

# John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights

## *Building World Peace*



**John Humphrey Centre**

*for Peace and Human Rights*

*pour la paix et les droits de la personne*



ACGC   
Alberta Council for Global Cooperation



***Principal Writers:***

Wayne Lavold, Teacher, Harry Ainlay High School  
Robert Gardner, Teacher, Harry Ainlay High School

***John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights Coordinators:***

Renee Vaugeois, Executive Director  
Carrie Malloy, Education Coordinator

***Resource Design:***



**frost bytes**

Leroy Schulz, Frost Bytes Development Ltd.  
<http://www.frostbytes.ca>

***Special Thanks to:***

Honourable Douglas Roche, O.C.  
Honourable Claudette Tardif  
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Joan Cowling  
Louise De Pape  
Kiran Choudhry  
Larry Booi



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### ***The John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights***

The John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights, named in honour of the Canadian-born principal writer of the United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, was established in Edmonton, Alberta in June 2000 as an outgrowth of the Human Rights Education Foundation. The primary purpose of the Centre is to educate the public, particularly children and youth, on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The underlying belief is that many social problems such as poverty, conflict, bullying, racism, civil strife and other ills may be overcome through a commitment to human rights.

### ***Building World Peace: The Role of Religions and Human Rights, October 2006***

In October 2006, the John Humphrey Centre sponsored a conference entitled *Building World Peace: the Role of Religions and Human Rights*. The conference brought together representatives of various faith backgrounds, including Aboriginal, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim, to discuss various understandings of faith and spirituality, the origins of conflict and its potential resolution. Conference organizers argued that



***“[t]he need for our Conference stems from recent international events that have harmfully impacted various communities. Some of the issues negatively affecting Canadian societies include increased fear of society-wide crime; fear of personal victimization; religious misunderstanding; racial, ethnic, and religious profiling; and outright hate-based crime and violence. Based on this negative social fall-out, it is evident that community and religious leaders ought to take steps towards promoting peace, harmony, and justice.”<sup>1</sup>***

One of the objectives of the conference was to facilitate dialogue and understanding.



***“From the perspective of religious and human rights leaders, our Conference aims to dismantle preconceived notions that hinder societal co-operation, to recognize the importance of educating our children, youth, and the general public against discriminatory practices, and to build social bridges that will enhance life for all.”<sup>2</sup>***

Through keynote presentations, panel discussions, workshops and casual conversations, delegates were able to explore a range of questions about conflict, religion and human rights and to develop conclusions about how to bring about peace in the world. The conference concluded with a participant-generated statement *Now We Must Change*.

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<sup>1</sup> John Humphrey Centre, “Building World Peace: the role of Religions and Human Rights”, John Humphrey Centre, <http://www.buildingworldpeace.com/index.php>, (accessed Aug. 19/2007)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

The purpose of the *Building World Peace* resource is to assist teachers in meeting some of the outcome objectives from the Social Studies 10-1 Program of Studies by emulating the general intent of the October 2006 conference. Teachers may use this resource to guide students through the process of identifying issues related to the development of peace and human rights, explore background information related to the topic, and to develop decision-making skills enabling them to take action for change. In this way the resource follows the model outlined by the Alberta Education Program of Studies.

The **underlying assumption of this resource** is that global citizenship means working towards the achievement of peace and human rights and that the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* represents a foundation for achieving peace in the world. This represents one perspective on global citizenship and teachers should ensure that alternative perspectives are also presented.

**Please note:** while religion, by its very nature, is a potentially contentious subject area, it need not be the focus of lessons relating to this conference. The emphasis should, instead, be on the nature of the issues discussed as well as on the potential for conferences such as this, in which people – experts and laypersons alike – get together to seek knowledge, understanding and action as well as to develop a sense of global citizenship in order to find solutions to both local and global problems.

This resource is best utilized as students approach the latter portions of the Grade 10 Social Studies curriculum. It could be used as part of an exploration of Related Issue 4: *To what extent should I, as a citizen, respond to globalization?*<sup>3</sup> In adhering to the pattern of the Program of Studies, students will **explore** issues and problems relating to world peace, **examine** and **analyze** case studies, and **evaluate** possible responses. In the process of working through this resource, students will develop a number of skills and meet several of the Knowledge and Understanding outcomes identified in the Social Studies 10-1 program.

This resource provides ten classroom lessons for teachers which may be used in part or in their entirety depending on time considerations or other classroom needs. Generally, the individual lessons are not dependent upon one another, and it is possible to work through the resource adding or subtracting as required. The resource is thus expandable or contractible in order to accommodate teacher needs.

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<sup>3</sup> Alberta Education, Social Studies Kindergarten to Grade 12; Social Studies 10-1: Perspectives on Globalization (Edmonton: Alberta Education, 2007), pp. 24-25

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**Objective:**

Students will identify and research three contemporary conflicts, either wars or civil conflicts. Students will examine the origins and nature of the conflicts in order to develop a better understanding of the prevalence of conflict in the globalized world, despite the assumption that, as nations become less independent and people become more interconnected (the global village concept), warfare (either internal or external) has not, in fact, become less common.

In addition, students will develop an understanding of how violations of human rights play a large role in the violence throughout the world and how this makes the solution to conflict difficult to attain.

Ultimately, should the teacher wish to complete this mini-unit in its entirety, this information will provide the basis for the role-play debate that concludes the examination of human rights and world peace.

**Skills and Processes:**

- S.2.9 use current, reliable information sources from around the world
- S.7.3 draw pertinent conclusions based upon evidence derived from research
- S.7.7 develop, refine and apply questions to address an issue
- S.7.8 select and analyze relevant information when conducting research
- S.7.9 plan and perform complex searches using digital sources
- S.9.1 assess the authority, reliability and validity of electronically accessed information
- S.9.5 demonstrate discriminatory selection of electronically accessed information that is relevant to a particular topic

**Activity 1: Research current regional conflicts**

Working in pairs, students will conduct on-line or library research into three current conflicts in the world that involve the violation of human rights. They should choose three from different regions of the world that have been in the news recently. A teacher-provided list of conflicts from which to choose might help ensure a wide breadth of regions and types of conflict (civil and international). An excellent starting point for both teacher and student research is <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/index.html>. Research may take one or two one-hour class periods depending on the amount of detail desired.

Ask students to first develop five questions for each conflict that will lead them to a solid understanding of the conflict: *What information do we need to have in order to understand and meaningfully discuss the conflict?* They will need to be able to explain how these questions will help them understand the nature of the conflict and how it relates to the violation of human rights as they understand them. Suggest to them that it is important to go beyond simple factual data.

### **Activity 2: Create a chart to reflect information gathered**

Once they have built their bank of questions, they should apply them to their research through the creation and use of a retrieval chart. After their information has been gathered, students should discuss the conflicts that they researched and present a completed retrieval chart for one of the conflicts.

#### **Website evaluation:**

Students should be reminded that not all websites are equally valuable sources of information. Before the actual retrieval of on-line information begins, students should apply some critical questions to their sources.

- 1.** *Is this an “official” website, or an individual's own page?*
- 2.** *Is the information on the site referenced for original sources?*
- 3.** *Does the site appear to be biased in any way? Why do you believe so?*
- 4.** *Has the site been updated recently?*
- 5.** *Is there advertising on the site which may influence the tone or content?*
- 6.** *Is there enough information to give you a solid understanding?*

Based on the students' answers to the questions above, ask students to identify which sites are most valuable.

What follows is a sample retrieval chart that students may come up with:

- ????** **Where is the conflict and how long has it been going on?**
- ????** **What events from the past have contributed to the current situation?**
- ????** **Who is involved? What groups are represented or engaged in the fighting?**
- ????** **What is the conflict all about? Why is there violence? Why are human rights being violated?**
- ????** **In what way is this conflict an issue of human rights? Which of the 30 Articles from the *Universal Declaration* are being assailed here?**
- ????** **How might a global community based on the *Universal Declaration* prevent this conflict?**

***DVD Presentation by Romeo Dallaire******Objective:***

Students will watch a presentation by a respected former Canadian military leader well versed in issues regarding conflict, human rights and the United Nations. Students will watch carefully and respectfully, and gather facts and ideas that will inform their decisions and conclusions regarding conflict.

***Skills and Processes:***

- S.1.9** identify main ideas underlying a position or issue
- S.7.2** develop conclusions based upon evidence gathered through research of a wide variety of sources
- S.9.2** analyze the validity of various points of view in media messages

***Activity: Watch a presentation***

Students watch the speech and slide presentation that Senator Romeo Dallaire made at the Building World Peace conference. Students may answer a series of questions which follow the narrative of the presentation and which are intended to help them summarize the main points of the speech and think about the information presented. See Handout 3.

***Note to teachers:***

Canadian Senator and former military commander Romeo Dallaire presents an explanation and analysis of war and peacekeeping based on his experiences in Rwanda and other fields of conflict. In his speech, Dallaire offers some frank critique of UN, Canadian and other nations' actions in places of conflict and he asks some challenging questions for the audience to grapple with.

This speech runs approximately 70 minutes and includes a number of PowerPoint slides that have been integrated into this video. The presentation was made before an adult audience and may be challenging for some grade ten students. Therefore, it may be useful to break up the running of the video into sections played on different days or to skip parts of Mr. Dallaire's speech depending on the objectives of the lesson or unit plan. It should be noted that some of the content of the speech is of a grave nature – references to “Rape Sites” in war-torn villages and a couple of graphic photos of death and human destruction. However, Mr. Dallaire does provide insightful analysis of the changing nature of conflict and warfare and makes a compelling call for action on the part of Canada and other middle powers which students will be able to understand and appreciate.

Handout 1 (Keys to successfully watching a speech or documentary video) may be used to give students some strategies and some reminders about how to watch a presentation by an individual speaker.

Handout 2 (Questions to accompany Romeo Dallaire's speech) may be used to assist students in following the narrative and main ideas developed in the speech.

\* Handouts can be found near the end of this resource.

## Bio

### **Biography of LGen, The Honourable Romeo Dallaire (Ret'd), Senator**

Lieutenant General the Honourable Romeo Dallaire, (Ret'd), Senator had a distinguished career with the Canadian military achieving the rank of Lieutenant General and becoming Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources) in the Department of National Defence in 1998. In 1994, General Dallaire commanded the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR). His book on his experiences in Rwanda, entitled *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*, was awarded the Governor General's Literary Award for Non-Fiction in 2004.

Since his retirement with the military, Senator Dallaire has worked hard to bring awareness of post-traumatic stress to the general public. He has also worked as a visiting lecturer to various American and Canadian universities and is also a Fellow of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy, Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University pursuing research on conflict resolution and the use of child soldiers.

LGen. Dallaire (Ret'd) was appointed to the Senate effective March 24, 2005. He is also a member of the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights.

As a champion of human rights, his activities included:

- public speaking on issues relating to human rights and genocide prevention;
- visiting Darfur as a member of Prime Minister Martin's Special Advisory Team on Darfur;
- advocacy for the Canadian Forces mission to Afghanistan;
- membership in the United Nations Secretary General's Advisory Committee on Genocide Prevention;
- leadership in a project to develop a conceptual base for the elimination of the use of child soldiers; and
- leadership in activities aimed at the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

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Source: "LGen the Honourable Romeo A. Dallaire, (Ret'd), Senator Homepage" Accessed April 09, 2008.  
<http://sen.parl.gc.ca/SenWeb/welcome/?lang=en&sen=47>

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**Objective:**

Students will reflect and deliberate upon some of the important issues that emerge from Dallaire's presentation.

**Skills and Processes:**

- S.4.3** generate and apply new ideas and strategies to contribute to decision making and problem solving
- S.5.5** respect the needs and perspectives of others
- S.5.6** collaborate in groups to solve problems

**Activity 1: Examine a specific case from the conflict in Rwanda**

After watching the video of Romeo Dallaire's presentation, hand out the *Case Study: Children as instruments of war*. This is a brief recounting of a particular incident which Dallaire describes in his presentation. Ask students to share impressions about the ethical dilemma faced by combat troops in this situation. Working in groups of two or three, students should brainstorm possible responses to the situation that should be focused on saving as many lives as possible. Impress upon the students that for soldiers in the village this was likely a “no-win” situation. The purpose of this exercise is to generate ideas and explore possibilities; a wide range of ideas could be accepted here.

**Note to teachers:**

This case study is an especially disturbing account of the terror, tragedy and madness of war. Discretion should be used if this account is to be presented in the classroom.

**Activity 2: Consider questions and issues emerging from incidents of conflict**

Distribute copies of Handout 4 and have students work in groups of three or four to answer the questions. Invite students to think about their priorities in the decision making process. What should be the most important objective of peace keeping action? What would be the second most important?

**Objective:**

Students will examine a number of recommendations that came from the Building World Peace conference and judge how they might work to achieve these outcomes. Students will brainstorm and discuss potential challenges and obstacles to achieving the recommendations and develop strategies for overcoming those challenges.

**Skills and Processes:**

- S.1.9 analyze current affairs from a variety of perspectives
- S.4.1 demonstrate leadership in groups to achieve consensus, solve problems, formulate opinions, and take action, if appropriate, on important issues
- S.4.3 generate and apply new ideas and strategies to contribute to decision making and problem solving
- S.5.2 participate in persuading, compromising and negotiating to resolve conflicts and differences
- S.5.5 respect the needs and perspectives of others
- S.5.6 collaborate in groups to solve problems

**Activity: Assessing recommendations and planning for action**

Provide students with a number of recommendations for actions to achieving world peace. Recommendation 1 is included below in the form of a retrieval chart. Other recommendations are listed in Appendix 2. Working individually at first, then in pairs, and finally in groups of four, students should respond to the following questions regarding each of the recommendations for achieving world peace.

**Recommendation 1:**

***“Faith communities come together to form and fund a multifaith organization in Canada.”***

This group, representing all faiths and wisdom traditions, would work together to share ideas, improve understanding of each others' beliefs, and promote peace.

**Questions:**

(A sample chart is provided to assist students in organizing their ideas.)

**????**

**To what extent would this recommendation be effective in achieving world peace?**  
(Is the recommendation realistic, purposeful, easily understood, likely to be supported by citizens?)

*Ineffective*    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9    *Highly effective*

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**????**

**To what extent would it be possible to achieve this recommendation?**

*Difficult*    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9    *Relatively easy*

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**????**

**What obstacles or challenges exist in trying to implement this recommendation?**

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**????**

**How might these obstacles be overcome?**

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**????**

**What might individual students or small groups do to begin to achieve this recommendation?**

After working individually, then in pairs, students in groups of four should discuss their responses to the questions, then collectively record their answers on large poster paper for all classmates to see and discuss. To what extent is there agreement and disagreement? How might the degree of agreement affect the potential to take action or to implement the recommendation?

**Objective:**

Students will develop positions on a conflict somewhere in the world in preparation for participating in a role play debate.

**Skills and Processes:**

- S.1.1 evaluate ideas and information from multiple sources
- S.1.6 synthesize information from contemporary and historical issues to develop an informed position
- S.1.7 evaluate the logic of assumptions underlying a position
- S.1.9 analyze current affairs from a variety of perspectives
- S.5.2 participate in persuading, compromising and negotiating to resolve conflicts and differences
- S.6.2 acknowledge the importance of multiple perspectives in a variety of situations
- S.7.6 integrate and synthesize argumentation and evidence to provide an informed opinion on a research question or an issue of inquiry

**Activity**

Discuss the nature of the conflicts that students have researched and presented in earlier lessons. As a class, determine which of the conflicts is most pressing and requires the most immediate attention. This will be the subject of a role-play debate.

Create a debate topic based on the following possible template:



*Be it resolved that the United Nations Security Council should act to enforce the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights by the government of \_\_\_\_\_ in order to successfully resolve the conflict in that nation.*

As a class, determine who the stakeholders in this debate are (clearly, those students who had researched the conflict will lead the discussion) – for example, if the students are debating the conflict in Darfur, they might decide that the important stakeholders include:

- the Sudanese government
- the Sudanese military
- the Janjaweed militia
- rebel groups such as the Justice & Equality Movement (JEM) and the Sudanese Liberation Movement (SLM)
- the United Nations African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID)
- Arab civilians from the Baggara tribes of northern Sudan
- Black African civilians from the Zaghawa, Massaleit and Fur tribes of the Darfur region
- The Canadian mission to the United Nations
- The American mission to the United Nations

It should be made clear to students that the debate involves both local issues (the best way to solve the domestic problems plaguing the nation in question) and international issues (human rights/security vs. national security).

Brainstorm the base positions (pro/con) for each stakeholder group as a basis for research. On index cards, write numbers corresponding to the stakeholder groups and allow students to pull cards in order to randomly distribute the stakeholders among them. Depending upon the size of the class, there may be three or four groups that will debate the topic.

It is recommended that the teacher ensures that at least one member of the group that had done the original research on the debate case study be present in each of the debate groups. Their responsibility will be to help provide a basis of understanding about the conflict that will enable the rest of the group to adequately research their stakeholder positions.

Students should be given at least two class periods to research and develop a position statement for their stakeholder that will encapsulate his/her perspective on the issue/s (complete with both arguments and evidence) as well as to anticipate and counter opposition viewpoints.

Students will be asked to do the following in preparation for the debate:

- Research the background of the conflict, in particular the identity and stance of the role being played – which may be an individual and/or organization.
- Use that research to develop a position statement on one side of the resolution. It should include, where appropriate:
  - Background information on the individual's involvement in the conflict
  - Background information on the organization or group the individual is involved with (i.e. goals and methods used to obtain them)
  - A brief outline and explanation of the organization's stance on both the local and international issues (the position on one may need to be inferred from the position found on the other). These must be consistent with the background research.
  - Anticipated counter-arguments from those opposing the individual's perspective and a plan to deal with them.
- Prepare a two-minute introductory statement designed to outline the student's role and position to be given orally at the beginning of the debate.

Depending on the circumstances, the teacher might decide not to enter into the actual debate and use the finished position statements as assessment. If so, the debate resolution might act as an essay question and the position statements as finished essays.