



THE GREAT ESCAPE

A game for schools and human rights groups

Introduction

This human rights education activity is taken from Amnesty International UK's human rights education pack 'Freedom'. It is about a group of refugees escaping to freedom.

Participants are confronted with a series of human rights dilemmas on their way that they have to try to resolve by consensus.

Time: 40-60 minutes

Number of participants: 12 to 30+ (divide into groups of up to 6)

Aim

The purposes of this lively and interactive exercise are:

- to introduce participants to human rights
- to develop knowledge and understanding of democracy, legal and human rights and responsibilities, systems of justice, and skills in communication and working with others.

Equipment needed

Each team will need

- The Great Escape Route (enlarged to A3 size, if possible)
- A watch with a second hand
- Coloured crayons
- Pens

Each Leader/Teacher will need

- A set of 11 Challenge Cards (These should be printed out on A4 sheets and folded along the dotted line).

Instructions

The participants are divided into teams, each representing a party of refugees.

They have to make a long, arduous, clandestine journey out of their country, on foot, through dangerous territory, ahead of a pursuing army. They must carry everything they need. Their object is to bring as many members of the party as possible across the frontier to safety as quickly as possible. If all goes well the journey should take 11 days. They have little food or drink, but rationed carefully, it should just last them two weeks.

Every day the team meets a Challenge. A copy of each set of Challenges should be printed out and pasted on to a set of 11 Challenge Cards for each team. Each card presents a human rights problem, with a choice of three solutions, A, B and C. The team has to decide collectively which choice to make before they can progress on their journey. None of the answers is necessarily right or wrong; each has implications. Some are responses to internal conflicts; others are choices about external threats. Many involve delays. Some involve leaving members of the team behind. Some have disastrous consequences. If the team's progress is too slow there is a danger that supplies will run out or that they will be caught by their pursuers.

The exercise is timed from the moment the Runner arrives back at their team with a Challenge Card to the moment a decision is made. After each Challenge the teams carefully record their decision and chart their progress on the map.

Three jobs

Each team must allocate three jobs:

1. The Runner

When the team has made its decision the runner goes to the Teacher/Leader, hands in the previous Challenge Card and gets a new one.

2. The Recorder

charts the team's choice, A, B or C, at each challenge, by colouring in the route, records how many people the team leaves behind at each Challenge and writes down the number of days' delay incurred at each Challenge.

At the end of the exercise the Recorder adds up the number of people the team has left behind (if any) and the number of days delay incurred (if any).

3. The Timer

records how long the team takes to decide on each Challenge from the moment the Runner returns with each new card. The Timer writes the time taken on the map and at the end adds up the total time taken to make decisions.

Discussion

At the end of the exercise the teams report back on their achievements and results.

Groups to add up the time they took to answer the questions and the total of days lost, and how many people (if any) they have left behind.

The Teacher/Leader examines the time they took on each question, the choices taken and which Challenges they found most difficult.

You could tell them that any group that took more than 6 minutes (say) on their decision-making or accumulated 6 days' (say) or more delay would have been CAUGHT by the enemy, however nice and caring the group were.

What do the participants think the results and the decisions tell us about their group?

All sorts of conclusions – real and spurious – may be drawn from this activity about the nature of the teams, about the decisions they took and how well they worked together.

At this point the Teacher/Leader may reveal information which the teams could not possibly have known, eg the shepherd (Challenge 7) **was** a spy, so those who went with him would have been captured by the enemy; carelessness about hygiene (Choice A, Challenge 3) leads to an outbreak of acute food poisoning in which several of the party would die; Challenge 8 **was** a minefield, so those who walked across it would have been killed; the tunnel in Challenge 11 **collapsed** and buried anyone within it, etc.

Let them know that real refugees actually have experienced situations very similar to some of the challenges presented in this game.

Adapted from an exercise by the Citizenship Foundation 1988, Amnesty International Mongolia and Amnesty International Thailand.