

Avenue Zero Lesson Plan

By Louise Sarrasin, Educator
Commission scolaire de Montréal (CSDM), Montréal (Québec)

Objective

To enable students to gain a better understanding of trafficking in persons and the reasons why women and children become its victims in Canada and in other parts of the world. By doing so, raise the students' level of awareness, so that they may take appropriate actions to support those who are fighting for the respect of their human rights.

Audience

Students aged 15 to 20

Connections

Arts and culture

Languages and literature

Social sciences

Film required for the activity

The documentary *Avenue Zéro* (52 min)

Summary of the lesson plan

This lesson plan (*see note 1*) will enable students to develop a deeper understanding of trafficking in persons and its manifestations in Canada. Secondly, it will give students the opportunity to debate the issue from the human rights point of view and relate it to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (*see note 2*). Through these activities, students will come to realize how important it is to support these women and children as they fight for the recognition of their human rights; in addition, students will discover actions that each individual can take to call for better victim protection and for the restoration of the victims' dignity.

Start and preparatory activity: Define the problem to take effective action

Approximate duration: 60 min

Begin this activity by using the freeze frame technique during the first minute of the documentary, in which we can see a young woman under an umbrella and the film's title. Ask students what their first impression is of these images and of the title *Avenue Zéro*.

Step 1: Explain that this film deals with trafficking in persons and that they will see a segment of the film. Use the following questions to begin the discussion:

What do you know about trafficking in persons?

In your opinion, who are its victims? How many persons are affected by this problem and which countries are involved? Does this problem exist in Canada? If yes, how? If not, why? In your opinion, what does the film's title mean?

Step 2: Ask students to define trafficking in persons in their own words. Then, ask students to form small groups and share their definitions with their teammates and compare them with the one mentioned in the Palermo Protocol. (*See note 3*).

Step 3: Hand out copies of worksheet 1 (*included in the appendix*) and explain that the students are to use them to record their observations while they are watching the film. Briefly introduce the characters in the film and begin showing up to 4 min 34 sec. Use the following questions to elicit students' first impressions about the film segment:

- What have you learned about this problem in the first few minutes of the film? What images and statements does the filmmaker use to introduce the issue at the beginning of the film? What do you now know about Avenue Zero?
- What do you think about the smuggler's statements? How does her testimony contribute to the filmmaker's method of helping us to understand the issue of trafficking in persons?

Conclude the activity by asking students to form teams for the activity's team assignments (*see note 4*). Have members of each team read the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* during the week and note down the articles that are most relevant to the subject of the film segment they saw.

Activity 1: Protecting Rights

Approximate duration: 90 minutes or 2 classes of 45 minutes each

Step 1: Ask teammates to share what they have learned about the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. More specifically, ask them to discuss how important they think it is to respect these rights in their daily lives and to relate this to their chosen articles and the film segment they saw.

Step 2: Give each team one character from the film and have team members focus on that person's testimony and then fill in worksheet 1. Watch the film with students from 4 min 34 sec until the end. Then, ask members of each team to share the different observations they made about the character they were given.

Step 3: Ask each team to make a web chart (*see note 5*) to reply to this question: *How can we explain the existence of trafficking in persons?* Give each team a flipchart accompanied by the following instructions: draw a circle in the centre of the sheet of paper and write the question inside it; then draw radiating spokes, on which each team member can write an idea or an answer, as they think of them. Display the sheets on the classroom walls.

Step 4: Using the flipchart sheets and the following questions, begin a class discussion:

- What are the characteristics of these individuals (age, sex, social status, etc)? In your opinion, what are the living and working conditions of these individuals? What social factors contribute to trafficking in persons? How are First Nations women and girls more vulnerable than the rest of Canada's population? What explains this?
- Who are the smugglers and what means do they intimidate individuals or keep them prisoner? (Threats, false promises, violence.)
- Why do Canadian victims of trafficking in persons need protection? How do they tend to see themselves? What are the most serious concerns that the victims mention in the film? What prevents them from asking for help? What should we do to help the victims of trafficking in persons?
- What is the connection between trafficking in persons and human rights?
- In your opinion, what preconceived ideas do people often express about such victims? What do you think about that?

Explain that the United Nations Charter obliges sovereign states to promote respect for human rights and that it is in this spirit that the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* was adopted on March 23, 1976 and ratified by many countries, including Canada. Ask students to read about the Covenant (*see webography*) before the next activity, keeping in mind the issue of trafficking in persons.

ACTIVITY 2: Take action!

Approximate duration: 90 minutes or 2 classes of 45 minutes each

Step 1: With the entire class, briefly review the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, to make them aware of the responsibility of sovereign states to apply this covenant.

Step 2: Distribute worksheet 2 to members of each team and explain that they will use it to record their observations while watching the film a second time. Briefly introduce each person shown in the film and listed on the worksheet and ask each team to choose any two and focus on them. Before watching the film, ask students to also pay special attention to how the filmmaker chose to introduce her subject (type of testimony, images, sound, music).

Step 3: After watching the film, use the following questions to initiate a debate with the participation of the entire class:

- What problems and solutions were put forward by the individuals whom you observed while watching the film? What do you think of their points of view?
- The Palermo Protocols is divided into three sections: prevention, victim protection and punishment of smugglers. What do you think of this approach? What other approaches do you think might work?

Step 4: Ask students the following questions to help them develop a deeper understanding of the project's cinematographic aspects:

- How would you describe Hélène Choquette's use of sound in the film *Avenue Zéro*? Her use of text? Image? Music? What does the filmmaker's use of these things tell you about her intentions? Give examples to illustrate your comments.
- How does the combined testimony contribute to the film *Avenue Zéro*? How does this documentary film change your perception of the issue?
- How does the filmmaker approach the issue in Vancouver? In Montreal?
- What do the last images of the film suggest to you? How do these images resemble or how do they differ from the other images?

Conclude the activity by asking students to take a few minutes to think about one action they can take to raise awareness of this issue and to stand up for the rights of the victims of trafficking in persons. (*See note 6.*)

Recap

Suggested duration: 60 minutes

Organize a debate by examining the issue from a different point of view, for example, legalizing prostitution. Ask students to explain why legalizing could be or could not be a solution to the problem of trafficking in persons. Following the debate, organize an awareness campaign around this issue by using podcasts, posters, newspaper articles or any other format.

Reflective Sharing

After completing the activities of this lesson plan, students ought to be able to:

- Define trafficking in persons, name its main issues and take a position regarding these issues;
- Explain how this documentary film could be used as an educational tool to raise public awareness and even to call for action.

Notes

1. This lesson plan is designed for use with a wide variety of age groups. We suggest you adapt it according to the needs of your students.
2. We chose to use the Universal Declaration of Human Rights because it includes articles that can be used in our discussions covering several aspects of the trafficking in persons issue. For example, Article 4 states: “No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.”
3. The Palermo Protocols were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on November 15, 2000. They were signed by 147 nations and ratified by 56 of these. They came into force in September 2003. A definition of trafficking in persons is included on page 3 of the document of Mrs. Oxman-Martinez listed in the webography.
4. We suggest you give each student a specific role for the teamwork activities. For example: you can distribute the roles of secretary; spokesperson, discussion leader, supply person, consensus gatherer, etc. To give your students an opportunity to experience different roles, you can ask them to alternate duties in the various activities, as you progress through the entire lesson plan.
5. Several types of web charts exist. We suggest you use the one found on the Health Canada website, which can be found in the webography.
6. The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center is one of many anti-slavery organizations that are combating contemporary slavery worldwide through public awareness and victim assistance. Your students can use this site to find suggestions for possible actions.

Webography

- National Underground Railroad Freedom Center
<http://www.freedomcenter.org/slavery-today/take-action/>
- Status of Women Canada
<http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/index-eng.html>
- Canadian Council for Refugees
<http://www.ccrweb.ca/trafficking/learn.htm>
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>
- Web chart model on Health Canada Website
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/pubs/services/_adp-apd/toolbox-outils/iii-3-eng.php#2
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, website of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm>

- Palermo Protocol
<http://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNTOC/Publications/TOC%20Convention/TOCebook-e.pdf>
- International and Canadian Responses on the website of the International Bureau of Children's Rights
http://www.ibcr.org/eng/child_trafficking_canadian_and_international_responses.html
- Toolkit to Combat Trafficking in Persons
<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain?docid=4a7944fe2>
- Trafficking in persons, on the website of the Department of Justice of Canada
<http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/fs-sv/tp/index.html>

Appendix

Worksheet 1 Observation of testimony

Name	
Function	
Summary of testimony	
Issue raised	
Description of images and sounds supporting the testimony	
Possible effect on viewers	
Remarks	

Worksheet 2 Observation of testimony

Persons testifying	Agency or service representatives
Drug courier (mule) (4 min 20 sec)	Benjamin Perrin Faculty of Law UBC (4 min 52 sec)

Mai described as a former prostitute (8 min 30 sec)	Alice Lee Rape Relief and Women's Shelter (7 min 30 sec)
Young women from Honduras (11 min 35 sec)	Francisco R. Martinez Former Chairman of the Canadian Refugee Centre FCJ in Toronto (10 min 1 sec)
Former domestic worker (21 min 40 sec)	Dave Dickson Retired police officer and street worker (13 min 40 sec)
Carla (26 min 5 sec)	Sister Nancy Brown (15 min 30 sec)
12-year old adolescent from Montreal (36 min 5 sec)	Representatives of the <i>Association des aides familiales du Québec</i> (19 min 52 sec)
Cee Jay (43 min 25 sec)	Annie Robert Civilian member of the RCMP (20 min 25 sec)
	Magdala Turpin RCMP investigator (20 min 32 sec)
	Police officer of the <i>Service de police de la Ville de Montréal</i> Unit investigating sexual exploitation for commercial purposes (31 min 30 sec)
	Guy Bianchi Supervisor SPVM, Investigation Section (31 min 50 sec)
	Social worker from the Batshaw Youth and Family Centre (34 min 50 sec)