

DIDACTIC UNIT 4

Growing awareness of Human Rights

**Historical Memory Nowadays: The New
Language of Totalitarian Movements in
Europe**

28th Thessaloniki Lyceum, Thessaloniki, Greece

2014-2017

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1. INTRODUCTION

Title

Growing awareness of Human Rights.

Duration

7-8 teaching hours

Sources

- Map: <http://uk.businessinsider.com/map-shows-far-right-growth-across-europe-2016-3>
- Interview of Robert Paxton: <http://rnbnet.gr/details.php?id=395?id=395>
- “Szalotundo” film of the Hungarian director Martin Szirmai:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYgWtL5m-V4>
- Text on racism (in Greek):
http://foundation.parliament.gr/VoulhFoundation/VoulhFoundationPortal/images/site_content/voulhFoundation/file/Ekpaideytika%20New/racism/0_3racism.pdf
- Information on Jigsaw method: <https://www.jigsaw.org/>
- Compass, manual for human rights education with young people (Council of Europe):
http://www.eycb.coe.int/compass/en/chapter_2/2_38.asp
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>
- Text of Ieronymos, the archbishop of Greece:
<http://edu09.pbworks.com/w/page/11514239/%CE%98%CF%81%CE%B7%CF%83%CE%BA%CE%B5%CF%85%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AD%CF%82%20%CE%B4%CE%B9%CE%B1%CE%BA%CF%81%CE%AF%CF%83%CE%B5%CE%B9%CF%82>
- Text about Julien: <http://www.lifo.gr/now/greece/74116>
- Images:
 - <https://aformi.gr/2010/12/%CF%84%CE%B6%CE%B1%CE%BC%CE%AF-%CF%83%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%BD-CE%B1%CE%B8%CE%AE%CE%BD%CE%B1->

http://paspartoy.blogspot.gr/2016/08/blog-post_85.html

- <http://www.haniotika-nea.gr/361498/>
- <http://www.tovima.gr/society/article/?aid=828312>

Aims

Our project's goal is for students to:

1. Realize that far right ideas/attitudes/behaviors do not appear exclusively in political parties with relevant ideologies but they are also present in every aspect of their lives.
2. Think critically about prejudices, bias and discrimination behavior.
3. Develop communicative skills, empathy and social sensitivity.
4. Build up substantial acceptance towards cultural diversity.
5. Take a more skeptical approach towards the myth of national and cultural homogeneity.
6. Increase their knowledge and understanding of human rights.
7. Confront those that question the democratic values.
8. Change their attitude and start taking action.

Other aspects

- Classroom arrangements: The lesson plan can be held in an ordinary classroom. More space is needed during drama activities. The students can be moved in a more spacious room if there is one available; otherwise a special chair and desk arrangement will be needed.
- Groups: Students will work both individually and in groups.
- Equipment: A projector is needed for the images and the video to be displayed. Other material includes coloured cardboard paper, colour marker pens, reusable tack, 6-8 small envelopes and helium balloons, copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

2. RATIONALE

To most Greeks' nasty surprise, far right political forces entered the Greek parliament, 40 years after the collapse of military junta (1967-1974) and the democracy restoration in Greece. Numerous cases of human rights violation that happened during the seven-year dictatorship (censorship, imprisonment, tortures, exiles of dissidents, etc.) were still alive in collective memory. Nevertheless, the rising of these far right parties is neither a random nor an exclusive phenomenon of the Greek political life. At the same time, the concern increases regarding the power that such political parties gain in Europe.



The map above shows where far-right parties have made significant gains in state and regional elections in Europe since January 2015¹.

¹ <http://uk.businessinsider.com/map-shows-far-right-growth-across-europe-2016-3>

This constitutes an alarming phenomenon by itself. Our democratic reflexes seem to be even more activated if one takes into consideration another parameter, having to do with the fact that quite a considerable number of these parties' voters are young people.

Fascist movements have always been particularly interested in young generations. Recruitment of youngsters to their military group is one of their main goals². Their interest is absolutely justified as Sakellariou quoted: "*Youth is an absolute value for fascism and it becomes a symbol of the new, of national rebirth that the future nationalist revolution will bring*" (Sakellariou, 7)

Moreover, youngsters are considered to be inexhaustible resources of energy, fighting spirit and revolutionary powers. They usually have nothing to lose such as family, career, fortune etc. Last but not least, they are quite politically innocent, thus it is considered easy to manipulate them.

Reasons

The economic crisis that plagues Greece the last years is undoubtedly the first and most dominant reason that leads to the rise of such far right ideologies and political parties in the Greek political scene. The memoranda as well as the strict austerity measures that followed, the augmented unemployment percentages along with the poverty and misery of the population create a hostile climate for democratic institutions. Youngsters are the ones that adopt such ideologies easily, since they start realising that they will be the first generation that will live in worse conditions than their parents did.

Although the economic crisis is a fundamental reason why these parties are rising in numbers, it's not the only one. An explanation that tries to connect the rise of far right parties to the financial crisis in a linear and deterministic way seems to be inadequate. More factors should be taken into consideration though. The failure of the former political forces (because of the corruption or even incompetence) to meet people's needs made the situation even worse. The current political system is often considered unreliable and the democratic institutions are frequently characterized as inadequate and ineffective. Moreover, the increase of immigration flow towards Europe as well as the lack of a well-organized plan for the caring of those people intensifies these xenophobic behaviors. The foreigners (refugees or immigrants) become easy targets, scapegoats that get charged with the increase of the unemployment and criminality rates.

² It is worth mentioning the Nazis' youth organization *Hitler Jugend*, which numbered 2.300.000 members, in 1932. Secondly, the *Gioventù Italiana del Littorio* (GIL, Youth of the Lictor) aimed at training youths as "the fascists of tomorrow" in Fascist Italy.

The stage is being set for extreme xenophobic and nationalistic feelings to develop. The concept of racial purity starts expanding through the political scene, boosted by doses of national pride and justified by the glorious ancient Greek civilization.

In general, the youngsters' short knowledge about the facts of both the recent and distant past makes them fall victims of propaganda and manipulation easily. We can understand why these parties are so popular with younger ages if we combine the above information with the fact that these organizations usually act in the margins of law, often representing the sole alternative of revolutionary activism.

We can only point out that the 21st century's conditions are similar to the ones of Europe after WWI and the 1929's financial crash: financial insecurity, disappointment by democratic institutions, search of identity. Unquestionably, we all know where these conditions led us in the past, so we can only be worried that such events might reoccur. That is the concern that Robert Paxton already expressed in an interview of his³, back in 2010.

“I’m worried that today, compared to 2004, the nationalistic and xenophobic feelings as well as the disappointment for the democratic political institutions becomes more and more obvious. I’m witnessing tolerance towards strict measures against immigrants and dissidents, which could be considered the first step to an authoritarian way of governing. I am also witnessing the growing doubt about the ability of the electoral institutions to elect wise leaders and the ability of those leaders to choose wise policies.”

Six years later, we can only agree that unfortunately the situation has deteriorated.

Consequently, we realize that these far right ideologies are targeted towards a significant part of the youth and this is exactly the part of the population these ideologies gain most of their popularity. Their ideology is based on ideas such as “*The immortal ancient Greek spirit and the superiority of the Greek race*” and propaganda such as “*The increase of immigrants leads to the increase of unemployment.*” This occurs in a context that lacks solid historical knowledge and clear understanding of the present. Realizing that this situation jeopardizes the democratic institutions is in fact what urges the teacher to act. Undoubtedly, the education role concerning both the economic crisis and the unreliability of the political system, which are the two major factors is indirect if not restricted. However, racist obsessions and prejudices can be wiped out

³ <http://rmbnet.gr/details.php?id=395?id=395>

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through education. Moreover, education can help cultivate a more balanced approach towards national consciousness; one that is aware of the nation's course through history and recognizes its value but, at the same time, it respects cultural diversity, embraces and protects it.

3. ACTIVITIES

3.1. ACTIVITY 1: Starting point

As a starting point, we choose to present the short film “Szalotundo” of the Hungarian director Martin Szirmai. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYgWtL5m-V4>



After the film, we urge the students to discuss on the issues that the movie poses. Some indicative questions could be

- Why does the main character make such a mistake?
- How often do we draw wrong conclusions out of prejudices against groups of people?
- What can we do to avoid it, etc?

3.2. ACTIVITY 2: Definition of concepts

Our discussion leads us to topics such as racism, prejudices, far-right ideologies, fascism, racial superiority, xenophobia etc.

The teacher guides the students to write these concepts on the board so that the students can effectively clarify and define them through conversation. Some mistaken points of view are left behind and all together they conclude on a final definition for these terms.

At this stage, the students have the option of consulting a dictionary⁴.

⁴ For Greek language see http://www.greek-language.gr/greekLang/modern_greek/tools/lexica/triantafyllides/

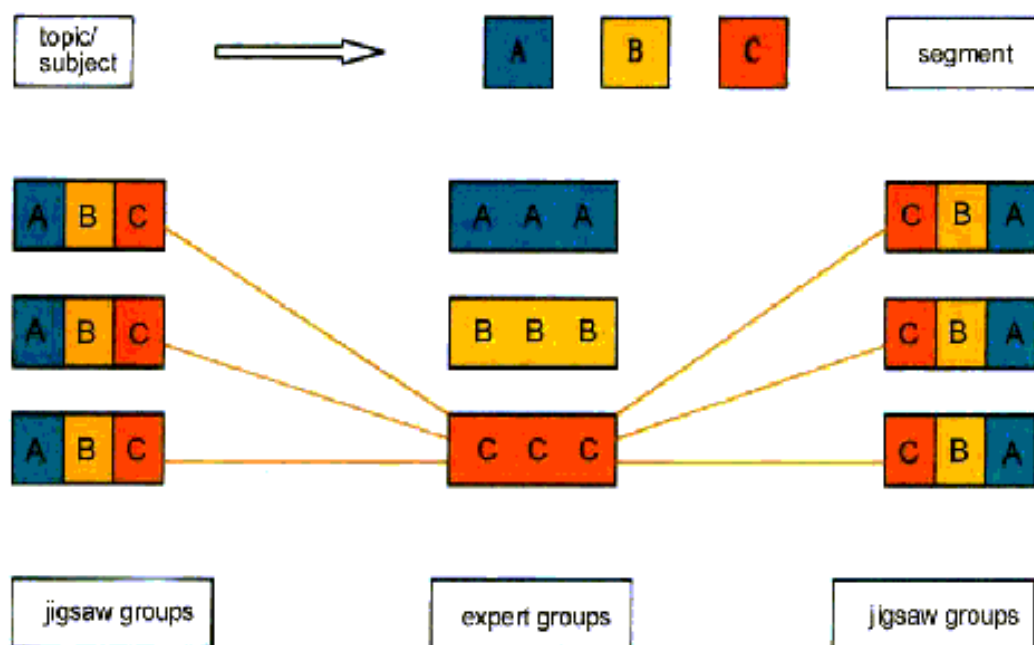
3.3. ACTIVITY 3: More about Racism

Taking into consideration that the concept of racism and racist behavior is what the students witness most often in their everyday lives, it's appropriate for the students to indulge in this term and its forms, should there be enough time.

Next, the teachers provide the students with a text about racism. A very good introductory text is available for the Greek students by the Hellenic Parliament Foundation for Parliamentarism and Democracy See **annex 1**⁵. The teacher can easily find a relevant text in the native language of its students.

Because of the text's sizeable length, it is recommended that the teacher applies the jigsaw method in order to make students read through and comprehend the text effectively.

The jigsaw method in brief



http://uways.net/genialcurriculum/genialcd/genial_main_p012.htm

The teacher divides the text into 5 as equal as possible parts and colors with every part having a different color. Next, the teacher splits the students in groups of 5 and assigns every color to each

⁵

http://foundation.parliament.gr/VoulhFoundation/VoulhFoundationPortal/images/site_content/voulhFoundation/file/Ekpaideytika%20New/racism/0_3racism.pdf

member of the group. He/she makes sure that every group has a representative of every color (jigsaw groups). The students study their parts of the text within the next 10 minutes, according to their color. Afterwards new groups are formed; this time the students are divided by color. During the next 10 minutes, they discuss what they have studied and together they decide how they will present it to their jigsaw group. Then the students return to their jigsaw groups and each color presents its part. This way, every student has worked both individually and with his/her groupmates but he/she has also studied the rest of the text⁶.

⁶ For more information on Jigsaw method see <https://www.jigsaw.org/>

3.4. ACTIVITY 4: Development of empathy

Even if we assume that theoretical knowledge is largely acquired, it's usually not enough by itself to remove deep rooted beliefs and stereotypical behaviors. We'd rather convey that knowledge in an experiential manner (experiential learning theory, Kolb). So, we have to create conditions in which the students will develop empathy towards other people's issues, especially those related to human rights. The students have to realize that although human rights belong to all the people by virtue of being human, in reality all people do not enjoy the same rights.

Activity

A suitable activity for our aim is titled "Take a step forward". This activity is included in *Compass*⁷, a manual for human rights education with young people. (Council of Europe)

The activity in brief

It is an activity that mirrors our society in a way. Each student takes a role card, reads it silently and tries to get into the role. For example "You are the daughter of the local bank manager. You study economics at university" or "You are a 17-year-old Roma (Gypsy) girl who has never finished primary school"

After a while the teacher asks all students to line up beside each other.

The teacher reads a statement, one at a time. For example "You have never encountered any serious financial difficulty" or "You have decent housing with a telephone and television" or "You feel your language, religion and culture are respected in the society where you live". Whenever students can answer "yes" to this statement, they should take one step forward; otherwise they don't move. Eventually, some students will move far away from the starting line while others will be stuck at the starting point.

The power of this activity lies in the impact of actually seeing the distance increasing between the participants. For some students that can be very annoying or moving. Teachers report that young students even burst into tears during the activity. Discussion and debriefing follow at the end of the activity.

⁷ http://www.eycb.coe.int/compass/en/chapter_2/2_38.asp

3.5. ACTIVITY 5: Activities inspired by the current affairs

Current affairs offer a lot of issues for discussion, debate and even questioning on the topic of human rights⁸.

The construction of mosque in Athens

One of these issues is about the construction of a Muslim worship place in Attica. The issue has caused a lot of backlash among political organizations and religious groups and as a result it's easy for the teacher to find plenty of relevant material, for and against the construction through the internet (articles, photos, etc.).

Firstly, the students are given the 18th article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which is about the freedom of religion⁹.

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 worship, teaching, practice and observance.

Next, an excerpt from a text of Ieronymos, the archbishop of Greece:

“Peaceful coexistence of people with different beliefs is a fundamental condition for social cohesion and it expresses deeply our long lasting cultural and spiritual tradition. Everyone should have the unalienable right to address his own God. To honor and worship him in appropriate places, without having to overcome any obstacles. The right to religious freedom is fundamental in all democratic states, such as the Greek one and should always be extremely respected, as defined by the Greek Constitution. Any act of violence in the name of any religion is absolutely condemnable, because it deeply insults the religion's very core. It makes believers vulnerable to fundamentalists and opportunists who have no respect for the person's freedom.”¹⁰

⁸ The texts of this part are just indicative. Teacher coming from a country other than Greece can glean relevant articles concerning similar facts that occur in his/her own country. Unhappily, current affairs provide plenty of such events almost in all European countries.

⁹ <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

¹⁰

<http://edu09.pbworks.com/w/page/11514239/%CE%98%CF%81%CE%B7%CF%83%CE%BA%CE%B5%CF%85%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AD%CF%82%20%CE%B4%CE%B9%CE%B1%CE%BA%CF%81%CE%AF%CF%83%CE%B5%CE%B9%CF%8>

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Next, the students are given material from groups that oppose this plan.



Photo of a rally against the mosque construction. The banner reads: no mosque in Athens.



Photo of a counter protest in favor of the mosque construction.

The teacher asks the students to study the arguments of those who oppose the construction of the mosque in Athens and then to argue in favour of the mosque construction.

3.6. ACTIVITY 6: Activities inspired by the current affairs

Current affairs offer a lot of issues for discussion, debate and even questioning on the topic of human rights¹¹.

A school for refugees

At the beginning of the new school year, a major issue came up regarding the management of the refugee crisis in which our country plays an important role. The issue deals with the education of the refugees' children that are temporarily being accommodated at refugees' hospitality centres. Beside the serious organising problems that this issue poses (educational schedule, teaching language, teaching personnel), it also meets the enraged reaction of many parents' associations that refused to lend the schools which their kids attended, during the afternoon shift. However, there were other parent associations that embraced and contributed to the success of that effort.

The students are once again provided with relative material found on the internet.

ΚΑΜΠΑΝΙΑ ΕΜΠΡΑΚΤΗΣ ΑΛΛΗΛΕΓΓΥΗΣ ΣΤΑ ΠΡΟΣΦΥΓΟΠΟΥΛΑ

**ΜΙΑ ΣΧΟΛΙΚΗ ΣΑΚΑ
ΓΕΜΑΤΗ ΑΛΛΗΛΕΓΓΥΗ**



**Κάθε σπίτι να γίνει μια σχολιά
αλληλεγγύης στα μικρά προσφυγόπουλα!**

Προϊόντα που συγκεντρώνουμε στο σχολείο:

- ✓ **Είδη Υγιεινής:** σαπούνι χεριών/μυλούκι, σαπούνι υγιεινό μαντιλάκια, οδοντόβουρτσες ή οδοντόκρεμα, μαλακό σαπούνι, μαλακό πετσάκι χεριών.
- ✓ **Είδη ρουχοποιίας:** ελαφρύ αδιάβροχο, ζευγάρι κάλτσες, σεντ σουρούακι.
- ✓ **Τρόφιμα:** μπισκότα, παξιμάδια, μαζαρές δημητριακών.
- ✓ **Σχολικά είδη:** τετράδιο ή μπλοκ διαγραφής, μαρτί κλασικά με: μακόφι, στίβι, βολιμπούλας, γόμα, βύσμα, μακρό παχύβιλο (π.χ. μόνι κειμενογράφο).
- ✓ **Μήνυμα ελπίδας:** διαγράψτε ή ψακίστε γραπτά μηνύματα για καλή τύχη και καλό ταξίδι στα σχολεία.

ΕΛΜΕΡ – ΣΕΠΕΡ – ΕΝΩΣΗ ΓΟΝΕΩΝ Δ. ΡΕΘΥΜΝΟΥ

Leaflet of the parents association in Rethymnon, Crete related to their campaign. The campaign aims at gathering food, clothes and educational material for the young refugees in order to help them attend the school.

¹¹ The texts of this part are just indicative. Teacher coming from a country other than Greece can glean relevant articles concerning similar facts that occur in his/her own country. Unhappily, current affairs provide plenty of such events almost in all European countries.



Μελισσοχώρι 8/9/2016

Αρ πρωτ.22

Από : Σύλλογο Γονέων και Κηδεμόνων του 5ου
Δημοτικού Σχολείου Ωραιοκάστρου
email : 5dim-oraiok.thess.sch.gr
τηλ: 2394032966

Προς: τον Πρόεδρο της Ένωσης Γονέων
Κον. Τσολακίδη Αθανάσιο
email : egoraio@gmail.com
τηλ: 6974495948

Κατόπιν απόφασης της έκτακτης γενικής συνέλευσης που πραγματοποιήθηκε την Πέμπτη 08/09/2016 και ώρα 18:45 με θέμα (πρόσφυγες – σχολεία) αποφασίστηκε ομόφωνα, η μη ένταξη - τοποθέτηση των παιδιών των προσφύγων στο χώρο του σχολείου μας.

Σε αντίθετη περίπτωση θα προβούμε στην κατάληψη του σχολικού κτιρίου.

Το Δ.Σ του Συλλόγου Γονέων και Κηδεμόνων
5ου Δημοτικού Σχολείου Ωραιοκάστρου



Document of the parents association in Oraioikastron, Thessaloniki. The parents declare their flat denial to allow young refugees' schooling in the school building of their own children.

Writing activity

After the students study arguments of both sides, the teacher encourages a free discussion on the topic. By the end of the discussion, the teacher asks the students to take part in an imaginary situation that goes as follows:

Imagine that in the afternoon shift, your school is “lent” to the refugee students. As a consequence, you share your desk (in absentia) with a kid from another country. Write a message to him/her and leave it on your desk so that he/she can find it when he/she comes back for class. What would you write to him/her? What could his/her response be?

3.7. ACTIVITY 7: The case of Julien

Read the following text about Julien¹² and discuss it.

Julien, a refugee that illegally crossed the Evros' borders in 2011, managed to pass his exams first and enter the Technological Educational Institution of Piraeus. What do you think is the secret for Julien's profound success?



Julien thanks Greece for supporting him and the people of Vocational School of Konitsa for becoming his family.

“I would like to thank Greece for supporting me. I would like to thank everyone here in Konitsa that helped me stand and move on with my life.” These are the words of 20 year old Julien who “escaped” from Africa in November 2011 and today entered 1st the Electrical Engineering School of Technological Educational Institution (TEI) of Piraeus. He spoke about his personal struggle to survive in Greece, which he considers his new homeland.

From the Center of Minor Refugee Protection of Konitsa, where Julien lives the last three years, he spoke to Athens's News and shared his joy: “I would like to dedicate this success to my parents and my siblings that are no longer in life”, he says trying to conceal the tears coming down his eyes. When he arrived in Greece he was 16 years old. At first he encountered major difficulties. As an “illegal refugee” he held in detention for three months at Evros' detention center. After he got released he wandered around in the center of Athens, until October 2012 when he got taken in the Center of Konitsa under General Prosecutor order.

¹² <http://www.lifo.gr/now/greece/74116>

The Center's employees remember that Julien didn't speak Greek back then, he was always sad and quiet and his only demand was to go to a school. The supervisors decided to register Julien to Konitsa's Vocational School.

“My parents used to tell me that the most important thing in life is education. That's what I kept in mind from them”, Julien explains, when asked about his will to keep going to school, since his school life was interrupted so abruptly. Julien also managed to learn the difficult Greek language through painful and constant effort. He also mentions his teacher, Gianna Nikou who taught him Greek in the evenings since the very first day he got accommodated at the Center of Konitsa.

In most of his talks, Julien praises God, to whom he prays every day. On his desk he had a New Testament, an amulet that his mother gave to him before he was violently separated from her. People in Konitsa report that many times they saw Julien go up to the mountain on foot, to spend some time at Stomiou Monastery, the retreat of Saint Paisios.



Julien at his desk.

Konitsa's Vocational School was like a family to the young man, as his classmates and teachers embraced him since the very first day, Julien describes. Every year he had the highest grades among his classmates and he has the very high grade of 19,8 at his high school diploma.

Last August Julien applied for refugee asylum. “I want to feel safe and have international protection, according to Geneva Convention. I want to move on and become a useful and

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important society's member. I want to contribute as much as I can to Greece, the country that helped me” Julien replies when he got asked how he visualizes his future.

The young man spends his free time with his memories of his lost family and country. Son of a politician and despite his turning a new page in life, Julien doesn't obliterate his father's fight for democracy from his mind.

M. Μυρίλλας, www.lifo.gr, 26.8.2015

3.8. ACTIVITY 8: Constructions and students' reflections

The activity combines both artistic work and contemplation by engaging students into using their creativity and group interaction in order to think, reflect and exchange ideas about the most inalienable principles of the mankind, human rights.

Materials:

Colored cardboard paper, color marker pens, reusable tack, 6-8 small envelopes and helium balloons (as many as the groups), copies of the Universal Declaration of human rights (as many as the number of students participating plus an extra copy for the Wisdom Tree), relevant videos or photos.

Constructions:

- Wisdom Tree: a cardboard construction, about 1m x 60cm
- Tree leaves: about 10cm each(as many as the participants)
- Peace contract: a cardboard paper, about 65 x45cm folded in half

Preparation: (about two class meetings)

Students should be introduced to the rights and their principles at this stage, so the teacher hands out photocopies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and allows them some time to read them. Then, he/she answers their questions and explains unknown vocabulary. Immediately after that, he/she comments on their importance and value so as to help them relate human rights to human needs. They also need to realize that all the people don't live in a safe environment. Lots of them are caught up in war and are forcibly displaced due to it. At this point, there could be a special reference to the current war in Syria and the thousands of refugees who are in search of an uncertain future in an unwelcoming, if not hostile, world. Consequently, the teacher asks the students to examine deprivation of human rights in the distressing war setting. They should reflect on war repercussions and their effect on people's rights and life in general knowing that some conflicts are even sparked by their violation. Finally, they decide on which rights they are going to focus on the day of the activity and organize discussion groups of 4-5 students each.

Now, it is time for them to prepare the constructions. It would be preferable if all the students could be involved in that part as it would give them the chance to enjoy classroom fellowship and social relationships. They separate in teams and undertake construction tasks. The most

artistic of them draw the Wisdom tree and cut the tree leaves. Another team works on the pattern of the symbolic peace contract which they are going to sign at the end of the activity. They also think about the promise they are going to make as a young generation and write this in the peace contract. Some other pupils take a copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and cut the articles of those rights they have selected for the activity in the previous class meeting. Afterwards, they put each of the articles in the small envelopes and tack them on the trunk of the Wisdom tree.

Some children who are technology “experts” take over to search for relevant motivating photos and videos which will ensure the students’ active engagement in the activity. A PowerPoint presentation with the main steps of the activity, along with related videos or photos providing visual stimulus would be most helpful especially for the less confident children. Last but not least, background music will create a relaxing and inspiring atmosphere for the participants.

When everything is ready, the Wisdom Tree is hung on the rear class wall and the desks are arranged in clusters, all facing the board for the PowerPoint presentation. There is no need to worry about class decoration! Students eagerly take the responsibility to decorate their classroom, let alone the fact that they are usually very resourceful and come up with highly imaginative ideas. It is worth mentioning that students from other classes could be invited as guests to share the experience and then might be willing to repeat the activity with their classmates this time.

Description: (about two class hours)

Children split in groups (4-5 each). The coordinator starts by stating that the purpose of this activity is to raise students’ awareness on the human rights concerns. He/she continues by referring to the tremendous amount of suffering and devastation which conflicts can cause depriving human beings of their basic rights. After that, he explains that each team will work on one or two human rights that can be combined (e.g. life and dignity).

Now, it’s time for the presentation of the selected rights and their principles. Students are asked to take their turns and get the envelopes with the human rights from the Wisdom Tree. Next, they read them aloud. The teacher poses a crucial question to them: Are we supposed to be mere spectators of these monstrosities as individuals and as a community or is it time to become active observers? He/she goes on by saying that they are given a chance to become thinkers and try to

identify with war victims, though it seems so hard to do so (visual stimulus will definitely contribute towards this direction). He/she urges them to centre on the human rights violation, interact with other group members and come up with their thoughts, ideas and suggestions about what we can do to take action. It would be preferable if the students have been given a set of questions to think upon in advance. Once their discussions have come to an end, after nearly a quarter of an hour, they are given tree leaves to write their reflections on. They take their time to read them aloud to the whole class and the stick their leaves on the Wisdom tree.

Later, the teacher notes that it's more than urgent nowadays to get individually and collectively involved in order to improve war victims' state of human rights. The young generation has to promise that it will find effective ways to defend them, therefore all students could sign a symbolic peace contract so as to remember their commitment.

As soon as the children have signed the symbolic peace contract, they write both their names and the selected human rights on the helium balloons. The groups take their balloons along, go out to the school yard where they form a circle and release the balloons in the sky.

Both the preparation and the activity itself prove to be really rewarding for the students and the teachers as well. The students especially acquire a sense of community and most importantly develop empathy by identifying and appreciating the feeling of people involved in negative experiences. All in all, it is a useful way to change behavior and develop an awareness of the importance of living in peace and caring for each other.

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AUTHORS

Theodora Glaraki

Evangelia Lefaki (activity 8)

Correction of translation: Evangelia Lefaki