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Human rights and the construction of identities in South African education

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The Questionnaire for Learners

This questionnaire is to be filled in by learners in Grade 9 doing Life Orientation and Human and Social Sciences learning areas. They are to be filled in individually by the learners themselves. This questionnaire is part of research project on human rights, democracy and citizenship education being conducted by some members of staff within the Education Department of the University of the Witwatersrand. We guarantee the anonymity and confidentiality of the institutions and individuals who participate in this research. We thank you in advance for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire

How old are you? .....years

Are you a boy or girl? Boy..... Girl.....

What race are you? African..... Coloured..... Indian..... White.....

(Authoritarianism)

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS BY SIMPLY CROSSING OUT THE OPTION OF YOUR CHOICE. EG.

Strongly agree ~~Agree~~ Depends Disagree Strongly disagree

i) Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn.
Strongly agree Agree Depends Disagree Strongly disagree

ii) What the youth needs most is strict discipline, rugged determination, and the will to work and fight for your family and country.
Strongly agree Agree Depends Disagree Strongly disagree

iii) Young people sometimes get rebellious ideas but as they grow up they ought to get over them.Strongly agree Agree Depends Disagree Strongly disagree

iv) What this country needs most, more than laws and political programs, is a few courageous, tireless leaders in whom the people can put their faith.
Strongly agree Agree Depends Disagree Strongly disagree

v) Sex crimes, such as rape and attacks on children, deserve more than mere imprisonment: such criminals ought to be publicly whipped, or worse.
Strongly agree Agree Depends Disagree Strongly disagree

vi)The businessmen and the manufacturers are much more important to society than the artist and the professor.
Strongly agree Agree Depends Disagree Strongly disagree

vii) For any group to succeed, it is most important to find an energetic, strict and just leader whom everybody should respect and obey.
Strongly agree Agree Depends Disagree Strongly disagree

viii) In every society there must be a leader whom all people would completely believe and whose decisions will be realised without objections.
Strongly agree Agree Depends Disagree Strongly disagree

(Opinions about Democracy)

i) The occurrence of multi-party systems has contributed more harm than good to our society.
Strongly agree Agree Depends Disagree Strongly disagree

ii) One should not allow certain people to vote.
Strongly agree Agree Depends Disagree Strongly disagree

iii) Although political democracy is important, it should be postponed for better times.
Strongly agree Agree Depends Disagree Strongly disagree

iv) Some political parties that exist today should be forbidden.
Strongly agree Agree Depends Disagree Strongly disagree

v) Democracy in politics results in fights and conflicts, and not in solutions of social problems.
Strongly agree Agree Depends Disagree Strongly disagree

vi) Democracy makes it possible for incompetent persons to have an impact on people's future.
Strongly agree Agree Depends Disagree Strongly disagree

vii) It is important that family matters are discussed jointly before decisions are taken.
Strongly agree Agree Depends Disagree Strongly disagree

viii) It is not realistic that common neighbourhood matters are decided upon directly by the residents.
Strongly agree Agree Depends Disagree Strongly disagree

ix) Employers do not need to consult the employees on important matters.
Strongly agree Agree Depends Disagree Strongly disagree

x) The method of referendum should not be used for policy making because ordinary people don't understand complicated issues.
Strongly agree Agree Depends Disagree Strongly disagree

xi) Students should not take part in decision-making in schools.
Strongly agree Agree Depends Disagree Strongly disagree

(Knowledge)

Please read the following questions and try to give correct answers.

1. Imagine that a man is accused of theft and he is on trial. During the trial it can't be proved that he is guilty, but on the other hand the man can't prove that he is innocent. What will happen?
a) he will be punished
b) he will be released
c) the decision will rely on the judge

2. A three-year-old cannot be accused of something in a trial; a 30-year-old person can. At what age can someone who is breaking the law be accused and undergo a trial?

   From ..... years.

3. What is the minimum age for someone to be married?

   From ..... years

4. Until what age are parents obliged by law to support their children?

   Until the child is ..... years old.

5. At what age can someone get a driving licence?

   At minimum ..... years.

6. Who makes the laws in the country? Choose as many answers as you wish.

   Parliament Courts President Other

7. What do you think human rights mean?

8. What do you think children rights mean?

9. Are you aware of the human rights in the new South African Constitution?
   Yes No
   Can you give more detail eg. What are you aware of? What do you think about it?

10. What do you think 'rights' mean?

11. Do you think that 'rights' always come with 'responsibilities'?
Yes No
Can you give an example of 'rights' that include 'responsibilities'.

12. Who do think has the role to make sure that people's 'rights' are protected?

13. Why do you think people have elections in their countries?

14. Do you think racists should have the right to vote in the country's elections?
Yes No
Why?

15. Are you a member of a club, society or organisation?
Yes No
Give details

16. Are you a member of your SRC?
Yes No
What is you role in it?

17. Who makes the decisions in your group or organisation? Choose one of the following:
The group as a whole
a) Only some people do
b) Only one person does
c) Only the chairperson does

18. Do you think it is important for people to belong to some group or organisation?
Yes No

19. Which of the following groups or organisations would you support? You may choose to support as many of the following groups or organisations as you want.

A women's group
Will Support Neutral Will not Support
A group for disabled people
Will Support Neutral Will not Support
A group for homeless children
Will Support Neutral Will not Support
A group that wants to protect the environment
Will Support Neutral Will not Support
A group to fight against crime
Will Support Neutral Will not Support
A group for sports development
Will Support Neutral Will not Support
A group for the development of Arts
Will Support Neutral Will not Support
A group for the development of African culture
Will Support Neutral Will not Support
A group for gay and lesbian rights
Will Support Neutral Will not Support
A group for the assistance of the aged or elderly
Will Support Neutral Will not Support
A group for people who are dying of incurable diseases
Will Support Neutral Will not Support
An anti-war group
Will Support Neutral Will not Support
Will support another group. Specify which group.

(Preferences/Values)

In politics it is not always possible to obtain everything one might wish. Below are several different objectives. Rank them from 1 (the most important to you) to 5 (the least important to you).

_____ Maintaining order in the nation
_____ Giving people more say in the decisions of the government
_____ Fighting rising prices
_____ Protecting individual freedoms
_____ Providing a decent standard of living for everyone

(Semantic differential)

Instruction: Every word heard provokes some feeling in us, and has a particular meaning. Here we investigate what different words mean for different people, which feeling is provoked by them. For example, the word SEA provokes the feeling of pleasure in some people, but for someone else this word may be unpleasant.
What a particular word does for someone can be measured on one line with 5 sections. The ends of the line assign opposite things, opposite attributes, for example:

pleasant _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ unpleasant

Starting from the beginning of the line, from the left side, the first segment means something most pleasant, and the second segment something less pleasant. In the middle is the neutral feeling, i.e. neither pleasant nor unpleasant. We will present you with two opposite attributes which can describe the particular word; put the sign X on one of five lines to describe as precisely as possible what this word means to you. Work quickly, give simply your first impression.

SCHOOL	pleasant	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	unpleasant
	good	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	bad
	nice	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	ugly
	important	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	unimportant
	bright	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	dark
	strong	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	weak
POLICEMAN	pleasant	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	unpleasant
	good	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	bad
	nice	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	ugly
	important	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	inumportant
	bright	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	dark
	strong	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	weak

WEALTH	pleasant	____	____	____	____	____	unpleasant
	good	____	____	____	____	____	bad
	nice	____	____	____	____	____	ugly
	important	____	____	____	____	____	unimportant
	bright	____	____	____	____	____	dark
	strong	____	____	____	____	____	weak
DEMOCRACY	pleasant	____	____	____	____	____	unpleasant
	good	____	____	____	____	____	bad
	nice	____	____	____	____	____	ugly
	important	____	____	____	____	____	unimportant
	bright	____	____	____	____	____	dark
	strong	____	____	____	____	____	weak

(Basic concepts and attitudes)

Now you will read a story, which is invented of course, but slightly possible. It is like a fairy tale, try to enter into the story as much as you can.

Imagine that one day one thousand persons from all over the world were dissatisfied with the lives they were living until this day, and they all went to a big deserted island and decided to establish/found a new community where they would live.
There were many different people on the island, young, old and with all kinds of occupations. Because they had settled, a question was raised regarding how to organise their community life.

In the following text of this questionnaire, you will become familiarised with different problems that people on the island were discussing. The most interesting thing here is what kind of solutions you would suggest in the situations given; in general what kind of opinion you have about different questions. There are no wrong or correct answers! Every reply is good. Please, read carefully and answer all questions. If you need some clarification, please ask for help!

Some people were talking about the necessity of laws which everybody would have to follow, others were saying that no laws were necessary. What is your opinion; is it necessary to have some laws or not (cross one answer)?

it is necessary to have laws
it would be good, but it is not necessary
there should be just a few, most basic, laws
no laws are necessary

What do you think, is it sometimes acceptable to break the law: (a) Yes (b) No

Why do you think so?

If you think that it is acceptable to break the law, can you write in what situations (occasions) this is acceptable?

People on the island decided that decisions, at least at the start, should be reached by voting and that they should accept the opinion that wins. But there are some questions regarding whether all who live on the island should have the right to vote and influence decisions or not. What is your opinion? Should some persons, based on their age, occupation, personal characteristics or any similar, be forbidden to vote? If there are such persons, write down, according to your opinion, who should not take part in voting for important decisions.

Some people had the opinion that the place where they were going to live had to be DEMOCRATIC. Some people thought this was not so important, and others were against such a suggestion. Before we ask you what you think about this, it is very interesting to know how what your notion of democracy is. Describe how a society should be if it is democratic:

What, in your opinion, should never exist in a society which is democratic?

What, in your opinion, is the opposite of democracy?

Let's go back to the story about the island. What would you say? (Cross one answer)

a) The society that they are creating should be democratic
b) That question is not so important now
c) There are better options than democracy

Imagine that people agreed to have laws. The most interesting part was when several laws were suggested. Now it was time to criticise or speak for a certain law. There were many suggestions. What follows is just a selection of the discussions.

There were many arguments about freedom of speech and media, because there were plans at the island, just as everywhere else in the world, that they should have their own newspaper, publish books, have radio and television.

Should it be allowed for every person to write and to way whatever she or he wants? Some were positive to this, but there were others who thought that some regulations have to exist.

Would you allow everyone to write whatever that person wants, or would you not?

(a) I would allow (b) I would not allow

If you were to make some limits, what would not be allowed to be written or told?

There were many opinions and long discussions about some food that was very tasteful, but dangerous for health. Should such food be forbidden or not? There were many suggestions; here are some examples:

a) It should be forbidden for all to eat this food
b) Everybody should be informed that the food is harmful to the health, and then everybody decides if she or he wants to eat it or not

What is your opinion about this?

One of the suggestions was that a law should be established which forbade lies, and that everyone who is caught lying will be punished by means of a penalty. Would yo u be for or against such a law?

(a) For (b) Against

Why?

On the island there were schools. The discussions were about if primary schooling should be compulsory, or only for those who wanted to go to school. What is your opinion?

a) All children have to go to school
b) The children should decide for themselves if they want to go to school or not
c) The parents should be asked if they want to send their children to school or not

Can you please answer why you have answered the way you have?

Suppose you have a parent who says "My son is going to go into my business anyway, and (s)he doesn't need much schooling for that". Do you think his/her son should be required to go to school anyway? (a) Yes (b) No

Why?

Imagine that a president is chosen on the island; he has shown that he is successful in his leadership role. In order to solve some problems that have occurred on the island, he is planning to take some actions. But these actions do not correspond with the laws on the island. What is he supposed to do in this situation?

a) He has to respect the law and give up the planned actions
b) He should respect the law, but it is not so serious if he breaks the law
c) He should create new laws which suit him, and then he should respect and follow them
d) If he is without any doubt that he will solve the problems, he does not have to consider the laws.

There are lots of different people on our island. Do you think they should all have the same rights as everyone else, or should they be treated differently? Please put a sign (X) for every group, to show how you think they should be treated.

They should have	More rights and freedoms than everyone else	Exactly the same as everyone else	Fewer rights and freedoms than everyone else	I don't know
Very rich people and their families	____	____	____	____
Physically handicapped	____	____	____	____
People who are against democracy	____	____	____	____
Homosexuals	____	____	____	____
Famous artists and scientists	____	____	____	____
Great politicians	____	____	____	____
People of different gender	____	____	____	____
People of different races	____	____	____	____
People of different religions	____	____	____	____

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The following are telephone numbers that you may also use to contact us in this regard.

011-716-5248
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Thank you so much for spending the time to complete and return this questionnaire. Your cooperation is highly appreciated.