

PLATO'S EU

Philosophical Learning
Applied To Online
Surroundings
in EU

Draft and example
for PRP2 workshop:

**Stateless persons and persons
without citizenship? / Do I need to
have citizenship to be a person?**



Co-funded by
the European Union





Version	Date	Comments
1	9. 12. 2022	
2	21. 2. 2023	
3		
4		
Document title:	<i>Stateless persons and persons without citizenship? / Do I need to have citizenship to be a person?</i>	
Date of issue:	1	
Author(s):	<i>Urška Jeglič</i>	
E-mail address:	<i>urska.jeglic@teof.uni-lj.si</i>	
Contributors to		



document :	
Quality reviewer (if any)	<i>n/a</i>
Number of pages:	22
Confidentiality status:	<i>For internal use of project partnership only</i>



CONTENTS

WORKSHOP:	5
“Stateless persons and persons without citizenship? / Do I need to have citizenship to be a person?”	5
1. INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC	6
2. LESSON OVERVIEW	7
3. LESSON BREAKDOWN – WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES	9
4. DISCUSSION CHECK	19
5. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	20
6. ANNEX	21



WORKSHOP:

“Stateless persons and persons without citizenship? / Do I need to have citizenship to be a person?”



1. INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

Stateless persons are those persons who are not recognized as a national or citizen by any state under the operation of its law (UN 1954). This means that a stateless person is someone who does not have the nationality of any country. As such, they are particularly vulnerable. The main causes of statelessness are: laws determining the circumstances under which someone acquires nationality or can have it withdrawn, migration to a state that does not allow a parent to pass on nationality through family ties, the emergence of new states and changes regarding borders and the loss or deprivation of nationality (UNHCR 2021).

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR 2022), 4.3 million people worldwide were stateless in 2022. Most of them lived in Asia and Oceania (11%), West and Central Africa (9%), and Europe (2%).

The purpose of the following topic is to reflect on the status of stateless people and their rights. In most cases, stateless people are deprived of the rights that other citizens enjoy (e.g., basic insurance, right to education, right to vote, etc.). In this topic, we will reflect on whether stateless people are discriminated against, how this affects them, and how we can overcome the inequalities.



2. LESSON OVERVIEW

Citizenship gives a person a sense of identity. In stateless people, one can observe an identity crisis and a sense of not belonging. Their national identity is often unclear. Some feel they are citizens of the country in which they were born or raised. National identity is often linked to the nationality of the parents. In most cases, the offspring of ethnically mixed marriages have a dual identity.

The lack of a nationality is characterised by the concept of apartheid. Stateless persons have neither the right to vote nor the right to education or basic health care. In some countries it is impossible to obtain an identity document, making border crossing impossible.

The 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons was adopted to address this situation. The Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons recognises the international legal status of "stateless persons," guarantees them equal enjoyment of human rights, grants them access to travel and identity documents, and establishes minimum standards for their care. The Convention also calls on States Parties to expedite the integration and naturalisation of stateless persons.

In 1961, the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness was also adopted. However, since most countries have refused to sign these conventions, the proportion of stateless persons is still relatively high and their rights are thus undermined



In the next lesson, students will take a closer look at countries' attitudes toward stateless people. They will try to form their own opinions and find solutions to these issues using various interactive methods. The teacher's role is to moderate the discussion and provide feedback on their questions. The workshop can be conducted equally well online, through virtual classroom, and in physical environment. The duration of the workshop can be from 45 to 90 minutes.

Materials that should be issued include:

Computer, projector, and pen and papers for the students. If it's not possible to gain access to a computer and projector, teacher may use a paper template with quotes that are offered up to discussion during the workshop.

Learning outcomes that will be attained through workshop:

- To learn about statelessness;
- To develop own views on statelessness;
- Developing critical thinking skills;
- Strengthening the ability to formulate arguments;

3. LESSON BREAKDOWN – WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

1. At the beginning of the lesson, the presenter shows the students a video entitled Born stateless: in search of a country that loves me - BBC News
2. After they watch the video, individual work follows. Students have two minutes to write three words or phrases that came to mind while watching the video on a piece of paper (or other note pad).
3. The facilitator then shows students a map of the world with the countries that have signed one or both of the conventions. The facilitator adds that the information on the map is from 2012 and that some of the countries that have indicated their intention to adopt the conventions have already adopted them (e.g., Paraguay, Belgium). The facilitator encourages students to take a closer look. The map can be viewed in silence or in open discussion. After a minute of looking at the map, the facilitator asks the students to look at the situation in the country of which they are citizens.

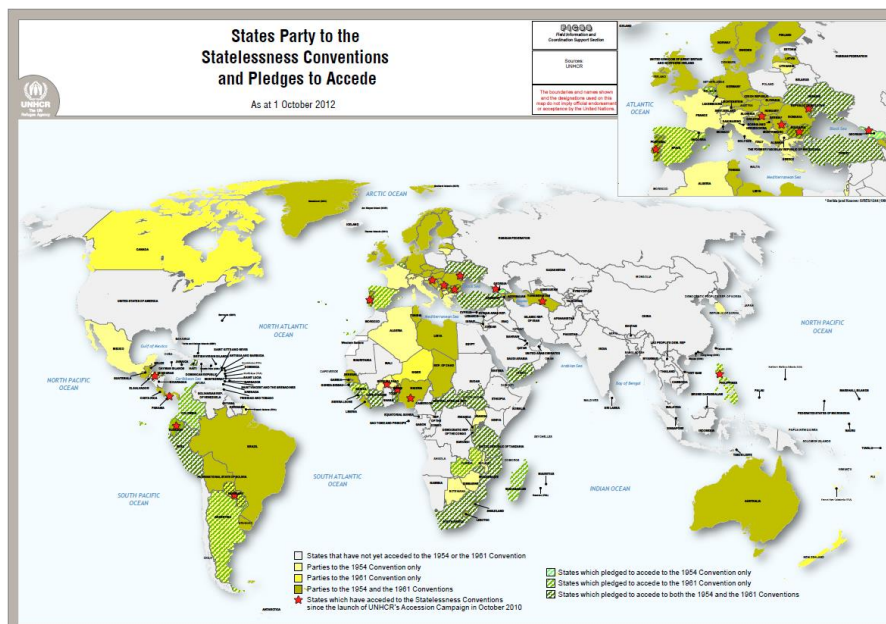


Figure 1: Stateless Party to the Statelessness Conventions and Pledges to Accede

Source: UNCHER

4. The facilitator then divides the students into pairs. Each pair tries to find reasons for their reservations about signing the Convention. The pairs should work for 10 to 15 minutes.

They answer the questions:

- a) What are the most common reasons for someone remaining stateless?
- b) Why do you think certain countries are unwilling to accept a convention regulating the status of stateless persons?
- c) Do you think it is appropriate for citizens of a country to have more rights than non-citizens?

After the pair work, the facilitator asks the students to share the main conclusions they have reached. If the students are reluctant, the teacher can use the icebreaker technique (e.g. share your own opinion and then ask if anyone else is like-minded).

5. The teacher continues the lesson by showing the following quotes on the PTT projection. He mentions that there are different reasons for becoming stateless and that they have different consequences. He tells them that children of migrants or children from mixed marriages have the most problems.



Figure 2: Quote 1; Source: UNCHR Tweet



Figure 3: Quote 2; Source: UNHCR

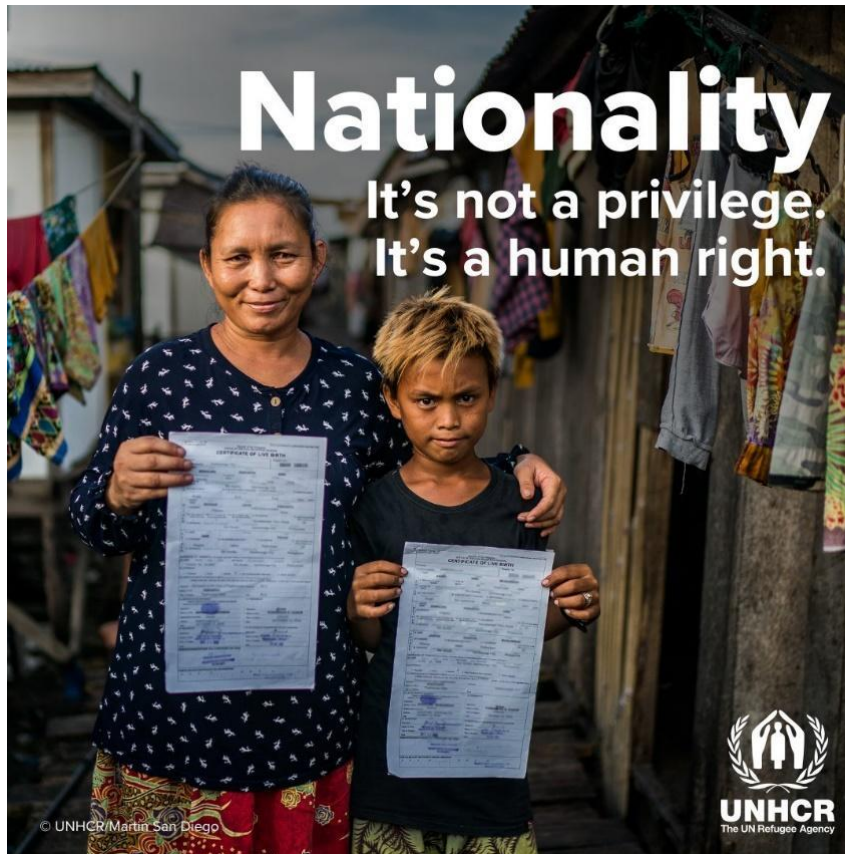


Figure 4: Quote 3; Source: UNHCR

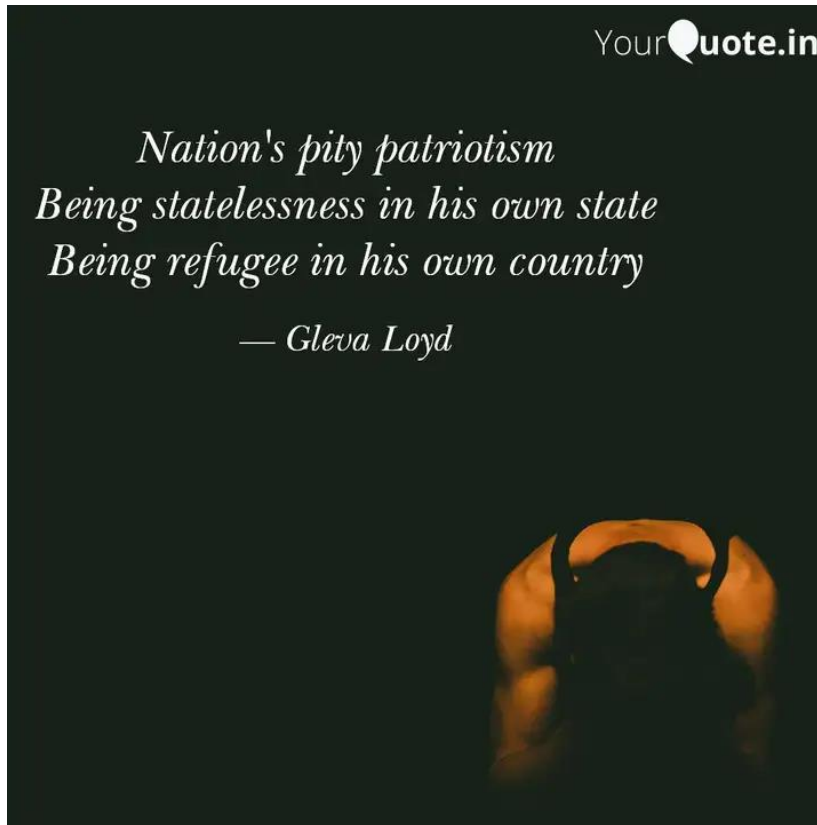


Figure 5: Quote 5; Source: YourQuote

6. Moderator then opens another round of debate with next questions:

- Which quote spoke to you the most? And why?
- Can you identify which quotes were written by people who have experienced homelessness themselves?
- Which quote do you think is the most subjective and which is the most objective?



- Do you think it is appropriate for an organisation to raise public awareness of the problem of statelessness through the testimonies of people who have experienced statelessness?
- UNHCR believes that stateless people are deprived of their basic human rights. Do you agree with this statement? Why yes? And why not?
- Did you find anything in the critique of the written word that you agree or disagree with? What and why? Is it an objective critique?
- Who do you think is responsible for regulating the status and rights of stateless persons?

7. Before the next activity, the facilitator reminds students that everyone has the right to citizenship, or at least the rights that citizenship as such provides to citizens. Remind them that migration is not decreasing and that wars and climate change are forcing people to leave their homes. It is also worth noting that people are often afraid to help stateless people, either because of prejudice against migrants or because they are not familiar with the _____ system _____ and _____ procedures

The facilitator gives students three minutes to think about how they would react if they met a stateless person asking for help. They can record their thoughts in their notes.

8. A role reversal game is then played. All students actively participate in the role-play, with six students acting as actors and the others as evaluators or commentators. The students who will play the roles can be chosen in a variety of ways. Ideally, the roles should be played by students who have expressed interest themselves. If not enough students express interest, the teacher can assign the roles in other ways. They can be called _____ upon _____ themselves _____ or _____ they _____ can _____ draw _____ lots.



After the pairs have been selected, the teacher gives the students instructions for the assignment.

Within each pair, one plays the role of a stateless person. The other members of the pair play the roles of people who work in jobs where they deal with stateless people (mayor, lawyer, social worker). The facilitator determines the time frame for the role play. It is recommended that each pair have three to six minutes to prepare.

The teacher can also have examples of questions to give to students in case they get stuck in formulating questions.

Example questions for a person going to the mayor:

- I am a stateless person. I wonder if you could help me get my citizenship?
- Could I at least have a permanent address in the municipality?
- Will you allow my children (who are undocumented) to attend kindergarten and school?

Example questions for a person going to the lawyer:

- What are the legal options for obtaining the status?
- Would you be willing to represent me in court when I fight for my rights to regain my revoked citizenship? The revocation of my nationality also deprived me of my home and the possibility of employment. Nevertheless, I am forced to pay for food at the supermarket and cover all my expenses like other citizens. Would you be willing to help me in the process to fight against this kind of injustice?

Example questions for a person going to the social worker:



- Is there any chance of getting social assistance, given that I am stateless and have no job?
- As the child of a stateless parent, I cannot apply for job vacancies. Can you please advise me on how I can earn money?
- Can I get social housing as a stateless person?

The facilitator is responsible for assigning the situations to the pairs. He/she distributes the sheets (Appendix 1, 2, and 3) to the people who will play the role of the stateless and describes the situation of each stateless person. Ask them to retire to the corridor or to another classroom (another virtual space) where they can prepare for the role in peace. Each person who will play a stateless person will have five minutes to read their role and briefly prepare for it. It is important that they keep the role to themselves

The facilitator also sends the students who will play the people in charge to another separate room (physical or virtual). He also tells them that they cannot prepare for the role because encounters with stateless people are often unexpected and you cannot prepare for them.

In the primary space (the classroom), the facilitator and students remain "observers." The facilitator instructs them to pay attention to the conversations and pay attention to the physical and verbal communication of the actors. He reminds them not to make comments during the role-play and that they will have plenty of time for discussion at the end. After each role play, they are asked to comment on the following:

- Did you think the situation of the role play was realistic?
- How did the stateless person address and present their problem? Which arguments



were good and which were bad?
- How did the person in charge react? Did she act objectively or subjectively? Which arguments were good and which were bad?

After all three role plays have been played, the tutor asks the students to think about how they would react in such situations. If time permits, they can also write down their reflections and share them with each other.

4. DISCUSSION CHECK



As this workshop is built completely on a set of discussions, next questions can be used to expand on the topics explored through the course of the workshop:

- Do you think that a person should automatically acquire the citizenship of the country in which he or she was born?
- Would you think it appropriate to have universal rules in this area?
- What do you think is the main reason why countries do not want to grant citizenship to certain people?
- How could the school system be regulated to allow stateless students to attend school without hindrance?
- Do you think that stateless students should have the status of special needs students?
- Have you ever met a stateless person yourself?
- What is your attitude towards migrants and stateless persons?

5. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



- Online article “Convention relating to the status of stateless persons”
[https://www.unhcr.org/ibelong/wp-content/uploads/1954-Convention-relating-to-the-Status-of-Stateless-Persons_ENG.pdf]
- Online article “Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness”
[https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.25_reduction%20statelessness.pdf]
- Online video “Living as a stateless person with no nationality: Leal's story”
[<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9SxpJQZaqn8&t=6s>]
- Online video “No nationality, no rights: stateless people in the Dominican Republic” [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZE545bGWxLI&t=1s>]
- Online video “Lynn - Life as a stateless refugee”
[<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZEalzAq4R0E>]

6. ANNEX



Annex 1: Profile of a non-citizen for the first example of the role play

Lejla is 25 years old. She was born out of wedlock in Lebanon. Since her father did not recognise her, she was never registered in the Lebanese citizenship registry. Today she is married, but only her religious marriage is valid, as the state authorities do not recognise statelessness. As a result, her two daughters are also stateless. Without her citizenship, Lejla cannot find work. Since the family is in urgent need of money (her husband is unable to work due to an injury), Lejla decides to go to the mayor of the city where she lives and ask him to arrange for her registration in the register of persons with citizenship. She asks the mayor to submit her application to the higher authorities and help her family.

Annex 2: Profile of a non-citizen for the second example of the role play

In 2016, the Dominican Republic passed a law that Haitians cannot hold Dominican citizenship, regardless of where they were born. As a result, 10,000 people became stateless overnight. Among them was Julio, whose dreams were shattered when he was 18 years old. He lost his citizenship before he could begin his medical studies. Julio also trained in athletics and received several national awards. He qualified for the World Championships with good results. But today Julio neither competes nor studies. As a stateless person, he has no right to study, work or travel. To support himself and his family, he goes after odd jobs

Julio decides not to remain silent and to bring his sports militancy to the fight for his rights. Julio begins to draw attention to the injustices through the media, which leads to several threatening letters at his home. Julio fears for his safety and wants to report the threats. He decides to seek a lawyer who is willing to help him and restore his rights, even though he is stateless.



Annex 3: Profile of a non-citizen for the third example of the role play

Let us turn back the clock and go back to the year 1998.

Denis was born in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1964. When he was a baby, his parents moved to Croatia where he grew up and graduated from high school. In 1985, he moved to Velenje, Slovenia, got a job and lived in a rented apartment. He had a Yugoslav passport, which allowed him to participate in the referendum for Slovenian independence. After Slovenia's independence, no one told him that he had to get a work permit, and I was not told how important it was to apply for citizenship. He himself had not received any notification. He ended up among the 'erased'. For a long time he did not even know what exactly had happened and that there were many such cases in Slovenia. Because he had no documents, he lost his job, his right to an ID card, his medical care and even the roof over his head. If his friends had not helped him, he would not have survived. Without documents, he could not even receive humanitarian aid from Karitas. Since he has not had anything to eat for several days, he asks Karitas if he could get something to eat every month.

Annex 4: Video

- Online video “Born stateless: Looking for a country to love me - BBC News”
[<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lo02oBLdIFU&t=4s>]