

## Human Rights Defenders Claim Their Rights: A Learning Journey

### VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

***Text-on-screen:***

*Susanna (she/her)  
Social Rights Alliance*

*Susanna:  
Why isn't this working? Is this working?*

***Title: Human Rights Defenders Claim Their Rights: A Learning Journey***

*Susanna:  
Okay, quick refresh. Our aims. We are all here because we are working on this project, exploring what it means to use an economic, social, cultural rights and human rights based approach in our work.*

*Susanna:  
So through that process of theory, reflection and action, which is what this space is going to be building us to do, and we're exploring what those frameworks can do for our work on our campaigns.*

***Text on Screen (VOICE OVER):***

*We met as a group of Community Researchers over Zoom every fortnight for six months, from September 2012 to February 2022.*

*We came together to explore our experiences and knowledge, and we built learning and solidarity.*

*Then we finally met in person.*

***Title:***

*Who are we?*

***Text-on-screen:***

*Hinda (she/her)  
Intisaar*

*Hinda:  
My name is Hinda. I recently founded an organization called Intisaar, so it's kind of looking at mental health in a nutshell. But looking at mental health in a more culturally appropriate way.*

***Text-on-screen:***

*Kayleigh (she/they)  
Sheppey is Ours*

Kayleigh:

It is about citizens, people who call The Isle of Sheppey home no matter where they originally from, coming together and working on building a better democracy, a better environment, and a better area to live.

***Text-on-screen:***

*Nic (she/her)*

*Difference North East*

Nic:

We are a campaigning charity to end discrimination for disabled people and most of our work is in the North East.

***Text-on-screen:***

*Martin (he/him)*

*The Wharton Trust*

Martin:

I'm the community organizer for Dyke House, which is a small square mile estate in Hartlepool. So my main focus is mental health and focus on people trying to improve that. But when you've got so many factors against them, it's quite hard. But a lot of the issues that arrive in their minds come from the same, same kind of thing. Not living in a great area and people don't pay attention to their issues. I did write a poem, but I'm kind of embarrassed now, so I'm not going to write - not going to read it. I was going to, but I think it's a... I don't know.

Hinda:

Oh, you have to! Come on.

Susanna:

Okay, we can turn our cameras off if that makes it easier.

Martin:

No, it's fine. I can't see you anyway. So -

"No one left behind?" A statement that sounds so bold.

Are we aware of all the stories to be told?

How do we ensure every single voice is heard?

Can we be sure that we will act on every single word?

Do people know the full extent of what they can do?

Or are they just doing exactly what they're always told to do?

Do they even know that they're allowed to stand up and fight?

Do they know that it's not just the power to, they also have the right?

We need to knock on every door, stop people in the street.  
Educate every single person we meet.

Find out what the real issues are. Not just the one's on the news.  
Get down to street level and get real people's views.

We need to let people know the power they possess and stand up for changes.  
Be united in causes, and become friends and neighbours not strangers.

Every person matters.  
Everyone has a right to life, a right to live in peace without trouble and strife.

The feeling people need the most is one of equality.  
To be able to live their lives with even a modicum of quality.

The right to live in safety without damage to their health.  
A right to feel wanted, not just an addition to landlord's wealth.

A right to have a voice, a right to use expression.  
A right to stand up for what they believe in without fear of oppression.

We need to make sure we touch every ear, every heart, every mind.

***Text on screen:***

*We need to make sure we touch every ear, every heart, every mind.*

To truly ensure everyone hears us, and no one is left behind.

***Text on screen:***

*To truly ensure everyone hears us, and no one is left behind.*

***Title:***

*How are human rights viewed in our communities?*

Nic:

I suppose that disabled people knew their rights, that they felt entitled to claim them and talk about them. And that sort of - that systems and practices that stop disabled people talking about their rights through, you know, this could be around shame or feeling not entitled to be in a public place or space or actively being pushed out of that. To be able to claim your rights in those public places that you often don't feel welcome in as a disabled person.

Hinda:

Arriving here as someone who sought asylum, I always was aware of human rights and what that means for me and my community. There's the human rights aspect of either - you know your human right is being abused, but what does that actually mean? Like, what else do you know? How can you articulate that you're

human right is being abused? I think people find it really hard sometimes, especially some of the communities that I work with, because we don't have the capacity or the time to really explore that.

Kayleigh:

Essentially, I think a lot of the view is human rights is something evil bad guys use to get out of being punished for things they've done. When I think the reality is far more that actually you see a lot of people suffer because of their human rights going sort of unrecognized, not knowing that actually they do have a right to complain about, the sort of, their standard of housing that's supplied by the council and to complain about the fact that they don't have access to healthcare all the time, locally.

***Text on screen:***

*We shared our space with activists from across the UK who shared stories of their work as examples of the Human Rights Based Approach.*

*ATD challenged us to think about "povertyism" as a form of discrimination and how we need to work to recognise the struggles, skills and contributions of those living in poverty.*

*We learnt about accountability with Participation and the Practice of Rights.  
"the higher you build your barriers, the taller we become."*

*We explored participation with Making Rights Real and discovered alternative terminology...  
'Heard to reach' actually means 'easy to ignore.'  
'Barriers to participation would be better termed 'hate practices'.*

*We found hope. We found warmth. We found inspiration. We found commonality across our divides.*

*We found fellowship over Zoom as we realised we all travelling the same road as Human Rights Defenders.*

*But before we can use human rights as a tool in our communities, we to Claim the Rights to talk about Rights.*

Hinda:

I think this it's really, really, really challenging to engage with human rights organizations. And I think people sometimes don't recognize - organizations themselves that are very forefront human rights campaigners - don't recognize the key issue is with language. Because I think quite a lot of the time we talk about, myself or my community, what the key issues for us are. But sometimes we don't have the language to, kind of, say article, for example, 12 of my rights is being abused and this is what it means. And, how does that look like in reality?

Nic:

I'm still not using language around, you know, not using the 'right language'

around rights. And that's totally okay. Like to advocate for that, to be able to have conversations about rights that are understandable. And, you know, having that grounding in knowing that you're allowed to, allows me then to get other people on board to say, right, we need to talk about rights. We have the right to talk about rights.

***Text on screen:***

*We want others to join us in Claiming our Right to talk about Rights...*

*So we're creating a board game!*

Nic:

How did we get to the board game? I think, again, it's kind of become a co-led like collaborative way of exploring how to talk about rights, that also feels inclusive and accessible because there's no right or wrong way to play it. I mean, we don't even have any rules for it yet.

Kayleigh:

It's very easy, I think, with human rights to get bogged down in details and legal jargon. And the board game is essentially a way to try and subvert that, to look at human rights in a different way, in a way that is a bit more accessible, a bit more easily approachable. I still very much sort of agree they're very important to how we sort of live our lives. But I now know a little bit more about what they are and how I can start having conversations with people. We're often quite a poor area, and I don't think people necessarily have the time to sometimes actually just sit back and look at what's going on around them, to fully understand where the problems are, where things are going wrong and how they're going wrong and what they can actually do about that. I think hosting a space where people can take a step back and sort of go, 'Oh, hang on a minute, this is wrong. Something can be done about it,' is, I think, quite powerful.

Nic:

Building solidarity as a group in this project feels very powerful because we've had really powerful conversations and those conversations and our new understandings and knowledge filter out into the communities that we work with and, you know, what's next then with this game, it would be really great to like develop it so that we can use it to make change and that is really powerful.

Hinda:

What I would like is more of us to be sitting at those tables equally, to talk about how collectively we can work together to change human rights.

***Text on screen:***

*If you want to Claim the Right to talk about Rights go to [www.socialrightsalliance.co.uk](http://www.socialrightsalliance.co.uk)*

**End of Video**