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Experiencing democracy:

Holistic Approaches in Classroom and Nature

Experiencing Democracy – Training Method

Participatory Human Rights Education Method

Erasmus+ KA122 Adult Education

Experiencing Democracy: Holistic Approaches in Classroom and Nature

Method Overview

This participatory method aims to help learners understand democratic values and human rights through discussion, reflection and collaborative learning.

Participants work with selected articles from the **European Charter of Fundamental Rights** and explore how these rights relate to everyday life.

Learning Objectives

Participants:

- reflect on the meaning of human rights in daily life
- understand selected articles of the Charter of Fundamental Rights
- discuss discrimination, equality and social participation
- develop critical thinking on democracy and citizenship



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Method Steps

Step 1 – Introduction

Participants are introduced to the concept of fundamental rights and democratic values.

The facilitator presents selected articles from the Charter of Fundamental Rights

Step 2 – Group Work

Participants work in small groups and analyse selected rights.

They discuss:

- What does this right mean?
- Where do we see this right in everyday life?
- When can this right be violated?

Groups document their reflections on flipcharts.

Step 3 – Presentation

Each group presents their interpretation of the selected rights.

The facilitator supports the discussion and connects different perspectives.

Step 4 – Reflection

Participants reflect on:

- Why are these rights important?
- What role does democracy play in protecting them?
- What responsibilities do citizens have?



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Target Groups

- adult learners
- educators
- community educators
- civic education programmes

Materials

- flipchart
- markers
- printed articles of the Charter of Fundamental Rights
- discussion questions

Key Educational Principles

- participatory learning
 - experiential learning
 - critical reflection
 - inclusive dialogue
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Step-by-Step Exercise Instructions

Exercise 1 – Introduction to Rights and Democracy

Aim

To introduce participants to the idea that human rights are part of daily life and closely connected to democracy.

Time

15–20 minutes

Procedure

1. Welcome participants and briefly introduce the topic of democracy and human rights.
2. Explain that the session will focus on selected articles from the **European Charter of Fundamental Rights**.
3. Ask participants a short opening question, such as:
 - What does democracy mean to you?
 - Where do human rights appear in everyday life?
4. Collect a few answers in plenary.
5. Present 3–5 selected articles from the Charter in simple and accessible language.

Facilitator's role

- create an open and respectful learning atmosphere
- explain key terms clearly
- encourage participants to connect legal rights with real-life experiences



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Exercise 2 – Small Group Analysis of Rights

Aim

To help participants interpret human rights articles and relate them to everyday situations.

Time

30–35 minutes

Procedure

1. Divide participants into small groups of 3–5 people.
2. Give each group one or more selected articles from the Charter.
3. Ask each group to discuss the following questions:
 - What does this right mean in practice?
 - Where do we see this right in everyday life?
 - When can this right be violated?
 - Why is this right important in a democratic society?
4. Ask groups to write their thoughts on a flipchart or large paper sheet.
5. Encourage them to use examples from work, family life, community life or public institutions.

Facilitator's role

- support groups if needed
- clarify difficult language
- make sure all participants can contribute
- encourage practical examples rather than abstract answers

Exercise 3 – Presentation and Shared Discussion

Aim

To exchange perspectives and deepen understanding through collective reflection.

Time

60- 120 minutes



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Procedure

1. Invite each group to present its article and key reflections.
2. After each presentation, allow short questions or comments from the other participants.
3. Highlight similarities and differences between the groups' interpretations.
4. Connect participants' examples back to broader democratic principles such as equality, dignity, participation and protection from discrimination.

Facilitator's role

- moderate the discussion
- support respectful listening
- connect different contributions
- help participants see the link between rights and democratic life

Exercise 4 – Final Reflection

Aim

To support personal reflection and strengthen the transfer to participants' own lives and work.

Procedure

1. Invite participants to reflect individually for 1–2 minutes.
2. Then discuss in plenary or pairs:
 - Why are these rights important?
 - What role does democracy play in protecting these rights?
 - What responsibilities do citizens and communities have?
 - Where do we see challenges to these rights today?
3. Ask participants to name one insight or one concrete takeaway from the session.

Facilitator's role

- create space for reflection
- encourage personal and social connections
- close the session with a strong link between rights, participation and democratic responsibility



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Optional Adaptations

For lower language levels

- use simplified language
- explain articles in plain words
- work with pictures or real-life scenarios
- allow oral instead of written group work

For outdoor or nature-based learning

- combine the reflection with a walk-and-talk activity
- assign one right per small group and let them discuss it while walking
- use natural space as a setting for slower reflection and dialogue

For mixed groups

- combine participants with different levels of experience
- encourage peer explanation and collaborative learning
- focus on practical examples from different life contexts

Key Educational Principles

- participatory learning
- experiential learning
- critical reflection
- inclusive dialogue
- collaborative interpretation
- democratic participation in the learning process

Expected Outcomes

After the activity, participants are better able to:

- understand the relevance of human rights in everyday life
- discuss democratic values in concrete terms
- identify examples of discrimination and inequality
- reflect on participation, dignity and social responsibility
- connect legal rights with lived experience