

Exploring Contemporary Women's Rights Issues

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THEME

Contemporary issues, challenges and problems in the domain of women's rights

CONTEXT

The activity plan accompanies the Women's Rights educational cards set created for the JustNow project.

This plan can either come as a follow-up to the 'Introduction to Women's Rights' activity or as an introduction or 'warming up' before the activity plan on 'Reproductive Rights'.

GOALS

- Introducing students/participants to contemporary issues and challenges in achieving women's rights
- Fostering active participation in critical reflection and dialogue about the topic of contemporary issues and challenges in the domains of women's rights and gender equality

METHODOLOGY

- Group discussion (using Socratic method)
- Small group work
- Presentations

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Students/participants gain a better understanding of issues relating to women's rights and gender equality
- Students/participants improve their critical thinking, collaboration, active listening and discussion skills

MATERIAL & EQUIPMENT NEEDED

- Access to the internet
- Women's Rights educational cards created in the Just Now project
- Flipchart paper and markers (for small posters for their presentations)

Overview of activities (process)

Duration: 45 minutes

Introduction: Group discussion: 10 minutes

The teacher/educator initiates the workshop by doing a quick recap of the previously covered topic introducing the women's rights. Below are some of the questions that can be used as a prompt for this initial group discussion:

- How do we define 'women's rights' and 'gender equality'? Why are they important for society?
- What are some contemporary challenges that women face today in their pursuit of equality?

As students/participants identify different challenges and issues, the teacher/educator should nudge them to provide more information about the identified issues, e.g. why is this a problem? Who does this problem affect the most, in what way? Do you know of any prominent cases or examples of this problem?

As the group participates, the teacher/educator uses the whiteboard (or flipchart paper) to record key points, insights and responses. The teacher/educator also guides the conversation, ensuring that different perspectives are explored and respected in the process.

Seeing the sensitivity involved in some of the topics that will be discussed in more depth, the teacher/educator should alert learners to the sensitivity involved, and ask them to treat the topics and the ensuing assignment with respect.

Contemporary Women's Rights Issues: Small Group Work & Presentations: 30 minutes

Divide the group into smaller groups (ideally, 4 students/participants per group), and provide each group with one key contemporary women's rights issue to prepare a short presentation about. (Note: you can use the issues showcased in the Women's Rights educational cards, or you can use additional ones that you would prefer them to focus on.)

Here are some of the contemporary issues that the small groups can focus on:

- gender pay gap
- gender-based violence (GBV)
- #metoo movement (sexual harassment)
- political representation (quotas for women in leadership positions)
- child marriage (or forced marriage)
- female genital mutilation
- workplace discrimination
- reproductive rights (incl. access to abortion)
- maternity leave and accompanying protections
- incel (involuntary celibate) movement
- underrepresentation and misrepresentation of women in media

Each group should prepare a poster presentation about their specific women's rights contemporary issue, answering the following questions:

1. Define the issue. (What is it? Why is it a problem?)
2. Provide some examples and/or statistics about the issue, globally and/or in your country.
3. What kinds of actions (policies, practices) are needed in order to improve women's rights in this specific issue/problem area?
4. Find an example of good practice (advocacy campaign, policy, law, organization) within the specific issue/problem area.

Small groups are meant to use the internet for their research about their respective women's rights issues. Each group should have 15 minutes to prepare their poster (note: it is advised that individuals have different research tasks for e.g. one person works on question 1, another on question 2, etc.).

At the end, each group should share their insights and present their posters to the group, explaining their respective women's rights issues and potential solutions. The posters could be placed on the walls, and left there for a while as a gallery exhibit, after workshop/lesson concludes.

Conclusion/Takeaways: 5 minutes

The lesson can conclude with teacher/educator asking the students/participants to each give one-sentence reflection on the class, stating what is something they learned, something that surprised them, or something that gave them food for thought.

The teacher/educator should briefly summarize some of the key points from the discussion, emphasizing the ongoing importance of women's rights in today's society and the need for continued advocacy.

HOMEWORK IDEAS

Seeing that this topic is rather sensitive and potentially distressing (since it focuses on problems and issues), it is advised that any homework assigned following this class is ideally centered around positive examples, inspiring practices and individuals who made a difference in these respective problem areas. Students/participants could be asked to research these inspiring practices, organisations and individuals, and prepare a short essay or presentation about them, or alternatively, an Instagram post – so that the entire group could create a series of educational and informational social media (Instagram, Tik Tok) posts featuring inspiring stories of positive women's rights initiatives.



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