

Introduction

All about EHL

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Exploring Humanitarian Law

Introduction



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Introduction

Throughout the world, young people are increasingly affected by wars and other situations of violence – as victims, as armed actors or as bystanders. Beyond the impact that such events have on them today, young people are also tomorrow's decision-makers, military leaders, combatants, humanitarian workers or civilian casualties. They have a stake in learning about the ethical and humanitarian issues that arise during wars and other situations of violence. These issues are relevant and meaningful for young people everywhere, and teachers play a critical role in helping their students explore them.

We have a choice today. We can either sit back, watch the devastation wrought by war and try to make our children look the other way; or we can choose to tell our children that what they see – or what they are themselves experiencing – is not acceptable, that this is not how it is supposed to be, and that they can behave differently, in ways inspired by deep-rooted respect for human dignity, both in peacetime and in the midst of armed conflict.

– Jacques Forster, Vice-President,
International Committee of the Red Cross

ABOUT EXPLORING HUMANITARIAN LAW

Exploring Humanitarian Law (EHL) is an education programme that introduces young people between 13 and 18 years of age to the basic rules and principles of international humanitarian law (IHL). The learning materials, which are based on both historical and contemporary situations, show how IHL aims to protect life and human dignity during armed conflict and to prevent and reduce the suffering and the devastation caused by war.

The teaching methods used in EHL require students to play an active role in the process of learning. This enables them to develop a practical 'humanitarian' perspective and to understand a subject as seemingly dry, and complex, as IHL.

EHL examines the devastation caused by war by making use of case studies and by building upon students' own experiences and ways of thinking. The case studies describe the behaviour of actual people who are caught up in situations where humanitarian action is required. By studying these situations, students develop a new perspective and begin to understand the need for rules to protect life and human dignity during war.

The EHL education materials were developed by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in association with Education Development Center, Inc. They can be used in school – within an academic subject or as extra-curricular activities – and in non-formal educational settings.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND HUMANITARIAN LAW

EHL is based on the premise that learning about IHL is relevant, meaningful, and useful for young people in all societies. The subject is pertinent and timely everywhere – regardless of a particular country's experience of armed conflict or other situations of violence – for a number of reasons:

- Armed conflicts or other situations of violence are taking place in many parts of the world today, and growing numbers of young people are affected by them.
- Many societies appear to be becoming more susceptible to violence in various forms.
- Young people, in greater numbers than ever, are exposed to media coverage of such violence as well as to forms of entertainment that play down the effects of violence.
- In times of acute social and political tension, such as post-conflict situations or periods of social reconstruction, education programmes like EHL may have an indirect pacifying effect.
- States party to the Geneva Conventions are required, both in peacetime and during war, to spread knowledge of IHL as widely as possible.

Developing an understanding of the humanitarian issues that arise in times of conflict is essential in the effort to prevent and limit violations of IHL, and of the 'hard core' of human rights, in the future.

LEARNING GOALS

The primary learning goal of EHL is to help young people embrace the principles of humanity in their daily lives. In particular, it fosters:

- understanding of the need to respect life and human dignity, especially in times of armed conflict;
- understanding of humanitarian issues and of the various aspects of IHL as well as the complexities of its application;
- interest in current events and the capacity to view conflicts at home and abroad from a humanitarian perspective;
- involvement in community service or other activities that serve the most vulnerable members of society.



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EHL contributes to developing social awareness in young people and sharpens their sense of civic responsibility. The teaching materials emphasize the importance of protecting life and human dignity during armed conflict and, by extension, at all times. The programme makes a distinctive contribution to citizenship education.

METHODOLOGY

As its title, Exploring Humanitarian Law, suggests, 'exploring' is the main pedagogical approach used in the programme. Students, guided by their teacher, define their thoughts and reach answers together. The word exploration implies unfamiliar territory and a search for new or better ways. Students may take different paths and reach different conclusions. Sometimes there is no single right answer; sometimes it takes the diversity of opinion within a group to develop solutions.

Helping students explore humanitarian law may require a new approach from teachers. Teachers are exploring perceptions, attitudes and new content along with their students. This is a new experience for many teachers, who are trained to be experts in a particular area. In EHL, the teacher's role is to mentor students as they explore the subject; he or she is not required to have all the answers.

NOTE For more information on the methodology used in the EHL programme, consult the *Methodology Guide*.

Strengthening academic and life skills

EHL teaches and strengthens many important academic skills. Students improve their communication skills by listening, reading and writing, and in discussions, debates and group work. They sharpen their analytical and research skills by identifying consequences, solving problems and analysing dilemmas. EHL uses a variety of teaching methods proven to promote critical thinking: requiring students to justify their ideas, probing for reasoning strategies, confronting students with alternatives and with thought-provoking queries and asking open-ended questions.

The programme helps students develop the ability to make sound choices that can prevent violence and high-risk behaviour. Although EHL is not intrinsically a life-skills programme, it does strengthen these skills as a natural consequence of the subjects taught and of the way learning takes place.

CONTENT OF EHL

EHL is a sequential course consisting of 22 explorations – the equivalent of 36 classroom sessions of 45 minutes each. Students are introduced to the humanitarian perspective, before examining specific IHL provisions. The explorations have been carefully designed to engage students' minds as well as their emotions.

NOTE You do not need to be an expert in IHL to teach EHL effectively. The teacher resources included in the various explorations provide background information on many of the topics covered in EHL. The *IHL Guide* provides additional IHL content in a straightforward question and answer format.



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INTRODUCTORY EXPLORATION: IMAGES AND PERCEPTIONS

In the introductory exploration, students discuss their initial responses to a number of questions related to armed conflict; they will tackle these questions throughout the programme. In particular, they explore the guiding question: What is human dignity?

MODULE 1: THE HUMANITARIAN PERSPECTIVE

Exploration 1A: What can bystanders do?

Exploration 1B: Looking at humanitarian acts

Exploration 1C: A bystander's dilemma

In Module 1 students learn to look at the world from a particular perspective. They examine humanitarian acts performed by ordinary people and learn about the role that bystanders can play in shaping events. They study the risks, obstacles and dilemmas that bystanders may face when trying to protect someone's life or dignity. The first module enables students to understand that they too, as bystanders, can have an impact on events.

MODULE 2: LIMITS IN ARMED CONFLICT

Exploration 2A: Limiting the devastation of war

Exploration 2B: Codes and traditions over time

Exploration 2C: Focus on child soldiers

Exploration 2D: Focus on weapons

Exploration 2E: Widespread availability of weapons

In Module 2 students discuss whether rules are needed to regulate armed conflict and, if they are, what form they should take. As a result of what they have learned in the preceding explorations, most students realize that such a need exists and suggest rules for protecting life and human dignity in times of war. They then study the basic rules of IHL and compare them with their own suggestions. This raises a question: Why do people, all too often, violate the rules of IHL in times of war?

MODULE 3: THE LAW IN ACTION

Exploration 3A: Identifying violations of IHL

Exploration 3B: From the perspective of combatants

Exploration 3C: Who is responsible for respecting IHL?

Exploration 3D: A case study: My Lai – What went wrong? What went right?

Module 3 provides an answer to this by considering the dilemmas combatants might face in real-life situations and the difficulties they might have in respecting the

law. Students discuss the answers to questions they usually raise early in the programme: What can be done to ensure greater respect for IHL, and who is responsible for ensuring that IHL is respected? Then they ask whether dealing with violations of IHL is important, and if it is, how to go about it.

MODULE 4: DEALING WITH VIOLATIONS

Exploration 4A: Rationales and options for dealing with IHL violations

Exploration 4B: Judicial options

Exploration 4C: Non-judicial options

Module 4 addresses these questions and draws attention to the growing efforts to ensure that there are ways to deal with IHL violations. This is an important step in the learning process as students are likely to question the value of IHL if violations of its rules are not dealt with. Students are also likely to be interested in the issue of coping with the consequences of armed conflict.

MODULE 5: RESPONDING TO THE CONSEQUENCES OF ARMED CONFLICT

Exploration 5A: Needs that arise from the devastation of war

Exploration 5B: Planning a camp for people displaced by war

Exploration 5C: Focus on protecting prisoners

Exploration 5D: Focus on restoring family links

Exploration 5E: Ethics of humanitarian action

In Module 5 students study the devastation caused by war, the efforts needed to respond to it and the dilemmas humanitarian organizations might face while doing so. Then they reflect on the following questions: What can they do to promote human dignity? What can they do to make a difference?

CLOSING EXPLORATION: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The closing exploration invites students to take action by developing small projects of their own.

NOTE The Course Matrix at the end of this brochure gives an overview of each module by setting out the skills practised, the guiding questions, and the concepts, explorations, objectives and key ideas.



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EHL MATERIALS



The **EHL resource pack for teachers** contains all the materials for teaching the programme: all the Modules in separate brochures, the Methodology Guide, and the Glossary.

The Modules

EHL is divided into five **modules**, framed by an introductory exploration and a closing exploration. Every module:

- is organized around a central theme;
- contains three or more explorations;
- raises key guiding questions; and
- outlines the skills and concepts that students will learn.

The modules contain detailed lesson plans for each **exploration**. These lesson plans are divided into **steps** with durations suggested for each; they also contain objectives, student and teacher resources and tips for preparing the lesson. Sidebars containing pertinent quotations or notes that can enhance the exploration are included in the margins of the lesson plans.

- **Extension activities** are assignments for students that you may select, depending on your students' interests, their age and the time available. They address students directly.
-  **Teacher resources** are reference materials. They are not required reading, but will help you to become more familiar with some of the topics covered in EHL.
-  **Student resources** consist of a range of materials related to the various exercises. They include stories, photos, data and background information, photo collages, case studies, video transcripts and worksheets. Student resources have a distinctive horizontal orientation, which allows for easier reading and visualizing.
- **Media pages** contain suggestions for student assignments. They appear at the end of each module.
- **Assessment** sections at the end of each module suggest ways to evaluate student learning.
- **Web resources** at the end of each module contain links to useful online resources for both teachers and students.

The Methodology Guide

The Methodology Guide is a manual to assist teachers in their preparation for teaching EHL; it emphasizes the teacher's role in EHL. It sets out a range of teaching methods, with workshops to help teachers to familiarize themselves with these methods and with the classroom activities used.

The Glossary

The Glossary provides a set of definitions of IHL-related terms and of various other terms used in EHL.

INSERTING EHL INTO THE CURRICULUM

One of the most difficult aspects of implementing EHL is finding a stable place for it in the secondary school (or upper primary, ages 13 to 15) curriculum. In many countries, the secondary school curriculum is already quite full.

While it is theoretically possible to integrate EHL across the curriculum, most ministries of education would find it impracticable: it is a complex and expensive process that would necessitate the training of large number of teachers. In countries where teachers are comparatively free to choose what to teach, the potential for including EHL in the curriculum is correspondingly great.

The broad range of historical and contemporary examples of armed conflict used in the programme and the fundamental ethical questions it raises naturally link EHL to academic subjects such as history, social studies, sociology, geography, civics, philosophy and law. There are also links with newer subjects such as citizenship education, human rights education and peace education, which may be offered across the curriculum. Finally, literature or language arts courses may also be suited to the discussion-based approach and active pedagogies on which EHL is based.

To facilitate the integration of EHL in the curriculum, it is important to tie the content of the programme to national objectives and existing practice. Countries define academic subjects in a number of different ways, for example, in terms of learning goals, performance standards, syllabus requirements, and general themes. In some countries, the period of change and innovation associated with the introduction of new subjects may provide an opening for inserting EHL into the curriculum.



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EHL can be offered in a shortened form and adapted to the needs of a particular school system or group of students. It is important that ministries of education consider the teacher-training implications of any choice they make in this regard: to that end, it is recommended that, where possible, EHL be included within one academic subject.

USING EHL IN THE CLASSROOM

As each exploration is designed to fit within 45-minute class sessions, EHL modules and explorations can be used as independent units in the subjects mentioned above.

Deciding what to teach

You will need to decide the extent to which you are going to make use of EHL in your class. If you cannot teach the entire programme, choose the explorations you want to teach. Base your decision on the time available, the requirements of your curriculum and the needs and interests of your students. The flexibility of EHL allows you to make choices that fit students' learning objectives and the time constraints.

A short pathway of explorations has been designed for those teachers who are not in a position to teach the entire EHL course. It follows the sequence of EHL instruction and includes the core skills and concepts, enabling students to gain a true understanding of IHL and all the complexities of its application.

NOTE For more information on the short pathway, consult the *Methodology Guide*.

The short pathway consists of nine explorations (14 classroom sessions):

Introductory exploration

Exploration 1A: What can bystanders do?

Exploration 1B: Looking at humanitarian acts

Exploration 1C: A bystander's dilemma


Exploration 2A: Limiting the devastation of war

Exploration 2C: Focus on child soldiers

Exploration 3A: Identifying violations of IHL

Exploration 4A: Rationales and options for dealing with IHL violations

Exploration 5A: Needs that arise from the devastation of war

You can find your way through the short pathway of explorations by looking for this icon: 

Selecting appropriate learning materials

A variety of materials has been provided and teachers may select those most appropriate for their classes. As they will be aware of potentially sensitive issues and wish to respect the personal boundaries of their students, teachers may choose to avoid particular case studies for cultural, religious or other reasons. Some materials may be better suited to more mature students.

Teachers may choose to use examples from local history to provide a sense of nearness for their students. Before introducing examples of your own, it may be helpful to first work with the original materials to understand how they contribute to the learning goals that have been set out. Once you are familiar with the original materials, you will be in a better position to choose appropriate substitutes. When adapting materials it is important that you avoid focusing on the perpetrators of violations and that you ensure that the changes or additions that you make reflect the spirit of IHL and of humanitarian values.

NOTE For more information on adapting the programme materials to your needs, consult the *Methodology Guide*.



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Some teachers may wish to avoid using controversial examples taken from local history as they might evoke extremely strong reactions that obscure the IHL content or disrupt the learning process. It is important that students be able to look at issues objectively. Experience has shown that students will often spontaneously refer to examples closer to home once they have examined examples taken from far-away contexts.

Duration of lessons

As you familiarize yourself with the materials and begin to structure your own EHL course, bear in mind that the time indications given for each step are only suggestions. Some class discussions or activities may exceed the allotted time, while others might take less time than suggested. If a discussion or activity takes longer than planned, you will have to decide whether to stop it or to let it go on. Assigning some activities for homework is one way of saving class time.

Classroom resources

The EHL materials can be used effectively with only a minimum of classroom resources. Photocopies of the student resources included in the EHL resource pack for teachers and a board where you can record notes are virtually all you need to make the content of EHL accessible to your students. If it is not possible to watch the student videos, the video transcripts and photos that are provided will serve as adequate substitutes.

USING EHL OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

You can also teach EHL outside the classroom, as an after-school programme, perhaps in conjunction with a history or current events discussion group, or with a debating club or community group. In addition, the EHL materials can be used in out-of-school settings such as summer camps, youth development programmes and scouting or summer recreation programmes.

PREPARING TO TEACH EHL

The most effective preparation for teaching EHL is to participate in face-to-face teacher-training workshops. Once a country has adopted EHL, the education authorities are likely to organize such workshops, often in cooperation with National Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies.

To use the EHL materials effectively, teachers should understand the humanitarian perspective that underlies IHL, the complexities of maintaining this perspective during armed conflict and the rules of IHL themselves. Teachers may also need to widen their teaching approach to include more interactive methods.

A specially designed set of ten EHL teacher-training workshops introduces teachers to the concepts and methods used in the programme, and to its exploratory perspective. These workshops give teachers an opportunity to discuss issues, practise new teaching and assessment skills, adapt lesson plans to specific classroom situations and work with other teachers.

Like most students, teachers learn by doing; the activities they explore during these workshops tend to be the ones they will use in class. The teacher-training programme enables teachers to engage one another in discussions, role-playing exercises and dilemma analyses.

If you cannot participate in a face-to-face teacher-training workshop, then you can follow the teacher-training online, at the EHL Virtual Campus (see below). All ten workshops are available online. If you choose this option, it is best to do the workshops with other teachers. If you do not have access to the Internet, you can also work through the teacher-training workshops in the *Methodology Guide*.

THE EHL VIRTUAL CAMPUS

The EHL Virtual Campus is a web-based resource centre and online community for the EHL programme, which connects you with teachers from around the world. The website's function is to help teachers as they introduce the basic principles of IHL to young people. A wide range of teaching resources is available: all the modules and explorations (12 of them are given expanded treatment in the form of 'e-explorations'), workshops, training videos and an online discussion forum. All EHL materials can be downloaded from the EHL Virtual Campus website at www.ehl.icrc.org

Course matrix



EHL concepts	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • basic needs • bystander • chains of consequences • civilian/combatant distinction • community strengths and resources • consequences* • dilemmas* • enforcement • human dignity* • humanitarian act • illegal order • impartiality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implementation • independence • indiscriminate weapons and weapons causing unnecessary suffering • limits in armed conflict • multiple perspectives* • needs of children • neutrality • non-combatants (civilians, combatants who are <i>hors de combat</i>) • non-material needs • obstacles to humanitarian behaviour*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • project goal • protection • refugees and other displaced persons • relationship between humanitarian law and human rights law • ripple effect • social pressure • target population • violation of IHL • war crime • youth mobilization 	
Skills practised	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessing needs • assessing projects • brainstorming • dilemma analysis • disagreeing respectfully • discussion • estimating effort • estimating scope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying consequences • identifying problems • identifying solutions • keeping records • legal reasoning • listening • perspective taking • planning actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • problem analysis • role-playing • story analysis • story-telling • supporting opinions with reasons • tracing consequences • working in groups

*in all modules

The Modules

Course matrix



Module	Guiding questions	Concepts	Explorations	Objectives	Key ideas
INTRODUCTORY EXPLORATION	<p>What are your images of armed conflict?</p> <p>What do you think of attempts to limit the suffering that results from it?</p> <p>What is human dignity?</p>	<p>Limits in armed conflict</p> <p>Human dignity</p>	Images and perceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to be aware of central questions underlying international humanitarian law (IHL) to be aware that there are no easy answers to some questions that may come up while exploring IHL to construct a preliminary definition of human dignity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept of human dignity is central to humanitarian law and will be revisited throughout Exploring Humanitarian Law (EHL). Some of the questions that arise in EHL have no single right answer or indeed any easy answers. One of the aims of EHL is to identify such questions and explore them.
MODULE 1 The humanitarian perspective	<p>What is a 'bystander'?</p> <p>What dilemmas do bystanders face?</p> <p>What effects can bystanders have?</p> <p>What is a humanitarian act?</p>	<p>Bystander</p> <p>Humanitarian act</p> <p>Social pressure</p>	1A: What can bystanders do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to understand the effect a bystander can have upon the actions of others to be aware of examples of bystanders acting in situations of violence to protect life or human dignity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ordinary people can, in times of violence, act to protect the life or human dignity of people they may not know or they would not ordinarily be inclined to help or protect. Bystanders often act despite possible personal risk or loss. Ordinary people everywhere have confronted inhumane behaviour to protect others who are at risk.

The Modules

Course matrix



Module	Guiding questions	Concepts	Explorations	Objectives	Key ideas
MODULE 1 The humanitarian perspective (continued)			1B: Looking at humanitarian acts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to understand the concept of a humanitarian act to understand how social pressure has an influence on what is done in those situations where someone's life or human dignity is at risk to be able to identify humanitarian acts in the news and in everyday life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A humanitarian act is done to protect someone whose life or human dignity is in danger, especially someone whom one would not ordinarily be inclined to help or protect. Such acts are likely to involve personal risk or loss. Performing a humanitarian act may be difficult in some social contexts, particularly when it involves a person who is considered to be part of an 'enemy' group.
			1C: A bystander's dilemma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize the complexity of a bystander's situation when he or she is witnessing a threat to life or human dignity. to learn how to analyse a dilemma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In many humanitarian acts, people face a dilemma of choosing whether or not to protect someone's life or human dignity when doing so may involve personal risk or cost to themselves or to those they are trying to protect. Either choice can have complex and long-term consequences for all involved.

Course matrix



The Modules

Module	Guiding questions	Concepts	Explorations	Objectives	Key ideas
MODULE 2 Limits in armed conflict	What limits are needed in war and why? Where do these limits come from? How do laws to limit war develop?	Limits in armed conflict Non-combatants (civilians, combatants who are <i>hors de combat</i>) Relationship between humanitarian law and human rights law Protection Needs of children Indiscriminate weapons and weapons causing unnecessary suffering Ripple effect	2A: Limiting the devastation of war	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to understand some of the reasons why rules are needed in armed conflict to understand how IHL and human rights law complement each other to learn and understand some of the basic rules of IHL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IHL aims to protect the lives and human dignity of people affected by armed conflict and to limit the suffering caused by war. It is a set of international rules that restricts the means and methods of warfare and protects those who are not or are no longer fighting. Human rights law also aims to protect life and human dignity. While IHL is specifically designed for armed conflicts, it does not replace human rights law, which applies at all times; the two bodies of law are complementary.
			2B: Codes and traditions over time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to become aware that, in many places and during many periods, people have created codes and applied traditions to limit the devastation caused by war to learn of some written and unwritten examples of historical prohibitions and requirements to show the relationship between the realities of war and the evolution of humanitarian norms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People's efforts to limit the brutality of war are universal. History contains numerous examples of rules that aim to restrain the use of violence in order to reduce unnecessary suffering and destruction.

The Modules



Course matrix

Module	Guiding questions	Concepts	Explorations	Objectives	Key ideas
MODULE 2 Limits in armed conflict (continued)			2C: Focus on child soldiers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to become aware of the scope of the practices of recruiting and using boys and girls in war and the consequences of these practices to understand the need for a minimum age for the recruitment and use of children in war to learn that both IHL and human rights law prohibit the recruitment and use of children under 15 in armed conflict and that many countries have formally accepted a new law that raises this age limit to 18 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children must be protected in armed conflicts. One form of protection is setting and respecting a minimum age for recruiting children into armed forces or groups or using them in armed conflict. Under IHL and human rights law, a person under the age of 15 may not be recruited by armed forces or groups or used for any purpose in armed conflict. A more recent law raises this minimum age to 18 years.
			2D: Focus on weapons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to explore what indiscriminate weapons and weapons causing unnecessary suffering are and to study some examples to understand why there are restrictions on the use of certain weapons in war to look at some specific IHL rules on weapons to see how public opinion may contribute to developing IHL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IHL restricts the use of some weapons in war because they are indiscriminate or because they cause unnecessary suffering. Anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war are important humanitarian concerns because they keep killing long after wars have ended. Mobilization of popular opinion may contribute to the development of international law.



The Modules

Course matrix



Module	Guiding questions	Concepts	Explorations	Objectives	Key ideas
MODULE 2 Limits in armed conflict (continued)			2E: Widespread availability of weapons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize that one of the major threats to civilians in armed conflicts today comes from small arms and light weapons to consider how the easy access to weapons and ammunition by a variety of groups makes it more difficult to ensure respect for IHL to understand that governments have a responsibility to control the availability of weapons to consider ideas for action at the local, national and international levels for reducing uncontrolled availability and misuse of weapons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The widespread availability and misuse of small arms pose a threat to civilians and make it more difficult to ensure respect for IHL. A comprehensive approach is needed to address the problem. This includes measures to restrict the availability of weapons, to decrease their misuse and to reduce the vulnerability of victims.
MODULE 3 The law in action	<p>Which rules are most often violated and why?</p> <p>What dilemmas do combatants face?</p> <p>Who is responsible for respecting IHL?</p>	<p>Violation of IHL</p> <p>Civilian/ combatant distinction</p> <p>Chains of consequences</p>	3A: Identifying violations of IHL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to be able to identify violations of IHL to recognize examples of the way in which one violation leads to another 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Violations of IHL often set off a chain reaction, leading to further violations. People give various reasons for the violations of IHL that take place. There are several ways to prevent violations of IHL and to limit their consequences.

The Modules

Course matrix



Module	Guiding questions	Concepts	Explorations	Objectives	Key ideas
MODULE 3 The law in action (continued)			3B: From the perspective of combatants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to be able to recognize dilemmas that may arise in combat situations to understand the difficulties in respecting IHL when the difference between combatants and civilians is unclear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following the rules of IHL in situations of armed conflict sometimes creates dilemmas. Dilemmas may result from the difficulty of distinguishing between combatants and civilians. Sometimes people blur the distinction intentionally, and sometimes it is blurred when fighting takes place in residential areas. If there is any doubt about the civilian status of a person or an object, that person or object shall be considered a civilian.
			3C: Who is responsible for respecting IHL?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to understand who is responsible for making sure that the rules of IHL are respected to identify how this responsibility is fulfilled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For IHL to be respected, many people have different responsibilities to fulfil; although a single person can violate IHL, it takes the combined efforts of government officials, commanding officers and individual soldiers to ensure that IHL is respected.

Course matrix



The Modules

Module	Guiding questions	Concepts	Explorations	Objectives	Key ideas
MODULE 3 The law in action (continued)			3D: A case study: My Lai - What went wrong? What went right?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to learn about some of the factors that could lead to serious violations of IHL to identify a range of dilemmas soldiers may face in making the 'right' choice on the battlefield to recognize the differing responsibilities of commanding officers and ordinary soldiers for violations of IHL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinguishing between civilians and military targets is fundamental in implementing IHL. Commanders must not give, and ordinary soldiers must not obey, unlawful orders. Respecting and ensuring respect for IHL is the obligation of all those involved in fighting.
MODULE 4 Dealing with violations	<p>Why is dealing with violations important?</p> <p>In what ways can violations be addressed?</p>	<p>Implementation</p> <p>Enforcement</p> <p>Civilian/ combatant distinction</p> <p>Social pressure</p> <p>War crime</p>	4A: Rationales for and options for dealing with IHL violations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to understand how dealing – or not dealing – with IHL violations can affect the well-being of a society after armed conflict to recognize that there are a number of ways of dealing with IHL violations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who commit grave breaches of IHL must be tried and punished. The responsibility for enforcing IHL lies primarily with governments, but others can play a significant role as well. Bringing perpetrators to trial is not the only way to deal with violations of IHL.

The Modules

Course matrix



Module	Guiding questions	Concepts	Explorations	Objectives	Key ideas
MODULE 4 Dealing with violations (continued)			4B: Judicial options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize that States must bring to trial those who commit grave breaches of IHL, regardless of the nationality of the perpetrator or the victim or where the crime took place to acquire an understanding of the different judicial ways of dealing with war crimes (national, international, 'hybrid' courts) to realize that these judicial approaches complement each other and that all contribute to the international community's efforts to bring war criminals to justice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> States must bring to trial and punish those who commit grave breaches of IHL, regardless of the nationality of the perpetrator or the victim or where the crime took place. Efforts have been made at different times and at various levels to try and to punish war criminals. While judicial ways of dealing with IHL violations may differ, they complement each other and contribute to the common effort of the international community to bring war criminals to court.
			4C: Non-judicial options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to understand certain non-judicial approaches that States have chosen to deal with IHL violations to consider the many perspectives involved - of victims and perpetrators and of the wider society - in efforts to build a peaceful future in the aftermath of IHL violations and human rights abuses to understand some of the advantages and limitations of non-judicial approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are various non-judicial ways to deal with IHL violations that may be used in addition to bringing alleged war criminals to trial. Many different perspectives must be considered to help societies move beyond the atrocities in their past. Truth commissions are useful instruments for uncovering the truth and for providing guidance on ways to deal with IHL violations.



The Modules

Course matrix



Module	Guiding questions	Concepts	Explorations	Objectives	Key ideas
MODULE 5 Responding to the consequences of armed conflict	What are the consequences of war? What effort is needed to respond to them? What dilemmas may humanitarian organizations face?	Basic needs Non-material needs Refugees and other displaced persons Impartiality Neutrality Independence	5A: Needs that arise from the devastation of war	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to understand how war disrupts the ordinary supports of life to be aware of the scope of humanitarian action needed to prevent and reduce the suffering caused by armed conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Armed conflict destroys resources and disrupts the ordinary supports of life. The primary responsibility for restoring the ordinary supports of life lies with governments, but humanitarian organizations, working together, assist in this task.
			5B: Planning a camp for people displaced by war	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to think about the circumstances in which people forced to leave their homes might find themselves to learn about some of the aspects of assistance and protection that people need when armed conflict forces them to flee from their homes to be aware of the scale of the effort required to meet human needs arising from displacement caused by armed conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responding to the needs of people uprooted as a result of armed conflict requires a great deal of planning and effort and ample resources. In addition to immediate biological needs, the social, psychological and spiritual needs of displaced persons must also be addressed to enable them to regain their human dignity and independence as quickly as possible. Assistance should be provided in a manner that aims to minimise any unintended harm it may cause.

The Modules

Course matrix

Module	Guiding questions	Concepts	Explorations	Objectives	Key ideas
MODULE 5 Responding to the consequences of armed conflict (continued)			5C: Focus on protecting prisoners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to learn about some of the ways IHL protects the lives and human dignity of prisoners to understand some of the dilemmas that humanitarian workers face while protecting prisoners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lives and human dignity of people who have been detained in relation to armed conflict are at risk. IHL protects prisoners; it also ensures that they are visited by humanitarian workers to verify that the rules governing their treatment are complied with. Humanitarian workers might encounter difficult dilemmas while carrying out their task of visiting prisoners.
			5D: Focus on restoring family links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to be aware of the plight of families who have been separated by war to understand the scale of the effort required to restore and maintain links between separated family members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Armed conflict results in vast numbers of people becoming separated from their families, without any means of communicating with them. IHL requires that action be taken to restore and maintain family links between separated family members and to clarify the fate of missing persons. Various actions are required to reunite a single family and to trace missing persons.





Module	Guiding questions	Concepts	Explorations	Objectives	Key ideas
MODULE 5 Responding to the consequences of armed conflict (continued)			5E: Ethics of humanitarian action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to understand that the principles of humanity and impartiality guide all humanitarian action to be aware that two additional principles – neutrality and independence – characterize the ICRC's action to understand some of the dilemmas that humanitarian workers might encounter while doing their work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All humanitarian organizations have codes of conduct that include important working principles. The ICRC places a particular emphasis on the principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence because of the nature of its activities. Humanitarian workers encounter various ethical dilemmas for which satisfactory solutions are not always available. Doing nothing is also a decision and has consequences.
CLOSING EXPLORATION	How can you promote respect for human dignity? What can you do to make a difference? How can you develop awareness in others?	Youth mobilization Target population Project goal Community strengths and resources Human dignity	Where do we go from here?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to make use of what has been learned to design a project that promotes human dignity to carry out a project that promotes human dignity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are many different things a person can do to actively promote human dignity, and it is best to participate in a project that draws upon one's skills and interests. When working on behalf of other people, it is essential to consider their perspective and to include their input. As a project proceeds, it is helpful to assess progress periodically and to review future plans.

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Notes

Notes

Mission

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance.

The ICRC also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles.

Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the Geneva Conventions and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It directs and coordinates the international activities conducted by the Movement in armed conflicts and other situations of violence.



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