

Week 1 Discussion Guide: Women's Rights



Themes from the Week

- The status of females
- Women's Rights = Human Rights
- Giving reality to human rights
- Negative Rights: (civil rights) and Positive Rights (socio-economic rights)
- CEDAW, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
- UDHR, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Before You Begin

Visit the Discussion Toolkit instructions page and read the instructions thoroughly to prepare for group discussions: <http://internationalwomenshealth.org/interact.html>

Remember, the toolkits are only a jumping-off point to start your conversations. You do not have to get through all the questions. The main purpose of meeting together is to have an engaged and thoughtful discussion about International Women's Health and Human Rights.

Part I. Get to Know Your Teammates

Introductions (estimated ~5-10 minutes)

Take a moment to write down: **Why are you interested in taking this course? What do you hope to gain from it?** When everyone is ready, take a moment to introduce yourself, where you're from, and your response to these questions.

Part II. Topical Discussion Questions to consider with your group. We have left space for you to write down some of your thoughts on the subject as you meet with your group.

Being Born Female (estimated ~10 minutes)

1. What does it mean to be born female in different parts of the world?
 - Consider places such as Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Kenya, the United States, or any other country of interest, including your own.
 - What are the barriers and burdens that women (not men) experience?
 - What are some reasons these barriers and burdens exist?

Women's Rights as Human Rights (estimated ~10-15 minutes)

2. (a) Recall the conversation on human rights with Professor Helen Stacy. Discuss the difference between negative rights and positive rights.

2. (b) Consider your own country and women's rights. What is the condition of negative (civil) rights in your country? What about positive (socio-economic) rights?

CEDAW (10-15 minutes)

3. Discuss the CEDAW treaty. What does the acronym stand for? How does it pertain to your country? Has your country ratified CEDAW and/or has it placed any reservations on the treaty? If yes, why do you think it has placed reservations?

BONUS QUESTION (if you have time)

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Can human rights norms be broadly adopted and/or enforced? Consider them at the local, national, and international levels. If your answer is "yes," how can they be given reality? Who are involved and what are some of the challenges? If your answer is "no," then how can these rights still be promoted? (Refer to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights if relevant)

Part III. Submit a Report

When you have finished, please share your group's reflections with the IWHHR community. As a team, make sure to fill out the information needed for the Discussion Toolkit report **before you conclude your meeting**. Your group only needs to submit ONE report.

The online report form asks for the following:

Date of your Meeting

Group Members participating

What you discussed (short write-up of a few sentences)

City and Country of each participant

Was the meeting **online** or **in person**?

Access the Sharing Portal at:

<http://internationalwomenshealth.org/interact.html>

Note: For those interested in a Statement of Accomplishment, you should also write an individual reflection on today's group meeting and submit in the "Submit Your Writing Assignments" tab.