

The group could do some research into reproductive rights in your country. Following that, they could hold interviews with both women and employers to find out how the legislation works in practice.

The group could also review the sex education that is taught in their country. Does it cover all aspects of reproductive rights?

If you want to explore other types of discrimination in the workplace you may like to do the activity, "Different wages", on page 135.

Ideas for Action

Take up issues about reproductive rights at your school or association council.

Investigate which local NGOs are working for women's reproductive rights and participate in their debates and campaigns.

Further information

The convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women

Aside from civil rights issues, the Convention also devotes major attention to a most vital concern of women, namely their reproductive rights. The preamble sets the tone by stating that "the role of women in procreation should not be a basis for discrimination".

The link between discrimination and women's reproductive role is a matter of recurrent concern in the Convention. For example, it advocates, in article 5, "a proper understanding of maternity as a social function", demanding fully shared responsibility for child-rearing by both sexes. Accordingly, provisions for maternity protection and child-care are proclaimed as essential rights and are incorporated into all areas of the Convention, whether dealing with employment, family law, health care or education. Society's obligation extends to offering social services, especially child-care facilities that allow individuals to combine family responsibilities with work and participation in public life. Special measures for maternity protection are recommended and "shall not be considered discriminatory".

(Article 4) The Convention also affirms women's right to reproductive choice. Notably, it is the only human rights treaty to mention family planning. It states that parties are obliged to include advice on family planning in the education process (article 10.h) and to develop family codes that guarantee women's rights "to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights" (article 16.e).

Handouts

The scenario

Maria has been unemployed for almost a year and is looking hard for a job. Ten days ago she went for an interview for her dream job – it was exactly what she was looking for! Everything went well and she was offered the position. The company asked her to have a meeting with Mr. Wladstock, the personnel officer, in order to sign her contract. She had already discussed her duties and other job-related issues at the interview. Just as Maria was about to sign the contract, Mr. Wladstock said that a condition of the job was that she signs a declaration that she will not have a baby for the next two years.

KEY DATE



15 May
International Day
of Families



www.un.org/womenwatch