

Unit 2

Sharing Facts & Opinions



Teacher Primer #2

Currently, the United Nations has 193 **Member States**. In order for a state to become a member, it must accept the goals outlined in the UN Charter, which was adopted at the San Francisco Conference on June 26, 1945. The United Nations officially came into force on October 24, 1945, when the 51st Member State ratified the Charter.

The **specialized agencies** and UN Programmes of the United Nations exemplify how the United Nations touches multiple parts of our lives. The Universal Postal Union (UPU) is a monitoring organization that works to improve delivery of international mail. Another specialized agency, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), works to improve television reception. The World Health Organization (WHO) works to improve peoples' health throughout the world. Its biggest triumph is the eradication of smallpox.¹ The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) provides aid to children in developing areas of the world, as children suffer the worst effects of conflict, poverty, and disease.

Other small groups that work on specific United Nations concerns are **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)**. Only a few NGOs work directly with the **Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**. These NGOs are generally associated with the Department of Information. They report to the UN about their work and research. Many of them have worked for UN conferences such as the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development. The Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office is a North American NGO.²

UUA holds ECOSOC consultative status, for which the UU-UNO is the representative in New York. The UU-UNO also has its own consultative status with the UN's Department of Public Information.

The UUA Commission on Social Witness – a five member committee – is charged with the mission of “engaging individuals, congregations, and districts in an ongoing process of study, action and reflection on pressing social issues to deepen our faith, to foster a greater sense of association among Unitarian Universalists, and to proclaim our vision of justice in the world.”

¹. Hope for Tomorrow (New York: UN department of Public Information, 1985).

². A World In Our Hands. (Berkeley: Tricycle Press, 1995) 48-49.

Unit 2: Sharing Facts and Opinions

Goal: The purpose of this unit is to help participants to recognize some of the issues with which the UN is concerned. Participants should begin to form and organize their own opinions on the subjects of children’s rights, the environment, and peacekeeping.

Activity 1 (20 minutes)

Human Barometer

This activity is a way to initiate class discussion. Tell the participants that you will be reading several statements. They will be asked to give their own opinions on these statements. Ask the class to stand. Explain that when you read a sentence, everyone who agrees with the sentence should move to one side of the classroom, and everyone who disagrees should go to the other side of the room. People who are not sure or undecided should stand in the middle. (Write the words Agree, Undecided, and Disagree on large colored posters and post them in different areas of the room, or find another way to divide the space visually.) After each statement, go around the room and ask several participants why they are standing where they are.

Here are the statements you should read to your class: (Note: You can start by saying sample statements, like “I have a sister,” but you may not get through all of them.)

- I am here today because I want to be.
- All children have the right to an education.
- Caring about the world is an important part of being a Unitarian Universalist.
- We should protect the environment in all situations, even when it means that people will lose their jobs.
- All Unitarian Universalists are very interested in politics.
- People should be able to keep guns in their homes.
- Growing up with my gender identity is more difficult than growing up with a traditional boy/girl identity.
- When people are in one country fighting with each other, other countries should mediate the conflict.
- Being a Unitarian Universalist means being someone who wants to help people who don’t have the things they need in order to live and be healthy.
- Children should not have to fight in war.
- People who make laws should listen to youth’s ideas and opinions.

Activity 2 (15 minutes)

More Symbols

You will need – copies of Appendix 6 for each person in the class. (It’s two pages, so try to double-side it!)

Explain that the issues you just discussed are some of the many things the UN works with.

Read to the class the following examples of how the UN touches peoples’ lives:

- Children: The UN helps people start schools and day care centers in countries where children don't have places to go to learn. They also teach people how to improve their water supply in places where water is dirty and disease-infested.
- Hunger: The UN has programs to increase food production in places where there is not enough food.³
- Refugees: The UN finds safe homes for people who are in danger in their own countries.⁴
- The UN also monitors mail that people send around the world. When you send a letter out of the United States, it is probably handled by the UN.
- Another United Nations organization works to make sure your T.V. and radio don't get a lot of static when you turn them on.
- Another organization makes sure that planes are safe when they are flying all over the globe.⁵

After reading this, pass out Appendix 6. Explain that all the pictures are symbols for different organizations that are part of the United Nations. Have children guess by looking at the symbols what kind of issue they may be in charge of. (You can either put the participants in groups or have them fill out the handout individually).

After about 5 minutes, they can turn over their sheets and review the answers. (You may want to point out and discuss the similarities between the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights emblem and the Unitarian Universalist chalice.)

Activity 3 (10 minutes)



International Hot Potato

- You will need* - A ball or roll of masking tape (something to throw)
 - Appendix 7 (list of Member States of the UN)

Ask participants to stand in a circle. Explain to the participants that they should throw the ball around the circle. (They don't necessarily have to throw the ball to someone who is next to them.) As the ball goes around the circle, you will go through the alphabet. For each letter, the participant with the ball should say the name of a country that is a member of the United Nations. For example: The first person to get the ball could say Afghanistan. The second person to get the ball could say Bosnia. Each participant has a list to refer to if he or she can't think of a country.

Teacher's note: When you get to the letters W and X, the participants will have a hard time coming up with countries. This is because no countries start with W or X! Explain this to them and move on to Y.

Activity 4 (15 minutes)

Case Study

Read the following story out loud to the participants:

³. Hope For Tomorrow. (New York: UN Department of Public Information, 1985)

⁴. ABCs of the UN (New York: UNA, 1995).

⁵. Hope For Tomorrow. (New York: UN Department of Public Information, 1985)

My name is Patricio Nthupuela. When I was born, my country was at war. One day an armed group of people entered our village, bombed our houses, and burned them. Both my parents were killed, too. A few years later, more violence rocked our village. Armed people kidnapped my sister and several of my cousins. Luckily, I was able to escape the attack. Many people left our village, crossed the borders, and went into neighboring countries. They now live in refugee camps.

I had always wanted to study. A few years ago, after realizing that I could not study in my village because of the war, I decided to move to a town 100 miles away. As I was traveling, a land mine blew up our car. In the explosion I lost both my arms.

It was very hard for me to be without both arms. But I wasn't going to give up. I soon learned to write by holding a pencil in my mouth. In spite of my disability, I was admitted to a school, and later, I passed the fourth and fifth grades. Now I am in the sixth grade. At school, my friends are very helpful, always ready to do whatever they can. I can put my clothes on but I can't fasten the buttons.

I would like to have artificial arms. I have even traveled to the capital to find them. So far, I have not been lucky. Luck is not on your side when you are crippled and have nobody in the world.

Discuss how the participants would feel to be this child. Have the participants break into pairs or three groups and discuss the following questions. What does your name mean to you? Does it represent your culture and your family? How might changing your name change who you are? Would you change your name if you could, and why? How much different is this child's life than your own lives? How are this child's rights being violated? How could the UN help this child? After a few minutes, bring them all back together to share their questions and answers with the rest of the group.

Before dismissing class, talk briefly again about the symbols of the UN, Unitarian Universalism, and the UU-UNO - what does that make them think about their role as Unitarian Universalists in the UN's work? How did the sharing facts and opinions activity make them think about global problems and issues? Were they surprised by how many countries there are in the world and how different the experiences of many of the people from other parts of the world are (like Patricio)?

Don't forget to pass out the homework before dismissing them if you desire to do so!

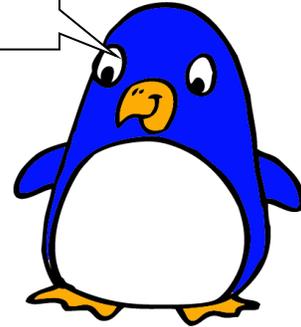
Homework

Flag Bearing

Pick a country, any country from the list of UN member nations that you received in class. (How about choosing a country you've never heard of before?)

Look it up!

Look it up,
baby!



Draw its flag here



Find out some other information and write it here



Name of country: _____

How big is it? _____

How many people live there? _____

What's the climate like? _____

How much money does the average person make? _____

What else is interesting? _____

Name something about the country that you found surprising.

Appendix 6

Identifying Symbols

Now you know the symbol for the United Nations. Now, try to match the symbols below of smaller organizations that are part of the UN to their mission.

Then try to guess what the group that this symbol represents might do. Write down you guess on the lines by the symbols.





unicef







Human Rights

WORD BOX:

United Nations Center for Human Settlements (HABITAT)

World Health Organization

United Nations Children’s Fund

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Universal Postal Union

Appendix 6 (cont.)

Identifying Symbols (the answers!)⁶

Now you know the symbol for the United Nations, try to identify some of the symbols of some smaller organizations that are part of the UN. Look at what is being shown in each symbol. Then try to guess what the group that this symbol represents might do. Write down your guess on the lines by the symbols.



United Nations Center for Human Settlements (HABITAT) works to find and build housing for people who otherwise cannot afford it.

United Nations Children's Fund works to bring food, health services, clean water, and schooling to children all over the world.



Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees helps people who can't safely stay in their home countries find places to live. They also help to return refugees to their homes when it is safe to do so.

World Health Organization works to improve health throughout the world.



Universal Postal Union helps to improve international postal service.

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights focuses on the rights of the people of the world, working for equality and fair treatment for all human beings.



⁶. A World In Our Hands. (Berkeley: Tricycle Press, 1995) 40-44.

Appendix 7

Member States of the United Nations (as of July 2011)

- * Afghanistan
- * Albania
- * Algeria
- * Andorra
- * Angola
- * Antigua and Barbuda
- * Argentina
- * Armenia
- * Australia
- * Austria
- * Azerbaijan
- * Bahamas
- * Bahrain
- * Bangladesh
- * Barbados
- * Belarus
- * Belgium
- * Belize
- * Benin
- * Bhutan
- * Bolivia
- * Bosnia and Herzegovina
- * Botswana
- * Brazil
- * Brunei Darussalam
- * Bulgaria
- * Burkina Faso
- * Burundi
- * Cambodia
- * Cameroon
- * Canada
- * Cape Verde
- * Central African Republic
- * Chad
- * Chile
- * China
- * Colombia
- * Comoros
- * Republic of the Congo
- * Costa Rica
- * Côte d'Ivoire
- * Croatia
- * Cuba
- * Cyprus
- * Czech Republic
- * Democratic People's Republic of Korea
- * Democratic Republic of the Congo
- * Denmark
- * Djibouti
- * Dominica
- * Dominican Republic
- * Ecuador
- * Egypt
- * El Salvador
- * Equatorial Guinea
- * Eritrea
- * Estonia
- * Ethiopia
- * Fiji
- * Finland
- * France
- * Gabon
- * Gambia
- * Georgia
- * Germany
- * Ghana
- * Greece
- * Grenada
- * Guatemala
- * Guinea
- * Guinea-Bissau
- * Guyana
- * Haiti
- * Honduras
- * Hungary
- * Iceland
- * India
- * Indonesia
- * Islamic Republic of Iran
- * Iraq
- * Ireland
- * Israel
- * Italy
- * Jamaica
- * Japan
- * Jordan
- * Kazakhstan
- * Kenya
- * Kiribati
- * Kuwait
- * Kyrgyzstan
- * Lao People's Democratic Republic
- * Latvia
- * Lebanon
- * Lesotho
- * Liberia
- * Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
- * Liechtenstein
- * Lithuania
- * Luxembourg
- * Madagascar
- * Malawi
- * Malaysia
- * Maldives
- * Mali
- * Malta
- * Marshall Islands
- * Mauritania
- * Mauritius
- * Mexico
- * Federated States of Micronesia
- * Moldova
- * Monaco
- * Mongolia
- * Montenegro
- * Morocco
- * Mozambique
- * Myanmar
- * Namibia
- * Nauru
- * Nepal
- * Netherlands
- * New Zealand
- * Nicaragua
- * Niger
- * Nigeria
- * Norway
- * Oman
- * Pakistan
- * Palau
- * Panama
- * Papua New Guinea
- * Paraguay
- * Peru
- * Philippines
- * Poland
- * Portugal
- * Qatar
- * Republic of Korea
- * Romania
- * Russian Federation
- * Rwanda
- * Saint Kitts and Nevis
- * Saint Lucia
- * Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- * Samoa
- * San Marino
- * Sao Tome and Principe
- * Saudi Arabia
- * Senegal
- * Serbia
- * Seychelles
- * Sierra Leone
- * Singapore
- * Slovakia
- * Slovenia
- * Solomon Islands
- * Somalia
- * South Africa
- * South Sudan
- * Spain
- * Sri Lanka
- * Sudan
- * Suriname
- * Swaziland
- * Sweden
- * Switzerland
- * Syrian Arab Republic
- * Tajikistan
- * Thailand
- * The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- * Timor-Leste
- * Togo
- * Tonga
- * Trinidad and Tobago
- * Tunisia
- * Turkey
- * Turkmenistan
- * Tuvalu
- * Uganda
- * Ukraine
- * United Arab Emirates
- * United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- * United Republic of Tanzania
- * United States of America
- * Uruguay
- * Uzbekistan
- * Vanuatu
- * Venezuela
- * Vietnam
- * Yemen
- * Zambia
- * Zimbabwe