

Makah whale hunt



Brief description of the activity

We live in a multicultural society where people with different habits and traditions live and that is why it is so important to promote a successful intercultural dialogue. This activity includes teamwork, role play and awareness building on some delicate and potentially conflicting issues such as: the right to adopt attitudes consistent with one's culture, the right to freely use one's natural richness, the right to the development and use of natural resources, the sustainable use of marine resources.

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Topics. Objectives and methodology:

The topics of this activity are the environment, globalization, human rights, cultural differences, inter-cultural dialogue, solidarity. The aims of the activity are: to explore the conflicts between the rights to development and cultural life and the protection of the environment; to develop intercultural competences and reflect on prejudices; to develop open attitudes towards cultural differences; to encourage intercultural dialogue, respect for human rights and cultural differences.

Duration:

150 minutes.

Costs:

There are no costs associated with this activity, except sheets of paper, photocopies (of the role cards) and pens.

Location:

A place indoors, where participants can concentrate, is pref-

erable.

Materials:

Role cards, sheets of paper and pens.

Staff needed and eventual specific skills required:

The activity can be led by one or two coordinators with knowledge on the topics covered by the activity (see annexes) and with basic knowledge on human rights, culture and environment. The coordinators must facilitate the dialogue by providing additional information when necessary.

Participants involved:

14 or more young participants or anyone interested in the topic and that would like to get to know new perspectives. The complexity of the issues addressed in this activity makes it more suitable for a mature group with good discussion skills. There is a lot of information to assimilate and, for the comprehension of the Makah whaling playing role cards, a

certain level of knowledge of human rights and environmental terminology is necessary. It is possible to divide the activity into two sessions and give the groups time to read the role cards and think about the topics in the meantime.



Steps:

Before

The coordinator must read all the Role Cards (Annexes) to familiarize himself/herself with the information. He/she will then be able to act as a resource if necessary. Copies of the Role Cards should be printed. Each group - which will be formed later - will receive one or more copies of a Role Card. The room where the activity will take place has to be prepared with all the necessary material (sheets, copies of the role cards and pens). It must be explained to the participants how long the activity will take and what its goal is. It may be necessary to verify that the participants fully understand the meaning of some of the terms and concepts introduced in the Role Cards such as: Indigenous Peoples, Precautionary Principle, Sustainability.

During

The activity is divided into two parts: part 1 (30 minutes) is an introduction to the activity and the environmental and cultural issues involved, and part 2 (90 minutes) is a simulated meeting to discuss the Makah tribe's application to the International Whaling Commission (IWC) to resume whaling. Make sure you leave time after the activity for discussion, debriefing and evaluation.

Part 1. Introduction to environmental and cultural issues (30 minutes): An explanation about the topics that this activity is about (environmental and cultural rights) should be given. This activity is based on a request from the Makah nation to the IWC to resume whaling and on the opposition from environmentalists and others.

- Give a general introduction of the Makah people to the group (see annex/role card 1 – The Makah tribe)
- Introduce the issues addressed in this activity.

- Ask people to respond to a series of statements by remaining seated (I agree) or standing up (I am against).
- The following statements must be read, one at a time, leaving time for the participants, after each of them, to express themselves with the system explained above. Invite participants to convince others of their ideas to see if anyone changes their mind and position (no more than 5 minutes per statement should be given). "People's habits should be respected as long as they do not abuse human rights." "We should respect people's right to choose what they eat; to be vegan, vegetarian or to eat meat. " "The food we eat should be produced using environmentally friendly methods. " "Animal husbandry should not include cruel methods such as intensive farming or inhuman ways of slaughter. " "Cultural traditions are very important to people and should be respected. " "Whales should not be hunted even if such practices is a fundamental part of a people's culture. "

Part 2. A mock meeting to discuss the Makah tribe's request to the International Whaling Commission (IWC) to resume whaling. (90 minutes): The scenario should be explained to the participants: the Makah people have asked the International Whaling Commission (IWC) to be able to resume whaling, a fundamental element of their centuries-old culture, and which several environmental groups oppose. This activity is a simulated meeting organized by an imaginary organization called CREST (Culture, Rights, Environment, Sustainability and Talk). CREST is an independent organization that works to bring the human rights perspective to environmental issues, and is committed to promoting understanding through dialogue. The simulation is a meeting between four groups:

- The Makah tribe, that wants to present their case in order to resume whale hunting;
- The High North Alliance, an association that represents coastal cities in northern Europe as well as

whale and seal hunters. The HNA works to promote the future of coastal cultures and the sustainable exploitation of the renewable resources of the sea, in this case marine mammals. The HNA supports the Makah's cause.

- Sea Shepherd, an organization that researches and documents violations of international laws, regulations and treaties that protect marine life species. They oppose the request of the Makah people.
- Greenpeace, environmental activists who oppose whale hunting.
- CREST's role is to mediate between groups. Discussions will focus on four issues:
- Should whale hunting be allowed?
- Given that this practice is a very ancient cultural tradition, should it constitute a legitimate exception to the regulations that govern whale hunting?

- If whale hunting was allowed, at what level would it be?
- What regulations are needed?

Ask two volunteers to represent CREST, and divide the rest of the participants into four groups. Distribute the role cards. The groups have 30 minutes to discuss the information and to prepare to defend their positions based on the request of the Makah tribe. When the groups are ready, they meet in plenary. Ask the volunteers representing CREST to arrange the reunion, which should last approximately 60 minutes. The purpose of the meeting is to share information and discuss the four issues, and to reach an agreement. CREST opens the meeting with a short declaration on human rights and the environmental framework. The Makah tribe then presents its case. At this point the debate begins. At the end of the discussion the debriefing can start followed by the evaluation.

After

Ask the groups to reflect on the discussion process and whether a consensus was reached. End the session by doing another "sitting / standing" round of voting by repeating the same questions asked in part 1, to see if anyone has changed their position on the issue of whale hunting after participating in the simulation of the debate.

Do's and don'ts

It is necessary to ensure that the participants fully understand the meaning of some terms and concepts introduced by the role cards. The complexity of the issues addressed in this activity makes it more suitable to a mature group with good discussion skills. There is a lot of information to assimilate and the text on role cards requires a certain level of knowledge of human rights and environmental terminology. It is possible to divide

the activity into two sessions and give the groups time to read the role cards and think about the topics between sessions.

The theme of the activity is very sensitive and can lead to heated discussions with conflicting behaviors and/or negative attitudes, which is why the role of the staff/ coordinator is very important. He/She must conduct the discussion in a way that it does not degenerate. It may also be interesting to adapt this role-playing activity to individual local environments and internal conflicts that may arise.

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Innovative aspects for the promotion of interculture

This activity makes the participants confront with the limits of their own cultural perspectives and allows them to reconsider their attitude towards the sustainable use of wildlife. Whaling and animal rights in general can be

very emotional issues for some people, who may have very strong opinions on the subject. This makes it a challenging - but also difficult - subject to work on.

Through group work, role-playing and discussion, participants become aware of cultural differences and people's rights related to their cultural specificities, experiencing in a concrete way the possible conflicts that may arise. By accepting different roles, participants can experience different points of view that can help them develop acceptance of cultures other than their own. With this activity other issues can also be addressed, such as environment and climate change. It is important to understand the different effects of humans on the environment and why we need to talk about these problems. Different cultures may have different views on environmental issues.

Possible follow-up

After the activity, it can be proposed to participants to try

to write together and publish on the web articles on the issues that emerged during the activity, from the risk of extinction of some animal species to the cultural identity of peoples and of minorities. These articles should be written or chosen in group.

Video, links and external resources

The Makah Tribe: <https://makah.com/>

International whaling commission: <https://iwc.int/home>

Sea Shepherd International: www.seasheperd.org

Greenpeace: www.greenpeace.org

Bibliography

<http://arhiv.zofijini.net/zofijini.org/Drzavljanska%20vzgoja%20in%20etika%20-%20metoda%203.pdf>

Brander Patricija, idr., Kompas. Priročnik za učenje mladih o človekovih pravicah, DZS, založništvo in trgovina, d.d

Role card 1 – The Makah tribe

The Makah are a Native American people living in Washington state on the Pacific Northwest coast of the continental United States of America. They are the federally recognized Indian Makah tribe and inhabit the Makah Reservation.

Whaling is central to Makah culture. Each hunt event requires deeply spiritual rituals and ceremonies, and is a source of inspiration for tribal songs, dances, drawings, crafts... For the Makah tribe, whaling constitutes a purpose and a discipline that benefits the whole community. It is so important that in 1855, when the Makah ceded thousands of acres of land to the United States government, they explicitly reserved the right to hunt whales on the Neah Bay Treaty.

Whale hunting provides meat, bones, tendons and bags for food preservation: very useful products in different sectors of the life of the Makah, although traditionally obtained at a high price in terms of time, means and risk.

The ancient Makah whaling tradition required men to pre-

pare for the hunt to go alone to pray, fast and take a ceremonial bath. Each had their own place, followed their own ritual and sought their power for the dangerous hunt. This special preparation lasted weeks or months, starting in winter, but in reality the whalers devoted their entire life to spiritual preparation.

Men waited for favorable climate and favorable ocean conditions to then set out to sea, in groups of eight, one group in each canoe. The departure time was calculated in order to arrive at the place of presence of the whales, in the open sea, at dawn.

Rowing silently, the whalers studied the breathing rhythm of their prey. A long experience handed down from generation to generation told them what to expect. When the whale finished spraying and returned to the surface of the water, the head of the hunt directed the crew to the exact place where the whale would resurface. There the men waited patiently,

and when the whale surfaced, the rowers kept the canoe to its left, adjusting their speed to that of the animal.

When the whale's back came to the surface, the harpooner hit it with a harpoon and the crew immediately began to row backwards, putting as much distance as possible between the canoe and the injured prey in order to avoid the very dangerous and potentially lethal blows of its tail. A blow to the whale's shoulder blade affected her use of her fins, slowing her swim. Sealskin floats inflated like huge balloons were then hooked onto the harpoon line to slow the prey. The harpoons were not meant to kill the whale, but to keep the floating balloons anchored to tire her out.

A detector float at the end of the line of fire served as an indicator so that whalers could follow their prey, placing additional harpoons and staying out all day and often the next night in the grueling fight against the animal. Eventually the final moment came for the killing performed using a special-

ized spear.

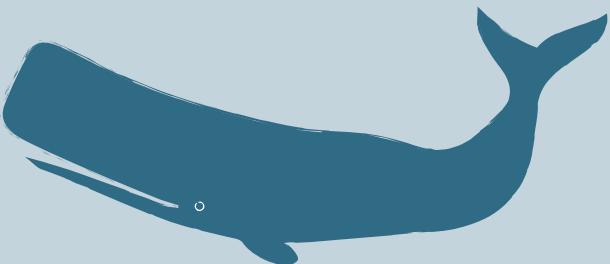
The next step was to tow the whale home. The hunters hoped the journey would be a few kilometers; this would happen, in their belief, if the whale spirit had accepted their prayers to return home quickly and safely. Otherwise - as actually sometimes happened - the journey back home, never the same as the outward journey due to the long fight with the animal - would exceed twenty kilometers. To prevent the whale from sinking, one of the hunters dived into the freezing water and in apnea sewed the animal's mouth, to prevent water from filling the stomach, weighing down the carcass and making it impossible to tow.

The difficult paddling home was accompanied by traditional songs to relieve fatigue and tiredness. Other solemn hymns, sung by all the villagers, welcomed the victorious hunters on their return, praising the superior power that had enabled the hunt to succeed.

The oral tradition of the Makah reports that their whaling tradition has been suspended and re-established several times. More recently, the practice was put on hold in the 1920s.

After the gray whale was removed from the endangered species list, the Makah claimed their whaling rights. With the support and guidance of the US government and the International Whaling Commission, they successfully hunted a gray whale on May 17, 1999. Under federal law, the Makah have the right to hunt and kill a whale, generally a gray whale, every year. Archaeological records and oral history indicate that historically a significant number of humpback whales have been hunted but more than 70 years have passed without capturing any whales due to the previous federal ban.

[Sources: Wikipedia, www.makah.com]



Role card 2 – The High North Alliance

The High North Alliance (Norwegian: Høge Nord Alliansen) is an umbrella organization of several Nordic fishing and whaling organizations. The organization's objectives are, according to its statute, to "protect the rights of whalers, sealers and fishermen to gather renewable resources in accordance with the principle of their sustainable management".

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The alliance was founded in 1991 in response to calls from conservationists to ban commercial whaling and, by more radical groups, to ban the killing of marine mammals for any purpose. The alliance is organized by a steering committee of six members, three from Norway and one each from the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Iceland. The alliance is funded by membership fees and grants from organizations such as the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (founded by Norway, Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands in 1992) and the Regional Development Committee for Northern Norway.

The alliance's activities include lobbying the largely sympathetic Norwegian government to increase Norway's whaling quota, promoting studies on whaling methods more humane, pressurizing the International Whaling Commission (IWC) to ease the moratorium on whaling and respond to campaigns by anti-whaling groups such as the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society and Greenpeace.

[source: Wikipedia]

Role card 3 – Sea Shepherd

Sea Shepherd is an international non-profit organization whose mission is to stop the destruction of the natural habitat and the slaughter of wild species in the oceans of the whole world in order to conserve and protect the ecosystem and the different species.

Sea Shepherd uses direct action to investigate, document and act when necessary to show the world and prevent illegal activities on the high seas.

By safeguarding the delicate biodiversity of ocean ecosystems, Sea Shepherd works to ensure their survival for future generations.

The organization was founded in 1977 by Paul Watson, one of the three founders of Greenpeace, after concluding that bearing witness "with demeanor" to environmental disasters was an inadequate response when compared to applying the current international system of laws, regulations and treaties.

Contrary to Greenpeace, which has chosen to avoid damaging whaling ships in the ocean, the Sea Shepherd supports an intentional policy of sinking or sabotaging ships that are found guilty of violating international regulations on whaling. As a result, Greenpeace has officially repudiated any ties to Sea Shepherd and refused to help them in their work, declaring: "[...] we will not help people who have declared that they will use violence. We are here to save whales, and not to endanger people's lives."

Although accused of using violence, the members declared: "Towards the poachers we apply force to prevent them from continuing the crime. Not violence, only force." This statement is supported by the fact that, in several decades of activity, the members of the organization have not been legally convicted for their activities: "In all our actions we have never caused any injury to human beings and, when we acted, the ships were our only enemy."

One of Sea Shepherd's offices is in Friday Harbor (Washington state) and another in Melbourne (Australia) for operations in the Southern Hemisphere. It also has many offices of the so-called "land volunteers", who are involved in communication, training and fundraising. In Europe, the recognized locations are in Amsterdam (the Netherlands), in Paris (France) and in Milan (Italy).

Sea Shepherd intervenes with direct actions for the protection of marine wildlife such as seals, dolphins and whales. These include intelligence and documentation operations aimed at reporting hunting activities to the authorities in force, and informing the public about threats to biodiversity in the seas around the world through press campaigns. In addition to, at times, the sinking of fishing boats engaged in industrial fishing activities while they were moored in the port, the sabotage of ships also moored (e.g. the ramming of the Sierra ship for whaling in the port of Lisbon) and the capture, with consequent destruction, of fishing nets adrift in

the open ocean.

[Source: www.seasheperd.org, Wikipedia]

Role card 4 - Greenpeace

Greenpeace is an environmental and pacifist non-governmental organization founded in Vancouver in 1971.

Greenpeace is famous for its direct and non-violent action to defend the climate, the whales, the interruption of nuclear tests and the environment in general. In recent years, the organisation has been addressing other environmental issues such as global warming, genetic engineering and trawling. Greenpeace has national and regional offices in 41 countries, all affiliated with Greenpeace International, based in Amsterdam.

The organization is funded by individual contributions from about 2.8 million donors and non-profit foundations, but does not accept funds from governments, political parties or large corporations. It is not even a voluntary membership, as Greenpeace accepts donations but does not register members.

(From the Greenpeace mission, ed.)

[...] Greenpeace's work is based on a set of principles that are reflected in all our campaigns and guide whatever we do, wherever we do it.

Greenpeace is an independent organization, which uses a peaceful and creative confrontation to expose global environmental problems and develop solutions for a green and peaceful future.

Our goal is to ensure the earth's ability to nurture life in all its diversity.

That means we want:

- To protect biodiversity in all its forms
- To prevent pollution and abuse of the ocean, land, air and fresh water of the earth

- To put an end to all nuclear threats
- To promote peace, global disarmament and non-violence

Our core values:

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Personal responsibility and nonviolence

We act based of conscience. This means that we are responsible for our actions and take personal responsibility. We are committed to peace; all those who participate in a Greenpeace action are trained in nonviolence.

Independence

We do not accept money from governments, companies or political parties. Individual contributions, together with grants from foundations, are the only source of our funding.

Greenpeace has no permanent friends or enemies

If your government or company is willing to change, we will

work with you to achieve your goals. Reverse your course and we will be back. What matters is not words, but actions.

Promoting solutions

To us, pointing the finger is not enough; we develop, seek and promote concrete steps towards a green and peaceful future for all of us.

Principle of fundraising

At Greenpeace, we are honored that our work is almost entirely funded by donations, given to us by passionate people around the world who care about the planet and want to help us to create a change, and subsidies from private foundations that share our values.

Our independence is fundamental to being effective in our campaign work, which is why we consider it a fundamental principle that drives all our fundraising. We do not accept funding from governments, companies, political parties or intergovernmental organizations.

As Greenpeace, our success depends on building a movement of people with the courage and conviction to help build a better world. The strength of this movement, as well as the integrity and reputation of Greenpeace, depend on the ability of its employees to support and promote the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct.

The responsibility to uphold this integrity is shared and sustained by every member of the staff, in every NRO and in every country we operate in, while working with communities to promote a green and peaceful future for all of us.

This means we must have a solid structure to ensure that we are committed to creating a working environment in which people are not exposed to harassment, abuse or discrimination.

These standards are set out in our Code of Conduct which clarifies what people can expect from each other and what Greenpeace expects from them in terms of acceptable be-

havior. It establishes basic principles and common rules or standards, which alleviate doubts and give precise instructions for the conduct expected of the people of Greenpeace. These common principles and expectations are also set out in the employment contracts and related policies of each organization in our network.

(source: Wikipedia, www.greenpeace.com)

