

explainity explains: Equal Rights

This is Sara, Calvin, Samir, Mala, Hassan, Carl, Anna, Lynn and her grandson Timmy.
At first glance, the nine of them are all quite different. But if you look closely, they have a lot in common.

Like they all have the same ID, live in the same neighbourhood or shop at the same market. And they all have equal rights!

That's guaranteed by law: We are all equal, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, ethnic origin, beliefs, disabilities or age.

But that wasn't always the case. In the past, women had less rights than men, on many levels. Women did not have the right to a college education or a pension payment.

Going to elections or making their own decisions simply was not possible.

And during the colonial era for example, Africans were kept as slaves. They had no rights at all.

The road to equality was and still is a centuries long ongoing process. Women's and civil rights' activists worldwide have always fought for it. Because of them and the efforts of countless people, there are now laws and guidelines that prohibit things like slavery and that regulate gender equality between women and men.

For example, if Sara, Samir, Hassan, Anna and Carl apply for a new job, Sara can not be turned down just because she is a woman and pregnant.

Or Hassan and Samir because they are from another country. Or Anna, because she is in a wheelchair.

If all are equally qualified, there must be a valid reason why Carl gets the job in the end.

For example, if a production company is casting a 60 year old male for a movie, then the others don't fit the bill, of course.

And outside of the workplace? The same rules apply!

So someone looking for an apartment, like Lynn and Calvin, may not be rejected by the landlord for personal reasons like age or sexual orientation.

But there are exceptions to the protection of humans, cases where not everyone is treated equally. Like women-only saunas, to which men have no access; or carousels where children, the elderly or the disabled are not allowed access, to avoid danger.

In the end decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. Anyone who thinks their right to equality has been violated can file a complaint or even sue.

"Equal rights"- as nice as that sounds, they don't fully exist today.

In some parts of the world, women are still forced to marry or receive less pay than men. Based simply on their background or religion, people are persecuted and bullied. While homosexuals can marry, they don't have all the rights of conventional couples. And these are just a few examples.

So what exactly "equal rights" means, is still a subject of hot debate.

For our nine people, one thing is true: equality is important, because every human being is equally important and should have the same rights.