaching Methods

Variety keeps things interesting. The lessons and activities presented in the Colega manual use many different teaching methods. Use those that most appropriately fit the human rights article being discussed and that you think will further the understanding of the objective being taught.

Assigning and Creating Groups

There are many ways to ensure that students are not always with the same people, and so that no one feels like they are always the last one chosen.

- Students count off by 3s or 4s. All the 1's get in a group, all the 2s in another group, etc.
- Do the same with different fruits. All the apples in a group, lemons, bananas, oranges, etc.
- As students arrive, give each one a yellow or blue paper or sticker. At the appropriate time, have all the yellows get together in a group and all the blues in another group.

Closings and Conclusions

How you close your lesson depends on the goals and tone of the class. It is important to end on the right note so students leave thinking about what they learned and how they feel about being there. Planning your closing or conclusion is a critical component of your teaching.

Ball Toss: Students stand in a circle or in two lines across from each other, not too far apart. They toss a ball from one to another, making sure to always toss to someone who hasn't had a turn yet. Each person who catches the ball states one thing she or he learned or can remember from the lesson. Continue until everyone has had a turn.

Group Summary: Ask a summarizing question, such as "What remarks that you heard today will you especially remember?" or "What idea can you take home to use in your family?" or "Does anyone have a question for me?" Have each child respond in turn. (Flowers, p. 82.)

Group Discussions

Small Group Discussion: Dividing the class into pairs or groups gives the students an opportunity to participate actively. Small groups can generate a lot of ideas very quickly. The facilitator asks a question, such as: "Is it ever right to spread false information about someone?" Explain the task clearly. Seat the students where they can see each other and tell them how long they have to complete the task. It might be necessary to have a chairperson and someone to take notes from each group. (Flowers, p. 63.)

After the allotted time, have each group report their ideas to the whole class by summarizing the discussion, presenting their decision, or listing their various ideas.

Whole Group Discussion: In order to have an open discussion, it is important to have an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in the group. One way to help create a "safe" environment is to have the group develop **Rules of Discussion.** This is best done at the beginning of the course when standards of behavior are usually being established.

Discussions are a good way for the facilitator and the students to discover what their attitudes are regarding human rights issues. They provide an opportunity to practice listening, speaking in turn and other group skills which are necessary for respecting other people's rights. It is preferable to seat participants in a circle or semi-circle where they can see one another. (Flowers, p. 63.)

Role-Play

A role-play is a short drama acted out by class participants. It is mostly improvised although students may draw on their life experiences for the situation. The facilitator identifies the issue, for example: **The Right to Property.** Two or more class members could play the part of someone taking another's property. Two others could represent those whose property is being taken away because of ethnic or religious discrimination.

- During the role-play, it might be useful to stop the action and ask everyone about what is happening and how the situation can be resolved equitably for all parties.

- After the role-play, it is important that participants talk about what took place and discuss appropriate ways to resolve the situation. (Flowers, p. 63.)

Songs and Stories

In many societies, songs and stories are the medium for preserving and transmitting social values. They can be used to convey **human rights concepts and values.**

- To explore a subject you've chosen, you could ask the group to search for local songs and stories they have heard that support the human right you are learning about.

- You can assign small groups to different issues. Give them time to ask parents, grandparents and others in the community about stories and songs. Have them collect and bring back the texts or music, and give them time to present to the rest of the class or teach a new song.

- Have a discussion comparing what the songs or stories are saying, and how that relates to the reality of today's world. (Siniko, p. 29.)

Most of the suggestions and information in Best Practices for the Classroom and Teaching Methods are adapted from two publications:

1. *The Human Rights Handbook, Topic Book 4*, Nancy Flowers. Minneapolis Human Rights Resource Center, 2000.

2. *Siniko, Towards a Human Rights Culture in Africa,* Amnesty International 1998.