



Debating Girls' Rights in the Context of Culture

Goal: To raise awareness about girls' rights and understand the issues that millions of girls face internationally. To consider the influence of culture on local traditions. To understand the relationship between culture, custom, and human rights.

Materials: Access to the internet, or access to a newspaper or article pertaining to girls' rights.

Time: 30 minutes

Activity: Select an article that addresses girls' rights in some way. Instruct participants to read that article. (An article about child marriage, the domestic roles of girls, child soldiers, child trafficking, and poverty might be applicable. This article from [CNN](#) is a good example.

Organize the group into two sides for a debate. Instruct one side to argue in support of the topic and one side to oppose it. Regarding child marriage, then, one side supports child marriage and one side will oppose it. Those against might consider arguments including opportunities for education, health and safety, and the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#). Those in favor might consider cultural precedent, the value of family and financial security, tradition, etc.

Allow the two sides to brainstorm arguments. Then permit each to present their case and debate for 20 minutes.

After the debate, use the discussion questions below to reflect on the topic:

For the CNN article, consider these questions:

1. Do you think that this marriage should have been allowed?
2. What do you think the legal age for marriage should be and why?
3. How do you feel about the response of the Grand mufti to the marriage?
4. Sheikh Abdul Aziz Al-Sheikh: "Shariah law has not brought injustice to women" – Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
5. Where can we draw the line between traditional culture and human rights?

Other Reflection Questions



- Did you consider a new side to the argument that you hadn't thought of before?
- How might cultural tradition influence girls' rights?
- How can individuals from different cultures find common ground on issues of girls' rights?
- In what other ways do you think culture influences our perception of human rights?
- What other issues affecting girls might be influenced by culture and tradition?
- For issues regarding trafficking and the use of child soldiers: How might poverty influence this topic? How might poverty limit a family's choice to protect its girls?