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The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: An Introduction

A MIDDLE SCHOOL UNIT (GRADES 6–8)

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Malawi, 2006

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Unless stated otherwise, the source for all charts, figures, maps, and statistics used in this unit is: United Nations Children’s Fund, (UNICEF), New York. Additional sources are noted when they are required. Website addresses (URLs) are provided throughout this unit for reference and additional research. The authors have made every effort to ensure these sites and information are up-to-date at the time of publication, but availability in the future cannot be guaranteed.

UNIT OVERVIEW

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: An Introduction

A Middle School Unit (Grades 6–8)

Unit Overview

The four lessons in this unit introduce students to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

In this unit students will

- Explore what every child in the world needs to be safe and healthy, and to develop to his or her full potential.
- Raise their awareness of some of the problems facing children worldwide.
- Identify improvements that have occurred in children’s health and well-being worldwide.
- Better understand the language of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Better understand the applications of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Explore ways to raise awareness of the needs of children and families around the world.

Lesson 1: What do all children need?

Students will brainstorm, discuss, and itemize what they believe all children need to be healthy and safe, and to develop to their full potential. Visual resources will be used to support students.

Lesson 2: Introducing the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Students will be introduced to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) by reading the summary of the CRC as a class, and viewing and discussing short animated online cartoons based on the CRC articles.

Lesson 3: Representing the Rights of the Child

Using the simplified version of the CRC, students should be assigned one right to depict through a tableau, or frozen image, with their bodies. First they should create a tableau depicting a violation of the right and then change the tableau to depict an affirmation of the right.

Lesson 4: What can we do? Children’s Rights and Responsibilities

Students read a case study about a teenager from Jordan, and then discuss. As a class and in small groups, the students discuss how they can take action.

Assessment/Evaluation

Students will be assessed based on their ability to

- Identify things children need to be safe and healthy, and to develop to their full potential.
- Demonstrate their understanding of the rights outlined in the CRC.

Background Information

In November 1989, after nearly a decade of negotiations, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child—the CRC. For the first time in history, an international treaty recognized that children are not possessions, but people who have human rights. It also recognized the incredible importance of parents and families in providing the best environment for children to grow.

The CRC is the most widely accepted human rights treaty in history. To date, 193 nations have ratified this important treaty. The only two UN member states that have not ratified the CRC are Somalia and the United States.

Although the CRC includes 54 separate articles and three Optional Protocols, the entire document is based on just four foundation principles: children should be free from discrimination; government policies should be based on the best interests of the child; children should survive and develop to their full potential; and children’s views and perspectives are important and need to be heard. The CRC refers to the family as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of its members, particularly children.

A summary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child has been included on pages 3–8 to use as a reference. The entire Convention can be downloaded at

http://www.unicef.org/rightsite/sowc/pdfs/SOWC_Spec%20Ed_CRC_Main%20Report_EN_090409.pdf.

How UNICEF Uses CRC to Help Children

In Pakistan, Najma, 7, raises her hand to answer a question in her second-grade class. Article 28 of the CRC ensures that primary education is free and open to all children.

Around the world, UNICEF and many other child-focused organizations use the CRC as an important tool to ensure that government policies and programs protect children:

- In Niger, which has the highest rate of child marriage in the world, UNICEF and NGOs have used the CRC to help pass national laws against child marriage, and worked with tribal leaders to speak out against this traditional practice, which deprives girls of their childhood.
- In Egypt, the CRC was a major tool in the campaign against female genital mutilation, which led to the passage of a ministerial decree and a statement by the country’s top Muslim institution against the practice.

- In Ukraine, UNICEF used CRC principles to help the Ukrainian government transform the state child care system to support foster family care for orphaned children, instead of institutionalizing them.

These are just a few of many examples of how the CRC helped governments change their policies to the benefit of children and families.

The Position of the U.S. Fund for UNICEF on U.S. Ratification of the CRC

In the United States, agreeing to a treaty requires several steps. First the President or a designated representative needs to sign the treaty; then the President submits the treaty to the U.S. Senate with explanations and interpretations of the treaty's provisions. The Senate must approve the treaty, or give its "advice and consent," by two-thirds majority. Only after that can the President formally ratify the treaty.

In the case of the CRC, President Clinton agreed to sign the treaty in February 1995; but it was never submitted to the Senate for consideration.

At the U.S. Fund for UNICEF, we know firsthand that Americans care deeply about conditions for children around the world and want to do whatever it takes to help reach the day when zero children die from preventable causes, zero children face exploitation or abuse, zero children grow up without an education. The U.S. government reflects that American compassion in its support for child survival, education, and other important programs. The U.S. government has not yet partnered with UNICEF in using the CRC as a tool to support children and families around the world. The fact that the United States is not party to the CRC keeps our government from exerting the strongest possible leadership internationally to make a difference for the world's children.

For additional information on the Convention on the Rights of the Child visit:

- **UNICEF:** www.unicef.org/crc
- **UNICEF:** <http://www.unicef.org/rightsite/index.html>
- **UNICEF Voices of Youth:** http://www.unicef.org/voy/explore/rights/explore_157.html
- **The Campaign for U.S. Ratification of the CRC:** <http://childrightscampaign.org>

Summary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

The following text is an unofficial summary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The full version of the Convention and its Optional Protocols can be found in the main report of *The State of the World's Children Special Edition: Celebrating 20 Years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child*, in the booklet *A World Fit for Children* and at www.unicef.org/crc.

Preamble

The preamble recalls the basic principles of the United Nations and specific provisions of certain relevant human rights treaties and proclamations. It reaffirms the fact that children, because of

their vulnerability, need special care and protection, and it places special emphasis on the primary caring and protective responsibility of the family. It also reaffirms the need for legal and other protection of the child before and after birth, the importance of respect for the cultural values of the child's community and the vital role of international cooperation in securing children's rights.

Article 1

Definition of a child. A child is recognized as a person under 18, unless national laws recognize an earlier age of majority.

Article 2

Non-discrimination. All rights apply to all children without exception. It is the State's obligation to protect children from any form of discrimination and to take positive action to promote their rights.

Article 3

Best interests of the child. All actions concerning the child shall take full account of his or her best interests. The State shall provide the child with adequate care when parents, or others charged with parental responsibility, fail to do so.

Article 4

Implementation of rights. The State must do all it can to implement the rights contained in the Convention.

Article 5

Parental guidance and the child's evolving capacities. The State must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and the extended family to provide guidance for the child that is appropriate to her or his evolving capacities.

Article 6

Life, survival and development. Every child has the inherent right to life, and the State has an obligation to ensure the child's survival and development.

Article 7

Name and nationality. The child has the right to a name at birth. The child also has the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, to know his or her parents and be cared for by them.

Article 8

Preservation of identity. The State has an obligation to protect and, if necessary, re-establish basic aspects of the child's identity. This includes name, nationality and family ties.

Article 9

Separation from parents. The child has a right to live with his or her parents unless this is deemed incompatible with the child's best interests. The child also has the right to maintain contact with both parents if separated from one or both.

Article 10

Family reunification. Children and their parents have the right to leave any country and to enter their own for purposes of reunion or the maintenance of the child-parent relationship.

Article 11

Illicit transfer and non-return. The State has an obligation to prevent and remedy the kidnapping or retention abroad of children by a parent or third party.

Article 12

Respect of the child's views. The child has the right to express his or her opinion freely and to have that opinion taken into account in any matter or procedure affecting the child.

Article 13

Freedom of expression. The child has the right to express his or her views, obtain information and make ideas or information known, regardless of frontiers.

Article 14

Freedom of thought, conscience and religion. The State shall respect the child's right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, subject to appropriate parental guidance.

Article 15

Freedom of association. Children have a right to meet with others, and to join or form associations.

Article 16

Protection of privacy. Children have the right to protection from interference with their privacy, family, home and correspondence, and to protection from libel or slander.

Article 17

Access to appropriate information. The State shall ensure the accessibility to children of information and material from a diversity of sources, and it shall encourage the mass media to disseminate information that is of social and cultural benefit to the child, and take steps to protect him or her from harmful materials.

Article 18

Parental responsibilities. Parents have joint primary responsibility for raising the child, and the State shall support them in this. The State shall provide parents with appropriate childraising assistance.

Article 19

Protection from abuse and neglect. The State shall protect the child from all forms of maltreatment by parents or others responsible for the child's care and shall establish appropriate social programmes for the prevention of abuse and the treatment of victims.

Article 20

Protection of a child without family. The State is obliged to provide special protection for a child deprived of the family environment and to ensure that appropriate alternative family care or institutional placement is available in such cases. Efforts to meet this obligation shall pay due regard to the child's cultural background.

Article 21

Adoption. In countries where adoption is recognized and/or allowed, it shall be carried out only in the best interests of the child, and then only with the authorization of competent authorities and safeguards for the child.

Article 22

Refugee children. Special protection shall be granted to a refugee child or to a child seeking refugee status. It is the State's obligation to cooperate with competent organizations that provide such protection and assistance.

Article 23

Disabled children. A disabled child has the right to special care, education and training to help him or her enjoy a full and decent life in dignity and achieve the greatest degree of self-reliance and social integration possible.

Article 24

Health and health services. The child has a right to the highest standard of health and medical care attainable. States shall place special emphasis on the reduction of infant and child mortality and on the provision of primary and preventive health care and of public health education. They shall encourage international cooperation in this regard and strive to see that no child is deprived of access to effective health services.

Article 25

Periodic review of placement. A child who is placed by the State for reasons of care, protection or treatment is entitled to have that placement evaluated regularly.

Article 26

Social security. The child has the right to benefit from social security, including social insurance.

Article 27

Standard of living. Every child has the right to a standard of living adequate for his or her physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. Parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that the child has an adequate standard of living. The State's duty is to ensure that this responsibility can be, and is, fulfilled. State responsibility can include material assistance to parents and their children.

Article 28

Education. The child has a right to education, and the State's duty is to ensure that primary education is free and compulsory, to encourage different forms of secondary education accessible to every child, to make higher education available to all on the basis of capacity and to ensure that school discipline is consistent with children's rights and dignity. The State shall engage in international cooperation to implement the right to education.

Article 29

Aims of education. Education shall aim at developing the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to the fullest extent. Education shall prepare the child for an active adult life in a free society and shall foster in the child respect for his or her parents, for his or her own cultural identity, language and values, and for the cultural background and values of others.

Article 30

Children of minorities or indigenous populations. Children of minority communities and indigenous populations have the right to enjoy their own culture and to practise their own religion and language.

Article 31

Leisure, recreation and cultural activities. The child has the right to leisure, play and participation in cultural and artistic activities.

Article 32

Child labour. The child has the right to be protected from work that threatens his or her health, education or development. The State shall set minimum ages for employment and shall regulate working conditions.

Article 33

Drug abuse. Children have the right to protection from the use of narcotic and psychotropic drugs, and from being involved in their production or distribution.

Article 34

Sexual exploitation. The State shall protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and involvement in pornography.

Article 35

Sale, trafficking and abduction. It is the State's obligation to make every effort to prevent the sale, trafficking and abduction of children.

Article 36

Other forms of exploitation. The child has the right to protection from all forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child's welfare not covered in articles 32–35.

Article 37

Torture and deprivation of liberty. No child shall be subjected to torture, cruel treatment or punishment, unlawful arrest or deprivation of liberty. Both capital punishment and life imprisonment without the possibility for release are prohibited for offences committed by persons below age 18. Any child deprived of liberty shall be separated from adults unless it is considered in the child's best interest not to do so. A child who is detained shall have legal and other assistance as well as contact with the family.

Article 38

Armed conflicts. States shall take all feasible measures to ensure that children under 15 years of age have no direct part in hostilities. No child below 15 shall be recruited into the armed forces. States shall also ensure the protection and care of children who are affected by armed conflict as described in relevant international law.

Article 39

Rehabilitative care. The State has an obligation to ensure that child victims of armed conflicts, torture, maltreatment or exploitation receive appropriate treatment for their recovery and social reintegration.

Article 40

Administration of juvenile justice. A child in conflict with the law has the right to treatment that promotes the child's sense of dignity and worth, takes the child's age into account and aims at his or her defense. Judicial proceedings and institutional placements shall be avoided wherever possible.

Article 41

Respect for higher standards. Wherever standards set in applicable national and international law relevant to the rights of the child are higher than those in this Convention, the higher standards shall always apply.

Articles 42–54

Implementation and entry into force. These articles notably foresee:

- the entry into force of the Convention 30 days after its ratification or accession by 20 States;
- States parties' obligation to make the rights of the Convention widely known to both adults and children;
- the establishment of a Committee on the Rights of the Child to consider the reports that States parties are required to submit two years after they have ratified the Convention and every five years thereafter;
- States parties' obligation to submit said reports to the Committee on measures they have taken to fulfil the Convention and the progress being made in their implementation;
- States parties' obligation to make their reports widely known in their own countries;
- international cooperation in the field covered by the Convention achieved by inviting UNICEF and the specialized agencies of the United Nations – such as the International Labour Organization, the World Health Organization and United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization – along with 'competent' bodies such as non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the UN to attend Committee meetings and provide expert advice on areas within the scope of their activities, and by the Committee's referring to them States Parties' requests for technical advice and assistance;
- the Committee's right to recommend to the General Assembly that special studies be undertaken on specific issues relating to the rights of the child.

The rights of the child articulated by the Convention are further reinforced by its Optional Protocols on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.

National Standards

The TeachUNICEF lesson plans are designed in line with National Content Standards. Using the National Content Standards as a guide, these lessons can be aligned with State Standards.

	Lesson			
	1	2	3	4
National Organization				
National Council for the Social Studies (K-12) Source: Expectations of Excellence — Curriculum Standards for Social Studies				
People, Places, and Environments Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of people, places, and environments.	✓	✓		✓
Production, Distribution, and Consumption Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people organize for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.		✓		✓
Global Connections Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of global connections and interdependence.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Civic Ideals and Practices Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic.	✓	✓	✓	✓
National Council of Teachers of English & International Reading Association (K-12) Source: Standards for the English Language Arts				
Standard 1: Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace.		✓	✓	✓
Standard 3: Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identifications strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context graphics).		✓	✓	✓
Standard 8: Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.	✓	✓		

LESSON 1

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: An Introduction

A Middle School Unit (Grades 6–8)

WHAT DO ALL CHILDREN NEED?

TOTAL TIME: 60 MINUTES

Overview

Students will brainstorm, discuss, and itemize what they believe all children need to be healthy and safe, and to develop to their full potential. Visual resources will be used to support students.

Objectives

Students will:

- Explore what every child needs to be safe and healthy, and to develop to his or her full potential.
- Raise their awareness of some of the problems facing children worldwide.

Materials Needed

- Videos
U.S. Fund for UNICEF: *Achieving Zero*
(<http://www.youtube.com/user/UNICEFUSA#p/a/FA6F0519DC4EA679/0/m1zP3H-I0tk>) or U.S. Fund for UNICEF: *Whatever it Takes*
(http://teachertube.com/viewVideo.php?video_id=151299&title=Whatever_it_Takes_to_Save_a_Child)
- UNICEF Voices of Youth Digital Diaries (http://www.unicef.org/voy/takeaction/takeaction_2692.html)
- Handout 1: What is the Convention on the Rights of the Child?

Directions

1. Begin by asking students to brainstorm a list of the things they think all children need to be safe and healthy, and to develop to their full potential. Each student should create their own list.
2. Divide the larger group into small groups of 4 or 5 students. Ask them to share their ideas with the group. Each group should compile a list of what they think every child needs by grouping similar ideas and discussing any disagreements.

3. Groups should consider: What is the difference between needs and wants? Which needs should be considered human rights for children and families? Are there any rights that you take for granted that other children may not be afforded? Who should make sure that these needs and rights are met?
4. Provoke deeper thought through one of the following visual strategies:
 - a. **Video Clip: *Achieving Zero* Length: 3m 40s**
Description: Every day 24,000 children die of preventable causes; UNICEF believes that number should be zero. This video highlights UNICEF's work to achieve that goal, while highlighting some of the needs and rights of children worldwide.
 - b. **Video: *Whatever it Takes* Length: 3m 47s**
Description: This video highlights UNICEF's work throughout the world, while highlighting some of the needs and rights of children.
 - c. **UNICEF Voices of Youth Digital Diaries**
Description: Voices of Youth Digital Diaries are all about young people who want to know more...do more...and say more about the world. These reports are first-person accounts by young people from around the world.
5. Ask students to reflect through free writing on the voices or video clip that they hear or view. How do the images or voices affect their initial ideas about needs and rights?
6. Ask students to revisit their lists of needs as a small group and add to them as needed.
7. If you will be continuing to the next lesson, hold on to the lists for Lesson 2: *Introducing the Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

Extension (Class discussion)

1. Which needs did you consider to be human rights? Why?
2. Which rights did you take for granted?
3. Which rights did you add after viewing the additional information?
4. Who should make sure that all children and families have these rights

Homework

To provide students with background information on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), have the class read Handout 1: What is the Convention on the Rights of the Child? and answer its accompanying questions.

Assessment/Evaluation

Students will be assessed based on their ability to

1. Identify things that children need to be safe and healthy, and to develop to their full potential.
2. Reconsider and elaborate on their initial ideas based on additional information and discussions with peers.

What is the Convention on the Rights of the Child?

Name:

Directions:

Read, "What is the Convention on the Rights of the Child," then answer the questions.



© UNICEF/NYHQ2009-0231/Josh Estey
Viet Nam, 2009
Children clap during a learning activity in Ban Pho Preschool in Bac Han District in remote Lao Cai Province. The UNICEF-supported school promotes child participation and other child-friendly activities in a safe learning environment and includes classes taught in the children's indigenous language.

What is the Convention on the Rights of the Child?

In November 1989, after nearly a decade of negotiations, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child—the CRC. For the first time in history, an international treaty recognized that children are not possessions, but people who have human rights. It also recognized the incredible importance of parents and families in providing the best environment for children to grow.

The CRC is the most widely accepted human rights treaty in history. To date, 193 nations have ratified this important treaty. The only two UN

member states that have not ratified the CRC are Somalia and the United States. In the United States, agreeing to a treaty requires several steps. First the President or a designated representative needs to sign the treaty; then the President submits the treaty to the U.S. Senate with explanations and interpretations of the treaty's provisions. The Senate must approve the treaty, or give its "advice and consent," by two-thirds majority. Only after that can the President formally ratify the treaty. In the case of the CRC, President Clinton agreed to sign the treaty in February 1995; but it was never submitted to the Senate for consideration.

Although the CRC includes over 50 separate articles, the entire document is based on four foundational principles: children should be free from discrimination; government policies should be based on the best interests of the child; children should survive and develop to their full potential; and children's views and perspectives are important and need to be heard. The CRC refers to the family as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of its members, particularly children.

How UNICEF Uses the CRC to Help Children

Around the world, UNICEF and many other child-focused organizations use the CRC as an important tool to ensure that government policies and programs protect children:

- In Niger, which has the highest incidence of child marriage in the world, UNICEF and NGOs have used the CRC to help pass national laws against child marriage, and worked with tribal leaders to speak out against this traditional practice, which deprives girls of their childhood.
- In Ukraine, UNICEF used CRC principles to help the Ukrainian government transform the state child care system to support foster family care for orphaned children instead of institutionalizing them.

These are just two of many examples of how the CRC helped governments change their policies to the benefit of children and families.

1. In your own words, write a short summary explaining the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

2. Do you think it is important to have a treaty that outlines the rights of children? Please explain your answer.

3. What additional information would you like to learn about the Convention on the Rights of the Child?

LESSON 2

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: An Introduction

A Middle School Unit (Grades 6–8)

INTRODUCING THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

TOTAL TIME: 60 MINUTES

Overview

Students will be introduced to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) by reading the summary of the CRC as a class, and by viewing and discussing short animated online cartoons based on the CRC articles.

Note: If students did not complete Lesson 1, they should either have a general understanding of the Convention on the Rights of the Child or time should be allotted to read and discuss Handout 1: What is the Convention on the Rights of the Child? from Lesson 1.

Objectives

Students will:

- Explore what every child needs to be safe and healthy, and to develop to his or her full potential.
- Raise their awareness of some of the problems facing children worldwide.
- Better understand the language and content of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Materials Needed

- Convention on the Rights of the Child
 - Handout 1: What is the Convention on the Rights of the Child? (See Lesson 1)
 - Simplified version of the CRC
 - http://www.unicef.org/magic/media/documents/what_rights_flyer_english.pdf
 - <http://www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/crc/simplified.html>
- Computer, Internet access, and projector or computer lab with Internet access and media player such as RealPlayer to play clips from <http://www.unicef.org/crcartoons/>.

Directions

1. Reflecting on the students' homework, ask them to share what they learned about the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). They should be able to explain that the treaty was adopted in 1989 to help children and families all over the world have their human rights protected. As a class read all or a portion of a simplified version of the CRC and answer any questions that students might have. Students should compare their small-group-generated list (from Lesson 1) to the simplified CRC. Students should note or check off the rights that they came up with that are included in the CRC and discuss what additional rights were not included in the CRC.

If time permits, consider viewing *20 Years of Child Rights*, a 2m 38s introduction to the CRC, found at <http://www.unicef.org/rightsite/>.

2. As a whole class with one computer, Internet, and projector, show students a clip from CRC Cartoons <http://www.unicef.org/crcartoons/> and tell students where the cartoon was made.

OR

If a computer lab is available, once the teacher models the activity students could work in pairs to answer questions based on assigned cartoons.

3. For each cartoon, ask students to answer in writing:
 - a. What is happening in the cartoon?
 - b. What symbols are used in the cartoon? What do they represent?
 - c. What is the message the cartoon is communicating?
 - d. What right is it depicting?
 - e. Is the right being affirmed or violated in the cartoon?
 - f. Do you think the cartoon is effective? Why or why not?
4. As a whole class, discuss the cartoons.
 - a. Which cartoons were most effective?
 - b. Why make the articles of the CRC into cartoons?
 - c. Who should see these? Why?
 - d. Why is it important for families and children to know what their rights are?

Extension/Homework:

Select a right from the Convention on the Rights of the Child and design a cartoon to illustrate the right. Encourage students to use a simplified version of the CRC and to choose one of the four articles that are the core principles of the Convention as outlined in Handout 1. Students could write a narrative description of their cartoon, create a comic strip version of their cartoon, create a series of wordless images to depict their right, or create an animated clip. Students should answer the following questions about their own cartoon:

- What is happening in this cartoon?
- What symbols are used in the cartoon?
- What do they represent?
- What is the message the cartoon is communicating?
- What right is the cartoon depicting?
- Is the right being affirmed or violated in the cartoon?

Assessment/Evaluation

Students will be assessed based on their ability to

1. Understand the rights outlined in the CRC.
2. Analyze the cartoons depicting rights from the CRC.
3. Create their own comic or cartoon to depict a right from the CRC.

LESSON 3

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: An Introduction

A Middle School Unit (Grades 6–8)

REPRESENTING THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

TOTAL TIME: 60 MINUTES

Overview

Using the simplified version of the CRC, students should be assigned one right to depict through a tableau, or frozen image, with their bodies. First they should create a tableau depicting a violation of the right and then change the tableau to depict an affirmation of the right.

Note: If students did not complete Lessons 1 and 2, they should either have a general understanding of the Convention on the Rights of the Child or time should be allotted to read and discuss Handout 1: What is the Convention on the Rights of the Child? from Lesson 1.

Objectives

Students will:

- Explore what every child needs to be safe and healthy, and to develop to his or her full potential.
- Raise their awareness of some of the problems facing children worldwide.
- Better understand the language and content of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Materials Needed

- Simplified version of the CRC
http://www.unicef.org/magic/media/documents/what_rights_flyer_english.pdf
<http://www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/crc/simplified.html>

Directions

1. Cut selected articles in the simplified version of the CRC into slips containing one right each. Consider including the core principles of the Convention that are made up of Article 2, Article 3, Article 6, and Article 12 as outlined in Handout 1 (See Lesson 1).
2. Divide students into groups of four.

3. Give each group one or two slips of paper with an article from the CRC on it, depending on the time available for the activity.
4. Ask students to begin by talking about what life would be like if this right were violated and what life would be like if this right were protected.
5. Tell students they are going to create a tableau, or frozen silent image, with their bodies to represent a violation of this right and then a second tableau to depict the right being affirmed. Each tableau should be held for 30 seconds to one minute. Students should consider what the person that they are depicting might be thinking or feeling.
6. Give students 15 minutes to plan and practice.
7. Arrange the classroom so there is a clear space for students to make their tableaux, where their peers can see them.
8. One group at a time should create a violation of their right and hold it for 30 seconds and then an affirmation of the right and hold it for 30 seconds.

OR

One group at a time should create a violation of their right and hold it for one minute. After the first 15 seconds, students or the teacher may gently tap a participant's shoulder to hear a sentence or phrase about what the participant is thinking or feeling. Repeat the process with the affirmation of the right.

9. After each set of tableaux is complete, peers should guess which right was depicted, using a simplified version of the CRC as a reference. They may ask the performers (more) questions to help them, if needed.

Extension/Homework

Ask students to reflect on the experience of doing the tableaux and how it impacted the way they think about the rights that were depicted.

OR

Discuss the impact of the CRC, pulling examples from the UN Cyberschoolbus (<http://www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/crc/impact.html>) or The State of the World's Children: Celebrating 20 Years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child report (http://www.unicef.org/rightsite/sowc/pdfs/SOWC_Spec%20Ed_CRC_Main%20Report_EN_090409.pdf).

Assessment/Evaluation

Students will be assessed based on their ability to

1. Demonstrate their understanding of the rights outlined in the CRC.
2. Participate in and reflect on the activity.

LESSON 4

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: An Introduction

A Middle School Unit (Grades 6–8)

WHAT CAN WE DO? CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

TOTAL TIME: 60 MINUTES

Overview

In this lesson, students read a case study about a teenager from Jordan, and then discuss. As a class and in small groups the students discuss how they can take action.

Note: If students did not complete Lessons 1–3, they should either have a general understanding of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) or time should be allotted to read and discuss Handout 1: What is the Convention on the Rights of the Child? from Lesson 1 and a simplified version of the CRC.

Objectives

Students will:

- Explore what every child needs to be safe and healthy, and to develop to his or her full potential.
- Raise their awareness of some of the problems facing children worldwide.
- Identify improvements that have occurred in children's health and well-being worldwide.
- Better understand the language and content of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Better understand the applications of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Explore ways to raise awareness of the needs of children and families around the world.

Materials Needed

- Simplified version of the CRC
http://www.unicef.org/magic/media/documents/what_rights_flyer_english.pdf
<http://www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/crc/simplified.html>
- Handout 3: Ali's Story
- Handout 4: Taking Action: A Planning Guide

Directions

1. Provide an opportunity for students to discuss their extension activity/homework.
2. Assign Handout 3: Ali's Story for students to read individually or view Ali's story at http://www.teachertube.com/viewVideo.php?video_id=171627&title=Ali_s_Story__Child_Labor. To access additional stories from around the world visit UNICEF Voices of Youth at www.unicef.org/voy.
3. Discuss Handout 3: Ali's Story and ask students if they think one or more of Ali's rights were violated or affirmed. Encourage students to refer to their simplified version of the CRC. Discuss how the CRC might support Ali and children like him; refer to "Handout 1: What is the Convention on the Rights of the Child?"
4. Reflect on the CRC as a class.
 - How can people help to make sure that the needs of children and families are met?
 - How can governments help make sure that all children's and families' needs are met?
 - How can international organizations like UNICEF help make sure that all children's and families' needs are met?
5. To conclude the unit/lesson ask the students to brainstorm ways they can take action relating to the needs of children and families outlined in the CRC. List the students' responses. Have the students work in small groups and complete Handout 4: Taking Action: A Planning Guide, then discuss. Additional resources on taking action can be found at UNICEF Voices of Youth <http://www.unicef.org/voy/takeaction/takeaction.php>.

[Possible ways students can take action are raising school and community awareness at a scheduled event, write their elected official on a particular right they believe needs to be address, volunteer in their community, or raise funds to support an organization that is dedicated to addressing the rights outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Additional suggestions can be found at <http://volunteers.unicefusa.org/activities/advocate/20-years-crc.html>.]

Ali's Story¹



“Ali, who is 16, lives in Souf Camp, one of six emergency camps built for the more than 1.8 Palestinian refugees who have arrived in Jordan since 1948. Every day, he works at a falafel restaurant frying chickpea patties, making sandwiches, and cleaning up. He works for six hours a day during the school year and for 12 hours a day during his summer break.

While Ali works, he can see his friends kicking a soccer ball on the dusty streets and laughing. He wants to join them, but he knows that he must work

to help his family make ends meet since his father is unemployed as a result of severe back and eyesight problems.

For Ali, working long hours every day has not just meant less time to play and enjoy being young. It has literally endangered his health: Two years ago he nearly lost his hand when he dozed off grinding chickpeas. Luckily, he was rushed to the hospital and his hand was saved.

The situation of the 17,000 people living in Souf is bleak, so when a project designed to teach young people about filmmaking was launched at Souf Camp to encourage self expression and youth participation, everyone got involved.

The participants decided to make a film about the plight of children who have to work to support their families and chose Ali as the main character.

“This documentary is a personal scream,” says Ali. “We wanted to reach out, make people living outside the camps know what our lives are like. It’s tough, but what’s even tougher is having young people my age pass by and stare because I am not doing the same things they’re doing.

¹ Source: UNICEF Voices of Youth, http://www.unicef.org/voy/explore/sowc06/explore_2475.html

Taking Action: A Planning Guide

Name:

Directions: In your small group choose one of the action ideas that were discussed in class or share another idea. Use this template to explain how you might implement this idea in your community to ensure the needs of children and families are met.

I. Action Idea

- What specific issue do you want to address?

- Why do you think this is an important issue?

- What is your action idea?

- Why do you think this is the best way to address this issue?

II. Implementation

- How many people do you need to implement this idea?

- Will the people who help you with this idea need to have any specific skills?

- What tools and/or materials do you need?

- Are there any costs associated with this action idea? Explain.

- How much time do you need to plan and then implement this idea?

- Are there any advantages or disadvantages to this idea?
