



Social Issues

Ethnic Minorities



Definition:

This is an ethnic group that is a minority within a nation or society.

The word ethnic means: belonging to a particular group by descent or culture rather than by nationality.

Examples:

- The Chinese community in Paris, France
- Some Native North American Indian communities in the United State of America
- The Lencas of Honduras
- The various Asian communities in Great Britain

Background information - the problems that they may face:

Ethnic minorities may face rejection by other groups in their society. They may be underrepresented or unfairly represented in government and local ruling parties. They may be discriminated against or may face racism and conflict with other communities.

Conflicts and discrimination occur in all societies due to a lack of understanding, misconceptions, preconceptions and ignorance.

Sometimes people and whole communities are judged on their appearances, without fully understanding them. This can only be overcome by both communities developing tolerance and respect for each other.

The different communities need to listen to each other, learn about each other in order to live in harmony together. They must work towards finding a compromise and not resorting to any violence or abusive behaviour.

See the other information sheets on Conflict between communities, racism and discrimination.

How you can make a difference?

Tackle the issue - learn about the different ethnic groups that make up your local community, region and country. Recognise the situations that they might face. Are the relations good between the different ethnic groups? How can relations be improved? Perhaps you could learn a new skill from a different ethnical group? Learn to empathise with other groups of people and not to judge anyone before getting to know them.

Use the materials and tools provided to follow the process of:

1. Identifying the problem
2. Developing Awareness and Empathy
3. Taking action
4. Measuring the change

Resources and Links:

Workshop 4: "I'm not a racist but..." from the booklet "Building Peace Together" (A World Organization of the Scout Movement publication)

http://www.scout.org/wsrc/peaceworkshops/workshop4_e.pdf (English)

Information on the World Organizations of the Scout Movement's Strategic Priority 4: Reaching Out:

<http://www.scout.org/strat/sp4en.shtml> (English)

<http://worldnet.scout.org/stratcd/frsp4/> (French)

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities:

http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d_minori.htm