



INTERNATIONAL
MUSEUM OF WOMEN

Women's Rights are Human Rights

Objective: Through text, interactive activities and visual images students will explore and discuss social and economic issues in which women's and girl's rights have been ignored, such as economic empowerment, access to education, and effects of war on women. This workshop includes more than 90 minutes of material and often what may seem like a simple concept conjures up more conversation, so be ready!

Estimated Time Needed to Complete Workshop: 90+ minutes

Equipment: none

Materials:

- World Map
- Thai and Eritrea images from International Museum of Women's exhibit "Women of the World: A Global Collection of Art"
- Markers, pens/pencils, paper, ribbon, scissors
- Large notepad
- Poster size paper
- July 1, 2005 *San Francisco Chronicle* article "Agents Said to Dismantle a Korean Sex Ring (in San Francisco)" <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2005/07/03/BAGGMDILAA1.DTL>
- Note 'End Notes' have *many* resources for this workshop. Many provocative topics, do not expect to finish this workshop in one sitting.

Ground Rules:

1. Please use positive language, no put downs
2. Be respectful and listen to others when they are talking
3. Please turn off cell phones
4. What's said in the room stays in the room
5. Have fun, be creative, and speak up!

Workshop

1. Introductions (10 minutes)

Facilitators introduce themselves and provide a verbal or written outline for students, which include the ground rules; ideally students should decide the ground rules. A short ice breaker is always a good way to begin a program. A simple question that everyone answers pertinent to your workshop can be an easy way to ease into a topic. Facilitators should participate in this activity as well.

2. Introduction to Human Rights (15 minutes)

Begin with a brief discussion introducing students to the concept of rights.

The concept of a person's rights has been transformed so that it takes greater account of women's lives. How women are treated within family, or their rights within marriage, their health care, or any obstacle based on custom (practices and attitudes held by their community for a long time) that tell woman she can only act a certain way, or do only certain things, now are seen as a denial of her basic rights - or denial of the same rights that men have.

Ice Breaker Activity: To get students to think about the concept of human rights defined above, ask them the following questions (A facilitator should write the responses from the group in a on the large notepad for all to see):

- Name one right you think you have.
- Name one right you don't have.
- Name one right you will have as an adult that you don't have now.
- Name one right you think all people in our country have.

Women's Rights Issue 1: HIV/AIDS (30 minutes)

Before introducing the topic, gauge students' comfort level with talking about sex. If this is a new conversation or uncomfortable try to address concerns upfront. Proceed asking what they know and when/where they were educated about HIV/AIDS.

Information on HIV/AIDS:

- I. Introduce students to HIV/AIDS: HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus and is the Virus that leads to AIDS, Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. HIV can only be transmitted through infected blood, semen, vaginal fluids and breast milk. The most common ways for HIV to be transmitted are through unprotected sex – whether vaginal, anal, or oral (oral sex risk is very low but students should always use oral sex condoms to protect from STDs as well!) and/or sharing needles with an HIV+ person. HIV can also be passed from mother to baby. The first reported case of AIDS in the U.S. was in 1981.
- II. Share the top four myths around HIV/AIDS:

- **MYTH #1:** HIV/AIDS is a gay man's disease. **FACT:** Women have shown the greatest increase in HIV/AIDS case both in the United States and around the world.
- **MYTH #2:** You can tell that a person is HIV positive (i.e. they have HIV) by looking at them. **FACT:** You cannot tell that a person is HIV + by looking at them -- their symptoms do not appear until 10 years after initial infection. The only way to know is to get tested three months after possible exposure to the virus.
- **MYTH #3:** *There is a cure for HIV/AIDS.* **FACT:** *There is NO cure for HIV/AIDS, only medicines to help deal with the symptoms (which can initially resemble symptoms of common cold or flu viruses. The symptoms of early infection can also be similar to the symptoms of other sexually transmitted diseases and other infections such as "mono" or hepatitis. Stress and anxiety can also produce symptoms in some people, even though they do not have HIV. Some people who contract HIV experience very strong symptoms, but others experience none at all. Other common symptoms can include headache, swollen lymph nodes, and sore throat. Testing for HIV antibodies is the only way to know whether you have been infected)*
- **MYTH #4:** People cannot become infected with HIV if they perform oral sex. **FACT:** HIV is present in the bodily fluids of both men and women. Therefore, HIV can be transmitted if fluids sperm/vaginal secretions enter the person's mouth.

III. Activity: The HIV handshake © HIV/AIDS Learner's Network of the Western Cape, South Africa

- *Prepare enough cards for the students. Mark each card as follows: one with an "X"; one with an "A"; one with a "B"; one with a "C"; and leave one blank. Keep in this order until you have enough cards for the students. Give one card to each student. Then ask the students to go around the group, shake the hands of three people and sign their cards with the letter, which they have on their own cards. When the students have completed this task ask them to take a seat.*
- Explain to the students that the purpose of the exercise was to show them how easy it is for the HIV virus to spread. Tell them that the act of shaking symbolized having sex with a person in this exercise.
- Ask the student with the card marked "X" to stand up. Explain to the students that the person in this exercise is infected with the HIV virus. Ask the students who had their cards signed by "X" to please stand. Ask other students to stand if anyone had shaken their hand. Eventually all the students will be standing.
- Now ask the students who had a card marked "A" to have a seat. Explain to them that they were abstaining from sex, and this means they were not infected with HIV.
- Ask those whose cards were marked with a "B" to have a seat. Explain to the students that they were not infected because they were

faithful to their partner. Mummy... This is not entirely accurate through! What if the other partner was unfaithful to their partner, and then they could be infected ... Maybe it should read: they might not be infected so long as their partner was also faithful and not infected with HIV/AIDS. If their partner was unfaithful however, they are at risk of being infected. Ask the students those with a card marked with a "C" to have a seat, explain to the students that they were less likely to be infected because they used condoms. Tell the students standing-who will have blank cards that they had not used protection and were therefore infected with HIV.

IV. Discuss the HIV handshake activity with the students (be prepared to answer many questions, have local phone numbers available to address questions you may not have answers for). Discuss the following two questions:

- How was it to be part of a particular group?
- What questions arose from this exercise?

V. In small groups read the following story:

Imagine you are a young woman in Uganda, Africa (locate on the map), where over half the people living with HIV and AIDS are women. There is a condom shortage, but people continue to have unprotected sex. One day on your long walk to school, you are raped by a man. He doesn't use a condom. You are afraid that now you might have gotten an STD or even worse, HIV. You don't know what to do and are scared and ashamed to tell your family and seek other help.

- How would you feel if you were this girl?
- What advice would you give to this girl if she was your friend?
- What advice would you want to hear as the girl in the story?

VI. Share the following information with the group:

- HIV/AIDS among women internationally continues to rise due to many factors:
 - Lack of education for women and girls
 - Lack of resources, and economics; men have greater access to condoms and money
 - Families will often ostracize family members with HIV/AIDS
 - In Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, fundamentalist Muslim governments are promoting the implementation of Sharia law (Sharia law is a religious code based on the Koran. Many Muslims understand it as a personal, moral guide, much the same way that many Christians understand the Ten Commandments. But in some countries, Sharia law has been used as the basis for a state legal system) under which people are sentenced to death for such crimes as having consensual sex with people of the same gender or outside of marriage. <http://www.madre.org>
- In South Africa, one in four females ages 15-24 is infected with AIDS
- Sex education begins in elementary school in Uganda, often with large signs such as "Girls keep your legs closed"

- HIV/AIDS has hit the African-American and Hispanic American communities particularly hard. Women in those two communities account for over 82 percent of all female AIDS cases in the U.S. That means that the other 18% is Caucasian, Asian/Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, and Native American.

VII. As a large group revisit ice breaker list and discuss which if any rights are being violated. Add rights not already listed.

Women's Rights Issue 2: Young Women and War (20 minutes)

I. Share the following statistics on women and war :

- In countries including El Salvador, Eritrea, Uganda, and Ethiopia, women and young teenage girls make up 1/3 of the soldiers fighting in conflict today. They are encouraged to be aggressive fighters during the war, but if and when they return home they are forced to return to more traditional female roles. Their contributions during conflict rarely receive recognition and female ex-soldiers often have to hide their military past.
- More than 80% of women and children make up the global refugee population. This means that during war, they have been forced to flee their homes and their homeland.
- Global military spending is \$956 billion. Combating worldwide poverty would be \$70 billion at most.

II. Story about Freshta, a girl from Afghanistan.

Introduce the following information to the large group:

Even though you might not have heard many stories in the news about Afghanistan lately, a war continues to go on and the United States military are still there. A group called RAWA, the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan, established in Kabul in 1977, is still working today for the human rights and social justice of women.

RAWA found that:

- Warlords still dominate Afghanistan
- Outside Kabul, women are still fearful of being in public spaces
- Refugees returning from Pakistan find misery in Afghanistan
- Women's unemployment is rampant
- Rural women's healthcare is dismal
- Education for girls is dismal
- Women have no political freedom
- Independent media are under constant threat

In small groups read the following story.

My name is Freshta. I'm from Afghanistan and am 13 years old. I am the top student in my class. During the war, my family had to move to another city where we didn't have a home. My uncle gave us a room in his house, but later he did not like us and made us leave. We built a hut from the bush under a tree. Our life was terrible. Our family is 13 people and my father had no work. I like math and sports, especially volleyball. I like vegetables. I want to become a good doctor in the future to serve my country.

Questions each small group should discuss:

- How would you feel if you were this girl?
- What advice would you give to this girl if she was your friend? What options might she have? (The reality of growing up in a war torn country is that one's options/opportunities are greatly limited.)
- What advice would you want to hear as the girl in the story?

III. As a large group revisit ice breaker list and discuss which if any rights are being violated. Add rights not already listed.

Women's Rights Issue 3: Sex Trafficking (20 minutes)

I. Introduction

Ask if any students can define 'sex trafficking' for the group. Facilitators can add to examples and causes. Sex trade takes advantage of women by misleading them with false job offers or information (wages, their rights). Some are sold by their poor families while others are kidnapped. Women are often shipped to other countries around the world. Remind students that the women are at a great risk for contracting HIV/AIDS and other STDs.

II. Image activity:

The topic of the international sex trade will be introduced through Thai (locate Thailand on a the world map- south of China, between Burma and Laos) artist Worapanit Jiya-Amondej's 1974 painting from the International Museum of Women's "Women of the World: A Global Collection of Art" exhibit. It shows a high-heel shoe attached to a ball and chain. Present the image to students and let them know it was done by a Thai woman artist and was shown in the Museum's "Women of the World" exhibit. Generate a discussion by asking students what they see.

Questions for discussion:

- Who are these women and girls?
 - Undocumented immigrants
 - Runaways or homeless youth
 - The Poor
 - Innocent women taken against their will
- Why might these women stay in this industry?

- For financial reasons (lack of education, low-paying jobs for women)
- If they report the crime, they may be charged as a criminal for sex work
- If they are far from home and don't know the language or have proper travel documents, they might not be able to get back to their families.
- They are ashamed to go back or their families will not accept them after being sex workers.

III. Discussion of news story on sex trafficking:

Before passing out copies of “Agents Said to Dismantle a Korean Sex Ring (in San Francisco)” from July 1, 2005, facilitators will share additional information: In the U.S. about 50,000 women are trafficked each year and globally up to 2,000,000 women a year are trafficked.

Hand out the article and share a summary (remind students to read the full article later):

Federal agents arrested more than 2 dozen people in San Francisco for their involvement with sex trafficking Korean women to the U.S. The agents discovered about 100 Korean women in San Francisco brothels (sex businesses) and erotic massage parlors and took them to a facility for medical treatment and care. Emphasize the locality of this event.

Open Studio Time: (25 minutes)

Students will use the remaining time to work on one of the following activities:

1. Students can make a protest poster about one of the issues discussed today.
2. Write a letter to a friend about what you've learned today
3. Write a letter of support to an agency supporting Human Rights for women and girls

3. Clean-up: (5 minutes)

End Notes

Resources:

Human Rights Organizations

Amnesty International (AI) www.amnesty.org is a worldwide movement of people who campaign for internationally recognized human rights.

Global Fund for Women www.globalfundforwomen.org makes grants to seed, strengthen and link women's rights groups based outside the United States working to address human rights issues

The Third Wave Foundation www.thirdwavefoundation.org helps support the leadership of young women ages 15 to 30 (in the US) by providing resources, public education, and relationship building opportunities.

EMPOWER www.empowerfoundation.org Foundation, since 1994 is Moolniti Songserm Okard Pooying meaning the foundation to promote opportunity for women in the sex industry of Thailand. **E**ducation **M**eans **P**rotection **O**f **W**omen **E**ngaged in **R**e-Creation

HIV/AIDS resources/stats

Campaign for Female Education

http://www.camfed.org/html/peer_health_programme.html

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pubs/facts/women.htm>

Unifem Gender and AIDS

<http://www.genderandaids.org/>

The International Community of Women Living with AIDS

http://www.icw.org/tiki-read_article.php?articleId=28 list of frequently asked questions

Young Women and War

Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA)

<http://www.rawa.org>

The secret weapon of terrorism- timesunion.com

<http://www.timesunion.com/AspStories/story.asp?storyID=426002&category=OPINION&newsdate=12/5/2005>

LIBERIA: No impunity for rapists, vows president-elect / Reuters News

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/IRIN/7180e4b54f22266c4b5f53fd656a0813.htm>

Sex Trafficking

Trafficking and Girls

http://www.crip.org/pdf/pub_facadoles_trafficking.pdf

Save the Children- Nepal

http://www.savethechildren.net/nepal/key_issues/traffuk.html

Human Rights Watch Bosnia Herzegovina Trafficking of women and Girls

<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/bosnia/>

Unicef-Children under threat – Romania

http://www.unicef.org/sowc05/english/povertyfeat_romania.html

Global Alliance against Traffic and Women

<http://gaatw.net>