

Grade 8 Life Orientation Worksheet

Cultural diversity

Discussion of a passage

In South Africa there is no single culture. We are an ethnically diverse society – a true Rainbow Nation. Our Constitution recognises all cultures, religions and languages equally.

Humans are constantly evolving or changing, however. We are different to our parents and even more so to our grandparents. We are influenced by society, technology and the environment. They influence the way that we do things. This results in cultures changing over time. Sometimes these changes are more obvious than at other times.

Read the following news article:

Forced circumcision: Son takes parents on

August 11 2009 at 10:51PM

By Ella Smook

Tradition is set to be pitted against the constitution in a landmark case around forced circumcision, which is due to go to trial on Monday.

But ahead of the start of proceedings, the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (Contralesa) has declared that its position on circumcision - forced or otherwise - would remain unchanged, regardless of what a court may order.

Bonani Yamani, now 21, was abducted from his home shortly before dawn on March 3, 2007. He was tied up, taken to the bush, circumcised against his will, then forced to eat the skin taken from his penis.

Circumcision is against Yamani's personal religious beliefs, and he subsequently asked traditional leaders for an apology and an undertaking that no one would in future be subjected to forced circumcision.

Instead, Eastern Cape Contralesa chairperson Chief Mwelo Nonkonyana was quoted as saying that those who refused traditional circumcision should be ostracised by the community.

Yamani's case is being handled on a pro bono basis by the Justice Alliance of South Africa (Jasa) in the Equality Court of the Bhisho High Court in the Eastern Cape.

Grade 8 Life Orientation Worksheet

Jasa explained that Yamani's case was premised on the equality clause in the Bill of Rights, which forbids unfair discrimination on the grounds of religion, conscience or belief.

Yamani argues that his Christian faith did not permit him to be circumcised in a manner that involved a blood covenant with his ancestors.

Custom, on the other hand, maintains that a young man who refuses to submit to the rite should be ostracised by the community, because it is this initiation into Xhosa manhood that marks his passage from "ubukhwenkwe (boyhood)" to "ubudoda (manhood)". To be stigmatised in such a way, traditional leaders say, would amount to "fair", not "unfair", discrimination.

But Yamani is asking for an order declaring that his ordeal amounted to unfair discrimination, and a restraint on especially traditional leaders encouraging any form of ostracism.

However, Contralesa president Chief Phathekile Holomisa said last night that even if the court ruled in Yamani's favour and installed the orders as requested, custom required that boys be circumcised. It was "not acceptable" for them to refuse.

Furthermore, leaders should be "commended for not calling for violence to be visited on this boy", he said.

"Forcing them physically is not the way to go. We would persuade them to go and undertake the ritual.

"Of course, ostracising (those who do not want to be circumcised) is one of the ways of forcing people to undergo the ritual," Holomisa said.

A person who failed to "obey" cultural expectations was "liable to be isolated".

Holomisa said Yamani was "wasting the court's time" and said if the court ruled in his favour, it would be "up to society to decide whether the order is meaningful or not".

Asked how this position could be reconciled with the constitution, which is the supreme law of South Africa and trumps any inconsistent laws or conduct, Holomisa said the constitution could not be forced on people.

"It has to be a living document. It has to live in the veins of people. It can't be imposed," he said.

Grade 8 Life Orientation Worksheet

John Smyth QC of Jasa said it was possible that the case could go all the way to the Constitutional Court, and acknowledged that even if a ruling was made in favour of Yamani, and, by extension, others like him, it could be hard to enforce.

But he said the first step was to clarify the law. And an order would further serve as a deterrent against the media publishing encouragements to ostracise.

"It will act as a restraint to some extent. This case is all about deterring an encouragement to ostracism," Smyth said.

This article was originally published on page 6 of [Cape Argus](#) on August 11, 2009

www.iol.co.za

Now divide into work groups of 4-6 learners per group.

Discuss the above news article.

Cover the following topics in your discussion:

- The opinions of the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (Contralesa)
- Bonani's rights and religious beliefs
- Traditional culture versus the Constitution
- Should old traditions such as these be respected and held on to?
- Should cultural norms ignore the right to personal choice?

Keep notes of your discussion.

Grade 8 Life Orientation Worksheet

Your teacher will assess your participation in the group discussion as well as your note-taking using this checklist.

Checklist for observation of group discussion			
Name:		Date:	
	Criteria: Does the learner:	Yes	No
1	Wait for a pause before s/he interrupts a speaker?		
2	Interrupt a speaker politely?		
3	Show evidence of having understood the concept of cultural norms?		
4	Keep to the topic under discussion?		
5	Cover all the points listed above?		
6	Give reasons to support alternative points of view?		
7	Make points clearly using appropriate vocal volume?		
8	Make eye contact when speaking?		
9	Use body language appropriately?		
10	Make notes about the discussion?		
2 marks for every 'yes' answer: 20 total			

Grade 8 Life Orientation Worksheet

Suggested Solutions

Question number	Possible marks	Solution
1	20	See checklist in Appendix of Assessment Tools.

Checklist for observation of group discussion			
Name:		Date:	
	Criteria: Does the learner:	Yes	No
1	Wait for a pause before s/he interrupts a speaker?		
2	Interrupt a speaker politely?		
3	Show evidence of having understood the concept of cultural norms?		
4	Keep to the topic under discussion?		
5	Cover all the points listed above?		
6	Give reasons to support alternative points of view?		
7	Make points clearly using appropriate vocal volume?		
8	Make eye contact when speaking?		
9	Use body language appropriately?		
10	Make notes about the discussion?		
2 marks for every 'yes' answer: 20 total			