



HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN 2021



too mainstream



too green



too dark



too thick



too naked



too many



**But who are you
to judge your neighbour?** James 4:12

#againstdiscrimination

Join our campaign: #againstdiscrimination

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Repost our banana GIF, »4 human rights«

Post your thoughts and experiences about discrimination in your environment. Use our hashtag #againstdiscrimination so we can share them.

Network with others, exchange information, and get to know new users like you.

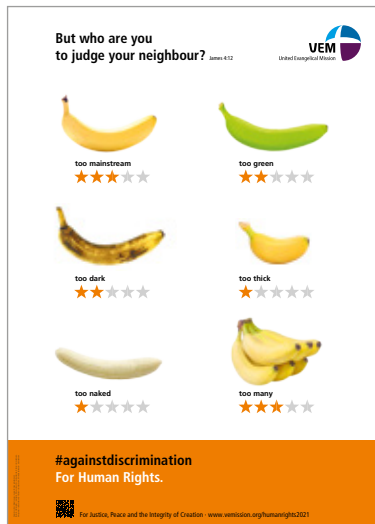
Dream up your own campaign against discrimination and we'll repost it on our channels.

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Current stories and information from our community are also available on Facebook ([f @VEMission](#)), Twitter ([t @VEMission](#)) and YouTube ([v United Evangelical Mission](#))



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INTRODUCTION

»BUT WHO ARE YOU TO JUDGE YOUR NEIGHBOUR?«

»But who are you to judge your neighbour?« (*Bible source: ESV*) With this question from the New Testament (James 4:12), the churches and institutions in the UEM communion call upon all Christians, all people of other religions and beliefs, all governments and rulers, to combat any and all forms of discrimination and marginalization and to actively participate in building inclusive communities. The adoption and implementation of antidiscrimination laws and programmes are part of the necessary work to reach this end.

George Floyd's last words were »I can't breathe«. They came shortly before he was brutally murdered by a white police officer on 25 May 2020, and their consequences have triggered a wave of outrage and protest against racism worldwide. His last words also represent the countless people around the world who suffer from the consequences of racism and other forms of discrimination and exclusion every day. They too are struggling to breathe.

»All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights ... Everyone has the right to all rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.«

The **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** of 1948 begins with these words (Articles 1 and 2). In the more than seventy years since its passing, a multitude of conventions have been adopted. They had one goal: to end discrimination and inequality among the people and to enable everyone to live in dignity.

They include the United Nations Conventions on the Elimination of All Forms of **Racial Discrimination** of 1965 and the Elimination of All Forms of **Discrimination against Women** of 1979. There have also been

other important conventions such as the Convention on the **Rights of the Child** from 1989 and the Convention on the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities** from 2006. These conventions are important milestones in laying the legal basis for the implementation of Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.¹

Discrimination and marginalization occur when some people are treated worse than others because they belong to a certain group or have certain traits, such as their gender, social or ethnic background, language, religion, political opinions, age, disability, or sexual orientation.

Unfortunately, these forms of discrimination still exist almost everywhere today. People face marginalization and discrimination in churches and Christian communities as well.

In the **United Evangelical Mission**, founded as an international communion of churches in Asia, Africa, and Germany twenty-five years ago, women have taken a special stand against discrimination in church and society from the beginning. Many churches in the UEM have committed in their diaconal programmes to supporting the rights of people with disabilities and the rights of children and the elderly. In encounters and initiatives with people from other religions, the UEM community campaigns against the exclusion of religious and ethnic minorities. In solidarity with the Papuans, the UEM communion condemns racism and violence.

¹ The years cited refer to the year in which each respective Convention was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

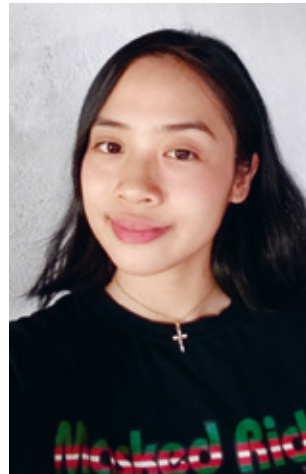
In Germany, the UEM communion opposes racism and xenophobia in the face of right-wing extremist groups in society who sow hatred and prejudice and whose supporters do not shy away from violence.

With our **2021 Human Rights Campaign**, we want to work together with the many young committed people in our churches to oppose discrimination and exclusion. We want to be aware of when we point fingers at others and judge people, consciously or unconsciously. We want to work together in the church and in society to build inclusive communities. We want to oblige our governments to use legislation and programmes to end structural discrimination and exclusion. We also ask for **support with specific projects** that will allow young people in particular, in the church and in society, in Africa, Asia, and Germany, to get involved in opposing discrimination and exclusion.

Opposing racism in Germany is just one example. In Rwanda, there is a project for young women with unintended pregnancies who are traditionally ostracized. In the Philippines, a youth theatre group combats cultural discrimination against indigenous people who are excluded and attacked because of their political opinions or sexual orientation.

We invite you to support these projects financially and hope that many people in the UEM communion will join our campaign against discrimination, exclusion, and violence. Let us stand together against all those who would sow hatred and violence, so that all people can live in dignity and with equal rights.

»But who are you to judge your neighbour?« ■



»I think the church should organize activities and events where we, the members of the church, can come into contact with people who feel excluded and discriminated against by the church.«

Aldrian Baruc (Philippines)



Dr Jochen Motte
Executive Secretary for Justice,
Peace, and the Integrity of Creation,
Member of UEM Management Team

PROJECTS

PHILIPPINES

»SANCTUARY« – »SACRED SANCTUARY«

The theatre project »Sanctuary« creates safe and creative spaces for young people to reduce discrimination and exclusion

In a social environment where militarization, extra-judicial killings and violence, and the silencing of dissent have increasingly become normal, free thinking and critical voices are at risk. The space for youth engagement, independent thinking and creative action is therefore deeply beleaguered and threatened.

- The young performers use plays to show the risks of discrimination and exclusion.



It is in this light that the organization »Youth Advocates Through Theater Arts« (YATTA) seeks to create a youth-led safe zone, a »sanctuary«. Here, young people between 15 and 25 years of age from various faith traditions may gather to speak freely, even with differing opinions. The sanctuary offers them space for a lively and constructive dialogue. The main topics are sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, cultural identity, and civic engagement. The young people share their experiences of discrimination and exclusion and formulate core messages on these key issues. In this place, young people can get to know their own creative potential and bring »true« stories to the stage. Young people who have been victims of discrimination themselves, for example, use plays to





»We all know that discrimination happens everywhere and all the time. But for me personally, I really do see a lot of people being discriminated against, especially if they are part of the LGBTQIA* community or have disabilities, or on the basis of their race or their social status in life.«

Krystelle Banogon (Philippines)

*LGBTQIA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersexual, and asexual)

narrate what has happened to them and their peers. The theatre work helps them to express their experiences and develop self-confidence and new perspectives on the future through creative work. Through the theatre projects of YATTA, the young adult participants gain new self-confidence and become role models for others. Under the mentorship of Dessa Quesada-Palm, the artistic director of YATTA, they write plays, compose the background music, build the stage design, and devise their pieces. The young performers perform their plays in youth centres and public places (or online platforms if prohibitions due to the pandemic continue) in order to reach the widest possible audience. They inform audiences about the dangers of discrimination and exclusion.

YATTA's pieces are relentlessly open, but despite the seriousness of their content they also have been known to make the audience laugh while inspiring them to think. Dessa Quesada-Palm attaches great importance to the fact that none of the pieces seems hopeless. »Through our theatre work we want to educate young people about their rights and duties. To do this, we build on their capacities to tell their story, articulate their rights as young people, and identify partners in defending these rights«, she explains. And YATTA succeeds in this educational work with wit and understanding. ■

YATTA

YATTA was founded in Dumaguete in 2005 to give strength to young people through theatre work and to stand up for young people's rights. The plays deal with human rights-related topics such as discrimination and living with disabilities, or violence against children, young people, and women. Advocacy for human rights through theatre is well received.

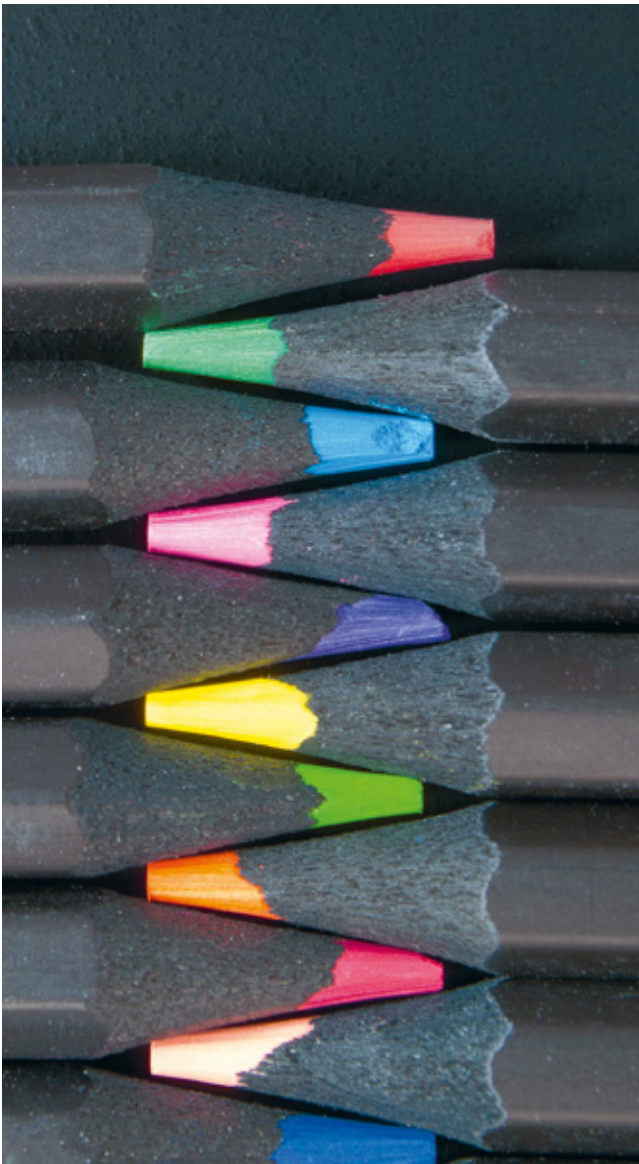
The theatre network cooperates with children's and youth centres, non-governmental organizations, churches, and government agencies. In 2008, YATTA was awarded the Ten Accomplished Youth Organizations prize by the National Youth Commission. YATTA also works closely with the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), a member church of the UEM.

www.yattadumaguete.wix.com/yatta



Dessa Quesada-Palm

Artistic director and director of the project
Youth Advocates Through Theater Arts (YATTA)

PROJECTS**GERMANY****»Colour-Blind?****Find Racism and Call It Out!«****Young People Develop Exhibition
on Racism and White Privilege**

The killings of George Floyd and others by racist police in the United States have once again inserted the subject of racism into our social and church discourse. As professionals in youth work, we can see that young people are increasingly concerned with this topic and want to get involved. The project »Colour-Blind? Find Racism and Call IT Out!« gives interested, committed young people a way to deal with racism, its causes, effects, and mechanisms of action, as well as to engage with white privilege more deeply and in community. The project will be accompanied by pedagogical and theological support, and the development of an interactive exhibition on racism will provide an opportunity for young people to contribute their ideas on the subject. They can work together against racism by sensitizing their peers through the exhibition.

The project will start on 4 January 2021 with a conference. For three days, young people from various youth churches and congregations will engage personally and spiritually with the topic of »Racism and White Privilege« at the youth church in Hamm. They will then design an interactive, coronavirus-compliant exhibition on the subject with a likely completion date of March/April 2021. This exhibition will then travel through various youth churches so that as many young people as possible can engage with the subject matter. Joint devotions on the theme of »Guilt and Reconciliation« will also be created. In the best case, youth services and other follow-up projects on the theme of discrimination and racism will develop after the exhibition.

As experts for their own target group, the young people will design the exhibition according to their own ideas. The Office for Youth Work of the EKVW and the full-time staff of the youth church in Hamm will accompany and support them in this. The young people will then act as multipliers through their role as experts on their own exhibition.

The aims of the project are to examine racism and white privilege and to transfer what has been learned and experienced into an exhibition format that will encourage other young people (confirmation and youth groups, school classes) to engage in interactive discussions. ■



Annika Huneke
Coordination Youth and
One World
Office for Youth Work,
EKvW



Katrin Berger
Youth Church
Pastor, Youth
Church Hamm

The **Office for Youth Work of the Church of Westphalia (AfJ)** is the central office of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia (EKvW) for all those who are involved in work with children and young people in Westphalia, are committed to them and support them in church and society. On behalf of the EKVW and the Youth Association of the Evangelical Youth of Westphalia (Youth Chamber of the Westphalian Church), the AfJ establishes positions, goals, and perspectives for the various subject areas of current practice in church congregations, church districts, works and associations.

www.ev-jugend-westfalen.de/evangelische-jugend-von-westfalen/amt-fuer-jugendarbeit

The **Evangelical Youth Church Hamm**, as a division of Protestant Youth in the Hamm church district, sees the participation of young people as a core task of its concept. Young people should rediscover the church and help shape the services for themselves and others. Spiritual and cultural events are central to this.

www.ev-jugend-hamm.de/jugendkirche

Youth churches from all over Germany are asked to actively participate as cooperation partners.

- 🔗 Making the world a bit more colourful at the Holi Festival of Colours. The spring festival is originally from India.



PROJECTS

RWANDA

Teenage pregnancies in Rwanda

The Anglican Church of Rwanda has promising approaches to the problems of these young women

The number of teenage pregnancies in Rwanda has been rising steadily for several years. As in other African countries, extramarital pregnancies are still a taboo subject in Rwanda. Teenage girls and adult women alike face stigmatization and social exclusion if their children are conceived out of wedlock. Men in such cases have little to fear.

The consequences for young women are often fatal. In many cases, they receive no support whatsoever from the father of the child. Sometimes they are even re-

EXTRA

The young women have recorded their statements in videos that can be viewed on YouTube

 United Evangelical Mission

- Almost children themselves, they are already mothers: teenage girls in Rwanda.





Although I was already grown up when I got pregnant, I was still young and lived with my parents. The father of the child did not support me financially. My parents told me that I could not stay with them and had to leave the house.



Sylvie Mushimiyimana

Now I am 35 and live alone in a house with my two children. Most men in Rwanda do not accept a woman who already has children from another man. I have resigned myself to staying alone.»

jected by their own parents. This clearly shows how the social conventions still weigh heavily today. Exclusion from one's church, school, or village community is by no means a relic of the past.

All this not only places an enormous psychological burden on the young mothers, but often results in extreme poverty, which in turn leads to chronic malnutrition of the mother and child. It begins even during pregnancy.

The Anglican Church in Rwanda (EAR) has started to support these women. This includes very practical help: the church provides them with land they can cultivate, for example. It also offers them free training, for example as seamstresses. But the church also lobbies the government for women to be considered in aid programmes.

>



Yvette Uwamariya



I was still at school when I got pregnant. The father of my child was also still very young. My parents did not discriminate against me, but they did not support me either. When the father of my child told me to move in with him, I dropped out of school and went to live with him. He treated me very badly. My daily life was marked by violence and poverty, so eventually I returned to my parents.

The Anglican Church supported me for a time – psychologically too. After a few years I met another man who accepted my child. The Anglican Church organized a church wedding for me. My son is now seven years old. The biological father never contacted me again after that.»

PROJECTS



» When I got pregnant, I was very afraid of how my parents would react. But they accepted my child without reservation. The reaction of the father of the child was completely different. He claimed that it was not his and refused to acknowledge it. The circumstances also forced me to give up my job.

The Anglican Church in Rwanda helped me the most. It brought me together with other women who were in the same situation as myself. The meetings we had together did a lot to help me overcome my self-doubt and regain my self-confidence.«

Elina Manishimwe

- > The cohesion within the church group has also been particularly helpful, according to the women themselves. Through the church project they have found other women who are in exactly the same situation. At the regular meetings the women can exchange ideas and support each other. What is more, they no longer feel so alone in their problems. The women have even founded a savings community. Three congregations of the Anglican Church in Rwanda have groups like this so far.

The UEM's human rights campaign not only seeks to help to expand these activities, but also and above all to draw attention to the fact that these women are still being marginalized and discriminated against, and thus to trigger a change in society as a whole. ■



David Fechner
UEM Peace Expert in Kigali,
Rwanda

» When I was 22 years old, I got pregnant. My older sister had already become pregnant out of wedlock. My family was discriminated against and condemned to by the village community. But my parents stood by my sister and me.

The father of my child was an older, married man who already had children. The neighbours in my village accused me of having seduced him. The man himself makes no secret of being the father, but he wants nothing to do with the child and does not support me in any way. Since it is generally regarded as misconduct on my part, he has nothing to fear from any consequences.«



Jeannette Mukakarega

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DISCRIMINATION – ON THE OBLIGATION TO ACT

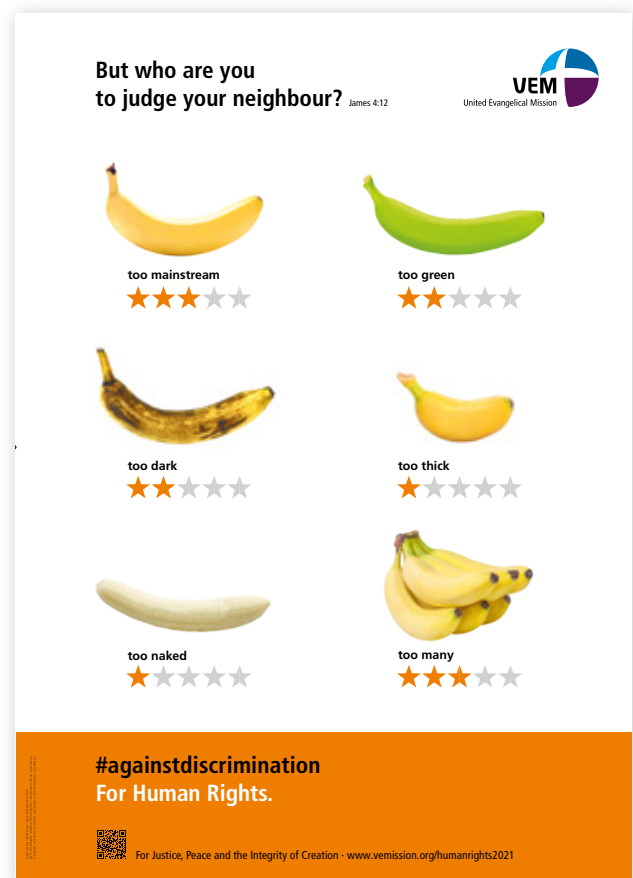
Discrimination includes more than the direct and deliberate devaluation and disadvantaging of individuals or groups. Many statements in this campaign booklet indicate that differences between people are perceived as determining their value. The notion of the supposedly »different« or »foreign« is woven into the deep structure of most societies as a stereotype. We can free ourselves from this historically influenced bias – in Western societies and others, we call this the process of civilization. Such an undertaking is obviously not easy, since all of us who are devalued and discriminated against are still being denied equal dignity and equal rights in society. The disadvantages that come with such discrimination are often not even perceived as unjust, but rather viewed as an inevitable result of differences among people. This opens the door to blatant and deliberate discrimination.

Discriminate? We don't!

The conscious classification and attribution of collective characteristics escalates what is Other into an open conflict between population groups with different interests. Results from ten years of research by sociologist Wilhelm Heitmeyer and his Bielefeld team¹ make it clear that group-related hostility does not stop with societies and social classes that describe themselves as »enlightened« or »tolerant«. A team of researchers from the University of Leipzig has written

of an »uninhibited centre« in Germany² – not a marginal phenomenon, in other words, but a core part of society in a country that is considered to be highly developed.

Discrimination is not just a consequence of individual attitudes or collective mentalities, however; it signifies a complex system of social relationships in which discriminatory distinctions are made in the



¹ Wilhelm Heitmeyer (ed.): Deutsche Zustände (»German Conditions«), Folgen 1-10, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/Main, 2002-2011.

² Oliver Decker et al. (eds): Die enthemmte Mitte. Autoritäre und rechtsextreme Einstellung in Deutschland. Die Leipziger »Mitte«-Studie 2016, Psychosozial-Verlag, Gießen 2016.

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- > struggle for access to resources. In addition to actions that can be attributed individually, this happens primarily through the structures in all of the social sub-systems of law, policy, education, and economics. Such discrimination includes the preferential allocation of jobs and services to members of population groups that are set off by racist, ethnic, nationalist, or gender-related distinctions.

Market and competition-oriented societies give rise to the paradox that unequal relationships are part of the system. In this way, individuals and groups considered to be productive are assigned a position that makes them better off than others and thus creates unequal social status. This is viewed positively, as appropriate and justified. The examples from this booklet alone can give the impression that differences can be explained by individual and intellectual performance, eloquence of language, and professional knowledge and skills. But the same individual performance in several people will again be different, and it is no coincidence that the lightness of a person's skin colour and/or other ethnic or religious characteristics will play a decisive role in how their capabilities are classified. Assessing one's performance in a competition of supposedly equal opportunity, therefore, and the social status associated with it, will only partially correspond to the claim that there is in fact a competition.

As has been sufficiently documented and does not bear repeating here, equal opportunities are based on conditions that the system of distributing social resources does not guarantee in any way. Most scientific studies on social inequality worldwide attest to growing inequality and delve into the differentiation by social status. People with disabilities, different sexual orientations, migration backgrounds, or membership in a minority are classified as deviating from the »norm«. The disparity necessitates access to equal opportunities, which is anything but fair, and instead perpetuates exclusion. There is an obvious conflict with the assumption that life is what you make it.

Enough research shows that political, legal, and educational measures against discrimination are essential if we are to be able to overcome stereotypes as individuals and as a society. The state has a duty to ensure that people can effectively assert their rights to equality. But it is not enough to guarantee individual legal claims to protection against discrimination and to demand an attitude of tolerance. Without an understanding of social structures, social practices, and the historical depth of bias, the commitment to fighting discrimination and its particular framework conditions gets stuck halfway. In particular, the emergence and implementation of human rights teach that organization is necessary in order to create struc-



Dr Kambale Jean-Bosco Kahongya Bwiruka
(Democratic Republic of Congo)

tures for solidarity and support. The history of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities shows exactly that without decades of pressure from organizations for the disabled, there would never have been such a convention.

Opposition through international law

In the human rights system of the United Nations, the prohibition of discrimination is not just one rule among others, but rather represents the structural principle for shaping society, the state, and international relations. All declarations of safeguarding human rights – such as the right to education, fair access to justice, freedom or minority rights – must be guaranteed in accordance with the principle of non-discrimination. In the absence of this principle, such freedoms would be the kind of privileges and particular rights historically reserved for »dignitaries«, which have always established exclusion and discrimination. Human rights, however, are based on human dignity for all people, without exclusion, legally and in practice. Human rights are equal rights. Equal rights should be understood as equal opportunities for all people to find and achieve their own plans for their lives in their own self-determined way – not as a uniformity in all human life, and not as the privilege of a few.

All human rights documents of the United Nations – the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), its treaties and conventions – prohibit discrimination, as do the regional human rights treaties for Africa, America, and Europe, and the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany. Two human rights treaties even formulate this goal in the title: the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.³

It is also of fundamental importance that the statements on the prohibition of discrimination include examples but deliberately do not present these examples as conclusive. Article 2, paragraph 1 of the UDHR states: »Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without any dis-

»I applied for
almost fifty jobs
and got zero results.
Very difficult!«

Takwani Suci Prestanti, a woman with
a disability (Indonesia)



tinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.« The use of »such as« opens up the possibility, as experience warrants, of adding further characteristics of discrimination and addressing them specifically.

For example, the long-standing and continuous lobbying by organizations for the disabled resulted in the adoption by the UN General Assembly of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which entered into force in 2008.⁴ With the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the signatory states to this agreement undertake to shape their social practices in such a way that people with disabilities are no longer excluded from public life, neither through barriers that have congealed into structures nor through administrative measures such as building codes. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), passed in 1989 and entered into force in 1990, had a comparable evolution.

There has not yet been an international convention on the equal rights of persons with diverse sexual orientation in order to enjoy universal human rights, non-discrimination and recognition before the law. Many states and governments are still reluctant or outright refuse to include sexual orientation and gender identity in the list of possible examples of discrimination. Homophobic prejudice is still widespread in these societies. Human-rights activists for sexual self-determination released the Yogyakarta Principles in March 2007 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia: twenty-nine articles on the rights of lesbian, gay, bi- ➤

³ UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979, entered into force in 1981.

⁴ UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

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- > sexual, and transgender people (LGBT). Today the members of this group would include the intersex, queer, and asexual communities (LGBTQIA). These principles are not yet legally binding *de jure*, but they are already being used in some UN expert committees on various human rights treaties that explicitly take into account the characteristics of sexual orientation and gender identity when reviewing the prohibition of discrimination.

The treatment and adjustment of legal claims against discrimination is an ongoing process. Abiding and constant significance is accorded to the fundamental questions of how exactly the respective characteristics of discrimination manifest themselves, how they are perceived, and how they are empirically and especially statistically recorded. The UN expert committees for the monitoring of the anti-racism and women's rights conventions have been recommending for years that all states – including Germany – provide meaningful empirical data that would enable these committees to name the discriminatory practices and structures as precisely as possible and react to them with maximum effectiveness. This applies in particular to temporary support measures (affirmative action) for individual groups of people in order to be able to break out of historically entrenched, discriminatory structures.

Precise analyses also allow us to detect, systematically address, and deal with multiple forms of discrimination. Research into both structural and covert discrimination is not over. Discrimination does not always occur in simple cause-and-effect contexts.



»The overlap and simultaneity of various categories of discrimination is a daily part of my life.«

Sarah Vecera (Germany)

Organizations of affected persons, the scientific community, and to a certain extent the judiciary and policy world are also now dealing with the topic of multiple discrimination and intersectionality. Different dimensions of discrimination can overlap and intensify, condensing into a specific form of devaluation and disadvantage – for example, the crossover sort of discrimination faced by working women, who are paid less on the basis of their sex or disparaged for their disabilities.

A human rights convention gets ratified by the state. Then what?

The states that have ratified the respective conventions have undertaken to transfer the norms into national legislation and national social practice. In so doing, they have made a firm commitment to appropriately protect people against violations of the law and to guarantee their everyday rights in society, as well as to report periodically on the implementation. The expert committees for each convention review and comment on compliance using the reports from states and the shadow reports from civil society initiatives. This opens up a broad field for support, such as the affected persons organizing themselves. The human rights treaties listed here have a high rate of ratification, so that even among non-ratifying states, the other expert committees also take into account how the prohibition of discrimination is being implemented.

The optional protocols include the possibility of submitting individual complaints about noncompliance with legal claims to the relevant expert committee. As a rule, however, the national judicial process must already have been exhausted. The expert committee then makes a decision, a kind of judgement that obliges the contracting state to implement it. In the case of non-compliance, international law does not provide for any public prosecutor or bailiff.⁵ But the reputational damage from not complying with a treaty is serious, so the vast majority of contracting states will respect a case decision. Those governments that have little incentive to implement human rights in the first place usually fail to ratify such additional protocols at all. This does not mean that they are any less bound to comply with the standards, however. >

5 Of male or female provenance.

Ratification of relevant human rights conventions in countries with UEM member churches

Country	Human rights convention, year ratified				
	CERD	CEDAW	CRC	CRPD	Optional protocol
Botswana	1974	1996	1965	none	CEDAW 2007
People's Republic of China*	1969	1981	1990	2008	none
Democratic Republic of Congo	1976	1986	1990	2015	none
Germany	1969	1985	1992	2009	CEDAW 2002 / CRC 2013 / CRPD 2009
Indonesia	1999	1984	1990	2011	none
Cameroon	1971	1994	1993	signed	CEDAW 2005
Namibia	1982	1992	1990	2007	CEDAW 2000 / CRPD 2007
Philippines	1967	1981	1990	2008	CEDAW 2003
Rwanda	1975	1981	1991	2008	CEDAW 2008 / CRPD 2008
Sri Lanka	1982	1981	1991	2016	CEDAW 2002
South Africa	1998	1995	1995	2007	CEDAW 2005 / CRPD 2007
Tanzania	1972	1985	1991	2009	CEDAW 2006 / CRPD 2009

CERD: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CRC: Convention on the Rights of the Child

CRPD: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

*Hong Kong is not a sovereign territorial state and as such cannot be a party to a convention.

Total number of ratifications by member states of the United Nations

Conventions cited in this text	Number of States Parties Ratified	Signed by states - Political declaration of intent
CERD	182	3*
CEDAW	189	2**
CRC	196	1***
CRPD	182	9****
Recognition procedure for individual complaints		
Optional protocol to CEDAW	114	11
Optional protocol to CRC	46	18
Optional protocol to CRPD	96	28

* Bhutan, Nauru, Palau

** Palau, USA

*** USA

**** Bhutan, Cameroon, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Solomon Islands, Tajikistan, Tonga, USA, Uzbekistan

As of September 2020

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»Man's great guilt does not lie in the sins that he commits, for temptation is great, and his strength limited.

The great transgression of man lies in the fact that he can turn away from evil at any moment – and yet he does not.«

Martin Buber (Austria)

- > In addition to the individual complaint procedure,⁶ CERD and CEDAW provide for their own investigation procedure in which lower requirements for the admissibility of a complaint must be met (exhaustion of domestic judicial remedies). The expert committee for the convention can then decide on its own to take action based on reliable information that indicates a serious or systematic violation or threat to the rights set out in both conventions. In such cases, the committee of experts is empowered to call upon the state party to cooperate in the examination of the information and to take a position on it. Both situations – individual complaints and special procedures – again open up a broad field of support for the affected parties.

Examples of how cases are treated in selected countries

In order to give readers an idea of the extent to which instruments of international law can be used specifically to combat discrimination, the following is a selection of case studies and countries in which member churches of the UEM exist and operate. This is a selection for illustrative purposes and does not claim to be a representative overview.

Recent studies of the human rights situation in **Namibia** by United Nations agencies have dealt with discrimination against the San indigenous people in the Kalahari desert and the mistreatment and abuse of women and children. Both phenomena have been commonplace in Namibia for many years. The UN expert committees have evaluated extensive analyses, identified options for government action, and stated their expectations of what the Namibian government can do to combat these problems.⁷

In **Rwanda**, the social context continues to be shaped by the civil war of the early 1990s and the genocide in 1994. Rwanda has undoubtedly done significant re-processing of its past and has made progress in human development. Nonetheless, the stereotypes underlying the genocide are still present, and the authoritarian government decreed change unilaterally instead of organizing it in collaboration with

⁶ CERD in accordance with State party declaration based on Article 14, CEDAW by additional ratification of Optional Protocol of 1999.

⁷ See the concluding observations on the periodic reports for CEDAW, CRC, and CERD in Concluding Observations (2015) CEDAW/C/NAM/CO/4-5; Concluding Observations (2012) CRC/C/NAM/CO/2-3. The Concluding Observations (2008) CERD/C/NAM/CO/12 from 2008 on the San are still valid today.



affected groups and in discourse with the population. This also applies to the prevention of violence against women and children.⁸

Religious discrimination in **Indonesia** is based on an ambivalent legal situation and political passivity. For example, the fundamentalist Sunni population groups view religious minorities as fair game. Indonesian authorities have done nothing to prevent systemic discrimination in the health care sector (HIV-AIDS) against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. The government allows police and militant Islamists to carry out arbitrary and illegal raids on private LGBT gatherings. The government uses insurrection law and the military to fight the self-determination of the Papuans, committing heinous crimes in the process.⁹

In **Sri Lanka**, ethnic profiling (unfounded suspicion based on ethnic characteristics) against members of the Tamil minority is still commonplace. After the Easter attacks in 2019, Muslims were increasingly targeted by fundamentalist Buddhists and also subjected to increased surveillance and harassment by security

forces. In March 2017, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women called on Sri Lanka to take more action against the numerous forms of violence against women and girls and to amend all personal laws to remove the discriminatory provisions contained therein – above all the Muslim marriage and divorce law from 1951.¹⁰

For many people, racism in Germany is a bitter daily reality. Germany is not doing well in the area of women's equality either, as far as discrimination is concerned – this is in fact a long-standing theme in its CEDAW reviews. Even a national institution like the Federal Anti-discrimination Agency found in June 2020 that many racist resentments are deeply embedded in German society and that these manifest in routine exclusion. In addition to improving the legal situation, the Anti-discrimination Agency is calling on the German Federal States to act against discrimination more consistently and to do significantly more for equal treatment. The UN expert committees also regularly criticize the fact that in Germany there is no uniform record kept of cases of discrimination and no comprehensive statistics maintained.¹¹

Such findings are recorded in all countries by civil society initiatives, national human rights commissions, law collectives, trade unions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and human rights defenders. They use these to mount public campaigns at the same time that they encourage those affected to organize themselves. Churches – some – are also involved in various initiatives. It is not uncommon for the commitment to require as much advocacy and effort internally as externally towards the mainstream population.

How we can get involved

Organizations, including churches, need to establish binding and verifiable plans to combat discrimination, alongside the numerous opportunities available locally and through participation in (UEM) projects. This can take the form of a variety of activities: participation in public campaigns, training and qualifica-



8 Concluding Observations (2020) CRC/C/RWA/CO/5-6; Concluding Observations (2019) CRPD/C/RWA/CO/1; Concluding Observations (2017) CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9; Concluding Observations (2016) CERD/C/RWA/CO/18-20.

9 Concluding Observations (2013) CCPR/C/IDN/CO/1; Concluding Observations (2007) A/62/18.

10 Concluding Observations (2017) CEDAW/C/LKA/CO/8; Concluding Observations (2016) CERD/C/LKA/CO/10-17.

11 Concluding Observations (2017) CEDAW/C/DEU/CO/7-8; Concluding Observations (2015) CERD/C/DEU/CO/19-22.

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- > tion measures for employees, the establishment of complaints offices and of measures for equality, a discourse on the multiplicity of valid ways to live one's life, and diversity concepts that oppose stereotypes and prejudices. Shining a light on victims of discrimination, however, should not encourage further discrimination.

A second large and key field is in building the capacity of those affected to organize themselves (empowerment), providing information about their legal recourses, and creating possibilities for exchange and networking with others. The idea of non-discrimination likewise includes an active examination of social participation that involves questioning traditional power structures and constellations. It is just as important to recognize that many of our fellow citizens (and congregation members) have adapted to these categories of stigma.

»You shall love
the Lord your God
with all your heart
and with all your soul
and with all your strength
and with all your mind,
and your neighbour
as yourself.«

(Luke 10:27)



This kind of commitment against discrimination is usually very uncomfortable and demands much of the state, society, and community. It is important to challenge deeply rooted historical prejudices, to mark them out as changeable and to actively push for that change. But the social policy level must also be included, and the implementation of an effective anti-discrimination policy based on human rights demanded. This is not necessarily groundbreaking work. It is about humanizing the whole of society and taking seriously the affirmation of the inviolable dignity of every person – the claim of the churches especially, since time immemorial. In this spirit, we confess that this commitment and this learning process takes time and will probably never be finished. The Old and New Testament scriptures, however, are full of evidence that people have attempted it and succeeded.



Dr Theodor Rathgeber
Researcher
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FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND EXCLUSION IN ASIA AND THE WORK OF THE CHURCH



»I finished college in 2016. I didn't start working until 2019. I applied for almost fifty jobs and got zero results. Very difficult! Various companies deliberately rejected me because of my disability«,¹ says Takwani Suci

Prestanti. This young woman has a disability, and she is not alone. Discrimination on the basis of disability is not uncommon in Indonesia and in Asia in general – in private companies and government ministries alike. Here is one example: the selection sheet for the admission of candidates for civil servant careers in 2019 in Indonesian ministries lists several application criteria for persons with disabilities. They must have good ability to see, speak and hear, analyse, discuss, and type. What is more, they should be able to walk without use of a wheelchair or other aids.² The barriers for people with disabilities are high in Indonesian society.

Discrimination and marginalization are widespread in Asia. The case described above is just one small example of disability discrimination. There are many forms of discrimination on the basis of characteristics such as origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or membership in a certain group. These are presented below.

Racial and ethnic discrimination

The indigenous Papuans in Indonesia have faced discrimination and marginalization for many years. Musa Heselo, an indigenous Papuan, reports on his experiences: »I ate lunch with some friends from Java

and Sulawesi a few times at a snack bar in Arso. My friends were asked to get their own food. I was the only one who was served.«³ What Musa Heselo experienced seemed like a privilege. But it was in fact a form of discrimination because the bar owner did not trust him to pick up his own food, even as he trusted the two friends from Java and Sulawesi to do so.

This form of ethnic discrimination is also experienced by the Lumad, the indigenous people of Mindanao in the Philippines. The Lumad have been displaced from their homeland for many years because they have resisted exploitation by the government. They are socially, politically, and economically marginalized. Denied access to education, they are displaced from their own ancestral lands. All of these are forms of discrimination.

People of Chinese descent face discrimination in Indonesia as well.⁴ Some of them have had traumatic experiences. The riots of 1998 targeted ethnic Chinese Indonesians in cities including Medan (North Sumatra Province), Surakarta (Central Java Province), and Jakarta, the capital. This group is still exposed to discriminatory hostility to this day. In mid-January 2020, a subdistrict in the east Javanese capital of Surabaya made headlines: officials from a community unit in Bangkungan Subdistrict, Lakarsantri District distributed a letter demanding that »non-*pribumi*« (non-native) residents living in the community who wanted to open a business pay twice as much as their »native« neighbours. In addition to the one-time fee, non-*pri-*

¹ www.bbc.com/indonesia/majalah-50512664

² www.bbc.com/indonesia/indonesia-50463761

³ www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/08/19/after-a-year-of-papuan-antiracism-rallies-discrimination-remains-an-everyday-occurrence.html

⁴ www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2020/01/24/being-chinese-indonesian.html



- ▲ The hurdles for people with disabilities are high in Indonesian society.

bumi were also to pay a monthly fee to the community. This effectively targeted the ethnic Chinese population in Indonesia.

Discrimination based on religion

Ethnic and racial minorities are not the only marginalized groups in Asia; religious minorities face discrimination as well. Attacks on the Christian and Muslim minorities in Sri Lanka are not uncommon, and in Indonesia there are attacks on Ahmadis, Shiites, and Christians as well as people of the local religions.

After the Easter bombings in Sri Lanka in 2019, Muslims came under heavy pressure from society and the government. Human Rights Watch reported that Muslim women were being imprisoned and harassed. They were also denied access to hospitals, universities, and public sites and squares, as well as the workplace. Human Rights Watch cited numerous reports from vari-

ous parts of the country, including Puttalam in the west and Batticaloa and Trincomalee in the east.⁵

In Indonesia, discriminatory laws and regulations threaten religious minorities. Thousands of places of worship, mainly Christian churches, have been closed on orders from the authorities. They have been using these laws as an excuse to close Ahmadi and Shiite mosques, and shrines of local ethnic religions. In some Christian-dominated provinces, conversely, such ordinances have sometimes been used as a pretext to shut down Sunni mosques.

Discrimination on the basis of sexual identity

The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual community (LGBTQIA) faces many forms of discrimination. Similar to the case of people with disabilities, they are categorically barred from becoming civil servants because of their sexual identity. In >

⁵ www.hrw.org/news/2019/07/03/sri-lanka-muslims-face-threats-attacks

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» Discrimination against the LGBT+ community is very blatant in our society, especially in public places like markets, shopping centres, and churches. Toilets in markets and shopping centres have signs for either women or men. And you don't see transgender people wearing skirts or dresses in church because that's a taboo. As a transgender person, I wanted to wear makeup and women's clothes when I was a student teacher in college. But that wasn't allowed at the college. There were times when I was discriminated against because sometimes I didn't behave as society expected or dictated. It affects my self-esteem and the feeling that I have to constantly fit in and monitor my actions because this society does not accept us.«

Rojan Talita (Philippines)



- > 2019, several agencies and ministries of the Indonesian government listed a series of requirements on the recruitment page for civil servants: applicants for all vacancies could not be colour-blind or mentally disabled, or have tattoos or piercings. Nor could they have any sort of »dysfunctional sexual orientation«.⁶ Many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual people lack decent jobs because their applications were rejected by companies, religious communities, or the government. They can only find work on the streets, with all the risk and threat that implies. Alternatively, they must hide their sexual orientation in order to get a reputable job.

Discrimination on the basis of sex

In many Asian countries, discrimination against women is a current issue. These are the facts: women have difficulty obtaining leadership positions; girls must make great efforts to attend school; women work harder but earn less. The UN report on women in Asia and the Pacific during the pandemic indicates that women are facing increasing discrimination. Notes Mohammad Naciri, UN Regional Director for

Women in Asia and the Pacific: »Asia and the Pacific continues to be the region most prone to natural disasters in the world. The gendered impacts of additional disasters within the context of COVID-19 can be anticipated: A Mekong drought, for example, combined with the increased need for hygiene practices such as handwashing in the context of the pandemic, will likely result in significant increases to the unpaid care work burden of women, who are primarily responsible for collection of water for household use.«⁷

Discrimination during the COVID-19 crisis

Distrust and hatred of foreigners is alarmingly high in many Asian countries. Discrimination against foreigners has increased with the coronavirus pandemic. To give just a few examples, Africans are being refused entry into China, and Chinese are being rejected by Indonesian society because they are considered to be carriers of the virus. Many migrant workers in Hong Kong are also experiencing discrimination for the same reason.⁸

⁶ www.bbc.com/indonesia/majalah-50512664

⁷ www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/4/press-release-women-hit-harder-by-socio-economic-impacts-of-covid-19-in-asia-pacific

⁸ www.youtube.com/watch?v=4A15oP6TKGg&feature=youtu.be

The Lumad, the indigenous people of Mindanao in the Philippines, have been driven from their homeland for years because they resist exploitation by the government. From left: Bai Bibiaon, Datu Duloman, and Bishop Hamuel Tequis. ▶



What is the church in Asia doing to combat discrimination and exclusion?

Churches and Christians in Asia are also confronting discrimination and disadvantages – as both victims and perpetrators. On the one hand, they are often treated unfairly by Asian societies and governments, for example when a church is planning to build a house of worship or when admission to a certain school is made more difficult for religious reasons.⁹ On the other hand, the church practices structural discrimination too. Examples include when women do not receive letters of recommendation for work in a school as a theologian, when women are not allowed to be decision-makers in the church, when people with disabilities have no opportunity to apply for jobs in the church community, or when people are rejected and marginalized by the church simply for belonging to the LGBTQIA community or living with HIV/AIDS.

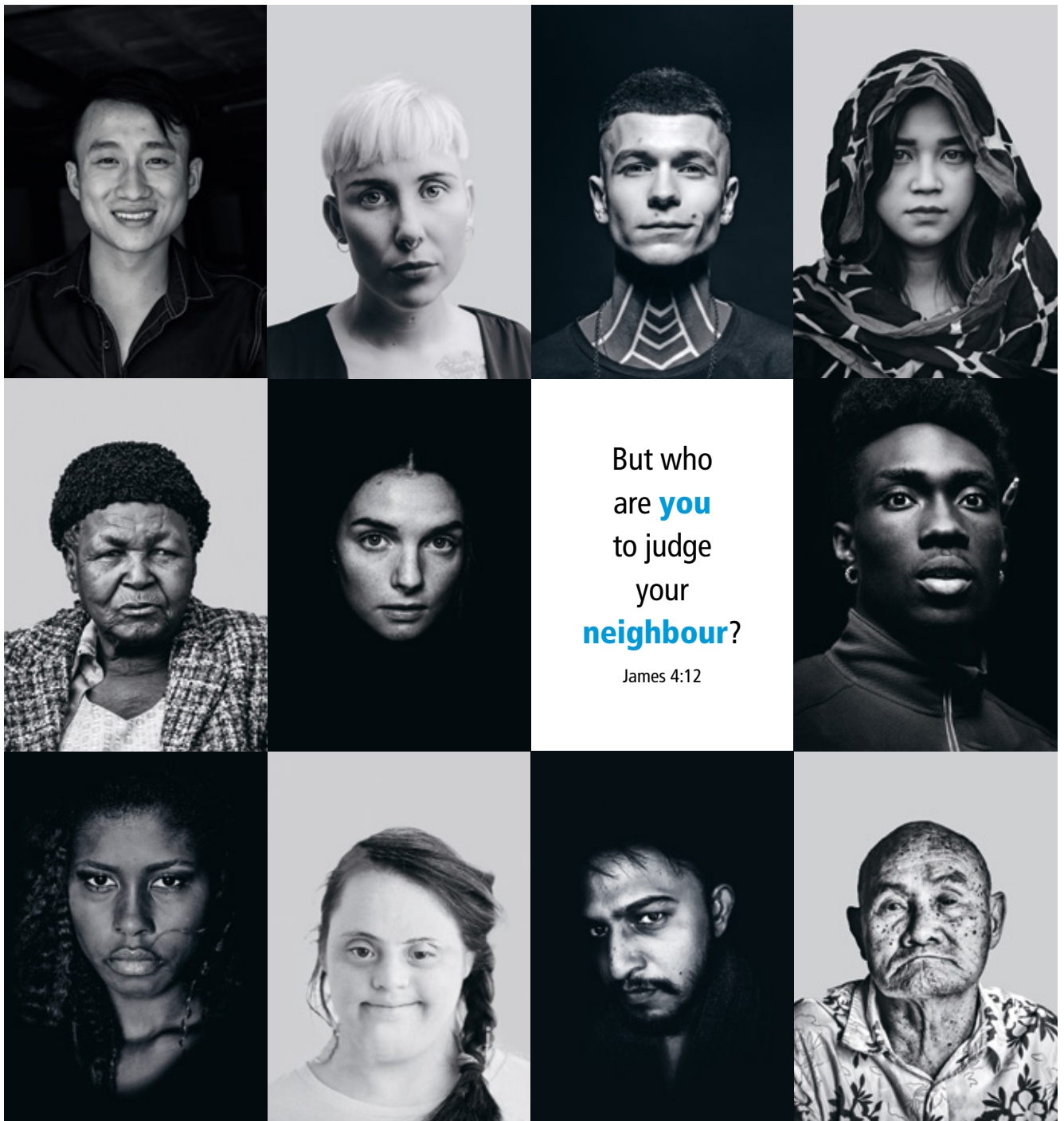
This is why it is the duty of the UEM member churches in Asia to protect people from discrimination, exclusion, and disadvantages. For example, the United

Church of Christ in the Philippines has issued the »Let Grace Be Total« (LGBT) statement on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. The churches in North Sumatra are advocating for the rights of people with disabilities and for those with HIV/AIDS. Churches in Java and Sri Lanka that champion interreligious dialogue are running campaigns to raise awareness of discrimination against religious minorities. Finally, the UEM member church in Hong Kong is making an attempt to listen to migrant workers from Indonesia. ■

⁹ www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2017/08/09/speak-up-on-religious-discrimination-at-school.html



Rev. Dr. Dyah Ayu Krismawati
UEM Executive Secretary for Asia,
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FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND EXCLUSION IN AFRICA AND THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

In Africa as elsewhere, discrimination and exclusion have many faces. The reasons for this can vary greatly.

Racial and ethnic discrimination

Racial discrimination is the most well-known type of discrimination in the world. It is not limited to skin colour, as the expression »people of colour« (POC) might suggest. Racial discrimination is a social construct that distinguishes people from one another – because of their accent, manner of speaking, name, clothing, appearance, diet, beliefs, leisure preferences, origin, or other aspect – and judges their value on this basis. Racial discrimination is sometimes openly manifested through insults, malicious jokes, or acts of hate.

In most African countries, various groups continue to experience racial discrimination, with ethnicity playing a prominent role. As one example, in Tanzania you will often hear statements like, »Ten people and three Maasai were on the bus.« Such a formulation can give the impression that the Maasai do not belong to the group recognized as people. Nevertheless, the Maasai are an active part of society; they are members of the government and the parliament; they are pastors and entrepreneurs. Even Saniniu Laizer, who recently became a millionaire upon discovering three large specimens of the gemstone tanzanite, belongs to this ethnic group.

The Batwa people in Rwanda (Abasangwa Butaka, the original inhabitants of the country) – also known as pygmies – are a minority in Africa. >

● Millionaire Saniniu Laizer belongs to the Maasai ethnic group in Tanzania.



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- > The Batwa were driven out during the colonial era, and missionaries were given their land to build churches on it. The expelled people had little money, no access to education, and inadequate health care. Things changed after the 1994 genocide, when the Rwandan government funded their education, for example. By 2018, 71 Batwa had attended university. Despite these advances, the Batwa are not yet fully integrated into society. Even the church has not yet ordained them as pastors. It remains very rare for people from other ethnic groups to marry into a Batwa family. To this day, such a connection is looked on as degrading.

The pygmies in the Democratic Republic of Congo, on the other hand, have tried to preserve their own culture, their villages, and their traditional lifestyle as indigenous people of the country. But other peoples, especially Bantu, consider the pygmies primitive because of this. The Bantu preach the Gospel to the pygmies and try to convert them to Christ and change their lifestyle. Some Bantu people even believe that sex with a pygmy can cure disease. Intercultural relationships of this type, therefore, do not end in an authentic marriage but are used only for a selfish purposes. Many mothers are left behind, helpless and hopeless.

According to the 2011 census of Namibia, the indigenous peoples – San, Nama, Himba, Zemba, and Twa – make up around 8 per cent of the country's more than 2 million inhabitants. Since the country gained independence from South Africa in 1990, various measures have been taken to improve the situation of the indigenous people in Namibia. Namibia has signed several international agreements to safeguard human rights and the rights of indigenous peoples, including the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In 2007, Namibia voted in favour of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). In addition, the country's own constitution prohibits discrimination and encourages the state to support marginalized and disadvantaged communities. The Namibian government has launched programmes in accordance with these documents to combat discrimination and create a just and balanced society. Despite much progress, the rights of indigenous peoples are

still not directly addressed as such in the constitution. The indigenous population continues to face poverty and discrimination, forced to live in remote regions of the country and to fight for their lands.¹

Social and cultural discrimination

In many African countries, albinos are discriminated against, persecuted, and sometimes killed because of their physical appearance. Many believe that people with albinism have magical, supernatural powers and are immortal. At the same time, albinos are seen in many places as mystical beings and deathless spirits, says the Cameroonian Jean-Jacques Ndoudoumou, an albino himself. He notes that some people believe that albinos did not behave well in their first life and that the gods would therefore punish them after death by returning them to earth. Discrimination against albinos is a reality in many African countries. Mutilations and ritual killings of albinos happen time and again. Individual body parts fetch a lot of money on the black market and are manufactured into items such as talismans.

¹ www.culturalsurvival.org/sites/default/files/media/namibiacescr2016.pdf



▶ In some African countries, albinos face discrimination and are sometimes attacked and killed.



» The church should raise awareness that every person is important in society, regardless of his or her disability, regardless of race or religion.«

Linda Mambo (Tanzania)

Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation

In many countries, people belonging to the LGBTQIA community (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual people) face discrimination. Perceptions of the LGBTQIA community are different culturally, religiously, and legally. In most African cultures, belonging to an LGBTQIA community is taboo and punished as an offence under the law. Not so in South Africa: South Africa's constitution was the first in the world to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, and in 2006 South Africa became the fifth country in the world and the first country in Africa to legalize same-sex marriage. LGBTQIA people in South Africa enjoy constitutional and legal protection from discrimination in employment, in the provision of goods and services, and in many other areas. Nonetheless, LGBTQIA people in rural South Africa still face homophobia. In Botswana, discrimination in the workplace based on sexual orientation has been banned since 2010, and same-sex sexual acts were legalized for both men and women by the Supreme Court on 11 June 2019. Discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity has yet to be banned in Namibia.

Discrimination against congenital deformities

Birth defects are perceived very differently in Africa. In some cultures, children with developmental abnormalities are given a positive, sometimes ironic name to describe their ailment. One would not necessarily define this naming as discrimination. For example, among the Nande or Yira in North Kivu Province (Democratic Republic of Congo), a child born with a cleft lip is called Munywa or Munywa wa Ngèbè, which means something like »cleft lip«. This name is very common, and children with a cleft lip are not treated badly. On the other hand, children with congenital deformities are considered »bad spirits« or unlucky in other cultures and are therefore sometimes treated badly. They are hidden away at home, far from school. They take no part in social life, have no proper health care, and receive no pastoral care either.

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» I have found that people with disabilities are highly discriminated against in our society. And indeed that's because they make no contribution to our society.»

Linda Mambo (Tanzania)

Discrimination on the basis of sex

Gender discrimination in Africa goes back to the patriarchal, socio-cultural, and religious systems that regulate the distribution of tasks and responsibilities in the society, girls' and boys' education, access to work and wealth, participation in decision-making processes, etc. For several decades the churches have undertaken tremendous efforts to narrow the gap between men and women in areas such as education. The churches are also committed to the equality of women in ministry, including in pastoral ordination. Not everyone sees this social advancement of women in the church and society as a good thing, however. There are still men who believe that women cannot perform certain functions. As a result, some people remain very hostile to the ordination of women and their promotion to higher leadership positions in the church.

What is the church in Africa doing to combat discrimination and exclusion?



Against all these forms of discrimination, the churches have organized various holistic programmes and projects with the aim of preventing exclusion and discrimination. The most vulnerable people receive special attention and care through the diaconal commitment of the church – including economically disadvantaged people, women and girls, people with disabilities, minorities, indigenous people, and the elderly.

In order to ensure sustainable development, the church is also building the capacities of the various people in order to reinforce their self-reliance and independence. By valuing differences as a human community, this work helps to develop a positive and improved understanding for peaceful coexistence.

The prophetic voice of the church serves as a constant reminder of the need to respect the dignity of each individual, to support justice for all, and to advocate for equal opportunities and peaceful coexistence in society. Although the church does everything possible to prevent discrimination and exclusion, there are laws and regulations that uphold various forms of exclusion and need to be reformed. This includes excommunication in the church. The task of the church is to return to the community all those who have been excluded from it. ■



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*But who are
----- **you** -----
to judge your
neighbour? -----*

James 4:12

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DISCRIMINATION IN GERMANY – NO HAPPYLAND¹!

Discrimination happens in Germany, and it happens every day. Discrimination happens in personal encounters as well as through systems and structures. It takes place in everyday situations – on the bus, in conversations with colleagues, in school classes and kindergartens, at parties, in church services, at job interviews and in advertising campaigns. One common source of discrimination is social media and the internet in general.

Discrimination happens knowingly and unknowingly. People are not always aware that what they say discriminates against others. Discrimination is not always intentional, but that does not take away from its effectiveness. Calling Germany a »Happyland« means turning a blind eye to the reality of discrimination and its destructive effects. The idea of the country as a »Happyland« allows discrimination to continue unhindered.

Discrimination also takes place under the guise of goodwill, often even kindness: »Mrs Müller, you are a woman. You should go home from this meeting now to be with your children«; »Hello fellow student, you live with a disability. How nice that you are here on our course! A special welcome!«; or »Mrs Noglo, here is the form to apply for financial support for the travel costs of a class trip for your children«, when Mrs Noglo is a pastor in a German city with no need and no intention to apply for assistance.

Every one of us has witnessed such sentences or similar ones and knows the resulting feelings of anger



»My church should always stay open-minded towards all kinds of individuals. My church should support and also arrange anti-discrimination projects to counteract a discriminatory mindset at an early age. But my church should always follow Romans 3:11. God doesn't have any favourites. My church should stand up for diversity proudly too and encourage its followers to do the same.«

Dorothea Altena (Germany)

¹ The German author Tupoka Ogette coined the term »Happyland« to describe the fact that many people in Germany face discrimination and racism unwittingly or refuse to accept that these exist. Ogette, Tupoka: Exit RACISM, Muenster 2017.



and helplessness – often hidden behind a smiling face. And probably all of us have already spoken such sentences and understand the immediate feeling of shame at having contributed to discrimination.

Discrimination happens privately, but also publicly, in everyday situations. To this day, black students in Germany see people hesitate to sit next to them on the bus, or watch shop owners eye them suspiciously as they browse.

But that is not all. Discrimination can lead to brutal open violence. Two events have deeply shaken the German public recently.

On 9 October 2019, during services for Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish faith, a young man attempted to enter the synagogue in Halle an der Saale, heavily armed. His aim: to cause a massacre. Only the firm lock on the entrance door of the synagogue prevented his entry, whereupon the young man shot two people outside the synagogue. He had previously an-

nounced his plan on the internet and filmed his actions with a head-mounted camera. The young man is now charged with two murders and 68 counts of attempted murder.

Four months later, on 19 February 2020, another young man shot nine people in two shisha bars in Hanau, and later himself and his mother. For the first time in Germany, this event was publicly and without hesitation named as racist violence and labelled as embedded in a racist discourse and not, as in similar previous cases, as »inhumane« more generally or as the act of an individual.

Combating and overcoming discrimination is a political objective. In 2006, following the introduction of the General Equal Treatment Act,² the Federal An-

² Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/publikationen/AGG/agg_gleichbehandlungsgesetz.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

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- > ti-Discrimination Agency³ was established in Germany. It provides information, advice, and support, as well as outreach. With its 35 employees, the Agency also conducts research and cooperates with experts for the purpose of actively preventing and eliminating discrimination. The Agency is bound only by the General Equal Treatment Act and works independently. Every four years it submits a report to the German Bundestag.

The report presented in 2019 points out that the number of requests for advice has steadily increased since 2016. In 2019, 33 per cent of all requests for advice related to discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin. Other requests for advice were for discrimination based on gender (29 per cent), disability (26 per cent), age (12 per cent), religion (7 per cent), sexual identity (4 per cent), and worldview (2 per cent). New attention is also being paid to discrimination in the medical field and discrimination by algorithms (internet).

Apart from this central structure, a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and foundations offer contact, advice, advocacy, and support. These include the Anti-Discrimination Association, with offices in many large German cities, and the NGO Pro Asyl,⁴ to mention just two. Self-help organizations such as the Initiative Schwarzer Deutscher⁵ (Initiative of Black Germans) and the Sinti-Allianz Deutschland⁶ (Sinti Alliance Germany) form networks of support, information work, further training, and advocacy. There are expert agencies, such as the academic Center for Research on Antisemitism⁷ in Berlin, as well as other entities that study the phenomena of discrimination. The Central Council of German Sinti and Roma⁸ and the Central Council of Jews in Germany⁹ are official representative bodies for their respective population groups. The Forum Menschenrechte¹⁰ (Human Rights Forum), founded in 1996, is a network of 53 NGOs working to protect human rights.

The aim of the Forum is to monitor the German Federal Government's human rights policy with regard to national and international issues.

One example of a well-known and widespread initiative for schools is the network Schule ohne Rassismus – Schule mit Courage (School without Racism – School with Courage).¹¹ Founded in 1995 as a response to the increasing right-wing and racist violence in Germany, the network now has more than 3,300 members in Germany and more in other European countries. The aim of the network is to encourage and support schools to work for an open, accepting atmosphere and against all forms of discrimination, bullying, and violence in schools. Schools are awarded a network seal when 70 per cent of all pupils and teachers have committed to actively preventing and combating discrimination and an annual project day has been organized.

Discrimination is a widespread and multifaceted phenomenon in German society. Initiatives, structures, and individual responses are needed to uncover, combat, and overcome discrimination. ■



Angelika Veddelar
UEM Executive Secretary for Germany,
Member of the UEM Management Team

3 Anti Diskriminierungsstelle des Bundes
www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/EN/Home/home_node.html

4 www.proasyl.de

5 www.isdonline.de

6 www.sintialliancedeutschland.de

7 www.tu-berlin.de/fakultaet_i/zentrum_fuer_antisemitismusforschung/menue/ueber_uns/parameter/en/

8 zentralrat.sintiundroma.de/en/

9 www.zentralratderjuden.de

10 www.forum-menschenrechte.de/english-summary

11 www.schule-ohne-rassismus.org

*But who
are you
to judge
your neighbour?*

James 4:12



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EXPERIENCES ON THE THEME OF RACISM IN EVERYDAY LIFE, AND ASPIRATIONS FOR THE CHURCH OF TOMORROW

The experiences of individual and structural discrimination are inextricably linked with emotionality and spirituality. It is people's personal experiences from which the treaties and human rights Conventions of the United Nations derive their demands for triumph over and protection from discrimination.

As the United Evangelical Mission, we are a communion of churches. We make this clear in our subtitle: the people who make up this communion are the most important thing, people who are embedded in a network of relationships based on the church. This is our strength. Our projects in this booklet are about individual people, and therefore subjective. At the same time, these people are integrated into state and church systems that consciously or unconsciously, actively or passively participate in exclusion and discrimination.

This campaign was originated by an international team of UEM staff members – it is therefore also subjective. And that's good. We hope that the campaign will gain more attention and resonance than the statistics and human rights conventions that purport to be purely academic and objective.

It is for this very reason that I am writing a personal word about this campaign. Intersectionality is an ever-present part of my life. Intersectionality describes the overlap and simultaneity of different categories of discrimination against a person. As a 37-year-old



»I honestly admit that in my life I once discriminated against other people because of their appearance and the way they lived their lives. When I grew up, I understood why there are people who discriminate. It's because people grow up in different belief systems, cultures, and religions. But discriminating against people and excluding them just because they are different from us is unacceptable. We have to learn that humanity is very important in order to make this world into a better place to live.«

Reymark Palen (Philippines)

married woman with academic training, a deputy executive secretary, a German person of colour (POC), and the mother of two children, I am regularly referred to in the church and ecumenical world as »young«, as a matter of course, and I experience sexism and racism at an individual level. People have no ill will in saying such things, and I do believe that. But the invisibility of my experiences is part of a problem that the church does not like to talk about. We have to start talking about the multitude of forms that discrimination can take. We must expose, reflect on, and overcome our own structural, institutional, and individual forms of discrimination. Christians need places and people where and with whom they can look at their own behaviours. Church leaders need information about which words exclude people from the start – in a job posting, for example. People who run worship services and congregational programmes need training in inclusive language. This will give the younger generation space to collaborate in shaping the open, tolerant, and accessible church of tomorrow. It will ensure that people enjoy being part of our churches and feel at home with us regardless of their origins, abilities, gender, or sexual orientation. We therefore invite you in this booklet not to look at the theme of discrimination and exclusion from a distance, but to recognize your own patterns of thought and action and to repeatedly revisit how you can change the scope of your ability to do so.

These are questions that a generation of young people in Africa, Asia, and Germany are addressing. They do this not to provoke the middle and older generations; rather, they can help us to sharpen our view and shape the church in an entirely new way. Young people have these thoughts about the subject of discrimination and exclusion. They ask quietly, somewhat fearfully and warily: »Who are you, really, to judge your neighbour?« Most of all, this younger generation reads in the Bible that Jesus went to the people that

society excluded. There, again, they find themselves. They want to be heard; they want us, too, to listen and to act.

We offer space to the younger generation to collaborate in shaping the open, tolerant, and accessible church of tomorrow. No longer does this generation consider me young, but I write these lines for them because my years of cooperation with them have left me with a deep feeling of connection. ■

**We challenge you to consider
for a moment:**

**When does one actually cease to be
»young« in the church?**

**What mental prejudices do I have about
POCs or Black people?**

**When do I feel a white man is
more capable than a Black woman?
And why is that so?**

Where can I create more accessibility?

**How can there be more equity for all
genders in the decision-making bodies
and leadership positions in our churches?**



Sarah Vecera
UEM Deputy Executive Secretary,
German Region

INFORMATION



▲ »Our diversity is our strength« – a clear sign against discrimination and exclusion.

WORSHIP SERVICE AND DEVOTION

»But who are you to judge your neighbour?«

Thoughts on James 4:12

Each time I'm in the Ruhr and walk through its city centres, I look at the people and realize that I only encounter a few of them in church. At the same time, I automatically start preparing boxes to put them into at the back of my mind. I forbid myself to have prejudices and yet I notice how they run through my head. I have to force myself to stop this. Everything that has shaped me from an early age, what I have learned and what was taught to me as a social norm, must be deliberately forgotten.

That's exactly how we see it on our banana poster: too small, too young, too old...we always find something if we want to.

But who am I to judge my neighbours? Who am I rising to at the moment? And what might the others be thinking of me? One or another judgement is surely there. And that doesn't feel good either.

At the same time, I have already encountered people in the Bible who feel of themselves or others that they are too small, too young, too old...and the list goes on. Similarly, there are people in the Bible who do not conform to social norms. Jeremiah feels too young, Sarah too old, David too small. Peter falls far, Ruth and Naomi feel alien, Martha feels unseen. God's grace and love allows them to appear as heroes and not in boxes. In grace, Jesus encounters people who are on the margins of society, who are unseen and excluded.

But how should we meet people within our churches today and give them the value that society does not seem to give them? What paths can we take with people so that they can find a voice of their own and not remain unheard?

>



» When I see that people are being discriminated against, I feel uncomfortable. But what I would like to tell them is that it doesn't matter who they are, where they are from, or what their skin colour is, because we are all still human. And we all still have the same red blood pigment. So there is no need to tell people that you have this skin colour, that you mustn't do this or that. We are all still a work of God. And we have to believe in that.«

Odile Niyigena (Rwanda)

WORSHIP SERVICE AND DEVOTION

- > We read an idea of how this could work in the book of Acts.

Acts 6: 1-7 – Seven Chosen to Serve (Bible source: ESV)

Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, »It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.« And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them. And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

This section makes it clear that the church is made up of two ethnic groups:

- The Jewish Christians / the Hebrew Jews, who speak Hebrew or Aramaic, and
- The Greek Jewish Christians, who speak Greek.

The apostles perceive that they are doing too much diaconal work and that they have no more time to preach. At first they grumble. But what happens then? They reflect and ultimately give up their responsibility. They give up the diaconal service that is originally part of their office. Also fascinating is to whom they allocate this service: all men with Greek names, without exception. Responsibility is divided between the two ethnic groups. The power and privileges associated with their offices are shared; the responsibility is

no longer in the hands of the apostles alone. I find these ideas from the Acts of the Apostles exciting – especially with regard to our human rights campaign. We shouldn't tend to crooked bananas through diaconia – we should straighten them up, give them our trust, and make them into deacons.

When I look in the Bible, this story and the story of the women at the empty grave show me that we need more diversity in how we distribute our responsibility. Jesus places the primary responsibility of proclaiming the resurrection in the hands of women. Back then – in ancient times – women had absolutely no say. The mechanisms of oppression in this era ensured that women could neither read nor write and were not suited to preaching. Jesus ignores this and breaks with the power structures of the time.

Society is informed by role models and stereotypes that uphold the axes of power in the world, that constrain and exclude people and lead to discrimination. God breaks open these role models and stereotypes and redefines them.

This is exactly what we should be doing! The campaign is another step in this direction. ■



Sarah Vecera
UEM Deputy Executive Secretary,
German Region

A Prayer For The Human Family

O God of all,
with wonderful diversity of languages and cultures
you created all people in your image.

Free us from prejudice and fear,
that we may see your face
in the faces
of people around the world;
through Jesus Christ,
our Saviour and Lord.

(Lutheran World Federation)

<https://www.stjameslc.org/building-relationships-with-god/2019/1/15/a-prayer-for-the-human-family>



EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL

Study Guide for Religion and Confirmation Instruction to Combat Discrimination Based on Social Background

»You are anti-social!«

Target group: Young adults (secondary school level and above), confirmands

Materials: Blackboard, presentation cards, graphics/images printed out or projected on a projector, pens

Optional: Internet access and mobile devices

Introduction

Handout for teachers and educators

Discrimination is something we encounter everywhere, every day. Some forms of discrimination can be particularly rife at schools, one of the most important social spaces for children and young people, as well as at extracurricular learning locations such as daycare centres, youth centres, after-school care centres, sports clubs, and confirmation classes.

Every child and young person ought to have equal opportunities in the educational system and equal access to extracurricular activities. Unfortunately, this does not correspond to the reality in Germany, where children and young people face structural and individual discrimination for a variety of reasons. In the General Act on Equal Treatment (AGG), the German Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency has called attention to various traits that are subject to discrimination:¹ *ethnic origin, gender, religion or ideology, disabili-*

ty or chronic illness, age, and sexual identity. The Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency emphasizes, however, that schools in particular are often the site of intersectional discrimination, that is, discrimination against a person or group of people on various discriminatory grounds.²

Another problem that is particularly evident in schools is discrimination based on social background. This happens in two ways: on the one hand, the educational systems of the federal states foster structural discrimination against children and young people from socially disadvantaged families. An example of this is that »social structures dictate that educational institutions in city districts with a high proportion of families with a migration background or socially weaker families are of a comparatively lower quality than [institutions] in other city districts«.³

In addition to the structural level, children and young people are also face interactional discrimination at

¹ Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency (ed.): Diskriminierung an Schulen erkennen und vermeiden. Praxisleitfaden zum Abbau von Diskriminierung in der Schule. Berlin 2019, p. 8.

² Ibid., cf. p. 9.

³ Ibid., p. 8.



David Mushi
South-North co-worker of the UEM
and former school director



The different levels of discrimination in our educational facilities are as follows:

- 1) Religious discrimination:** this means that some of the church's schools do not accept pupils from any other religion or denomination. In addition, only Christians and members of one denomination in particular can be employed in church facilities such as schools.
- 2) Socio-economic discrimination:** most of the church's schools and universities are very expensive, giving no chance for socially disadvantaged people to study there.
- 3) Ableism:** some of our schools are inadequately equipped for people with disabilities. They have only very limited access to church schools.«

the individual level based on their social background, for instance when a child's parents have a particular occupation or lack work altogether. In the worst case, children whose parents cannot afford a trip or the money for school meals are bullied by their peers. A family's scarce financial resources can lead to children being excluded from the community.

Jennessen et al. summarize it as follows:

Social background is the decisive variable in educational discrimination – this applies to both schoolchildren and their parents. The social background of a child exerts an effect on its own (as in the differing marks in school performance for children with parents of different income situations whose performance is objectively the same). It is also the decisive trigger, however, for the grounds for discrimination of age, ethnicity, religion, and sexual identity: the children of a successful Islamic lawyer from Iran who has a high level of interest in the concerns of the school parents' committee and a great willingness to collaborate will be far less likely to face



Debora Suparni
Director of the Sion Foundation
for schools, Indonesia



The government pays 50 per cent of the operating costs and ONLY for part of the infrastructure. If the foundation is strong, then the school is strong too. Nevertheless, many private schools have had to close because they could not afford the operating costs. The government is not helping to keep private schools alive. If a public school has no more students, the remaining students and teachers will be transferred to another public school. But if a private school cannot maintain its operations, the school is closed.

Also relevant here is that Christian schools are disadvantaged in comparison to Muslim schools. Since Islam is the majority religion, Muslim schools are favoured in terms of school facilities and infrastructure. This creates a hierarchical system that intensifies the discrimination against minorities and ultimately affects socially disadvantaged students. If they are in poorly equipped schools, they have fewer opportunities.«

discrimination than their counterparts from lower income groups.⁴

In the international context of the UEM, discrimination based on social background primarily occurs as part of intersectional discrimination. As Jennessen et al. (2013) suggest, other forms of discrimination (racism, ableism, age discrimination, etc.) can be reinforced by social status.

The examples from Tanzania and Indonesia show that discrimination happens not only on the basis of social background, but also and predominantly at the structural level.

The contributions here exemplify the experiences of some of the UEM communion. >

⁴ Sven Jennessen, et al.: Diskriminierung im vorschulischen und schulischen Bereich. Eine sozial- und erziehungswissenschaftliche Bestandsaufnahme. Expertise im Auftrag der Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes. Berlin 2013, p. 24.

EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL

- > They show that this type of discrimination appears in a variety of educational systems. Although it shows up at different levels, the desire for change is the same. The international UEM communion can come together to tackle discrimination based on social background and the associated tendencies towards intersectional discrimination. Through the different perspectives on a form of discrimination, we can learn together which coping strategies are necessary to overcome individual and global tendencies towards discrimination.

This educational material is intended to help minimize discrimination on the basis of social background. Children and adolescents, regardless of their age, should treat every other person with equal respect.

The following educational material is structured in such a way that the schoolchildren or confirmands will first identify and name forms of discrimination. They should then be able to analyse their own peer group/class/confirmation group, etc. with regard to discriminatory tendencies. Lastly, they should develop their own action strategies to combat discrimination based on social background.

Procedure – Combating discrimination based on social background

Fundamentals

- a. »All people are equal before God« – Use this statement as a starting point for a discussion in the class/confirmation lesson.

Key questions and additional steps:

- Ask: »Do all people see others as equal?«
- »Is everyone at school equal?«
- »Where are individuals or groups of people being treated unfairly?«
- Collect moments of inequality in the study group and write them down on different presentation cards. Use the presentation cards to cluster the results on the board.

- Identify the traits that are subject to discrimination (ethnic origin, gender, religion or ideology, disability or chronic illness, age, and sexual identity) and add to these if necessary.

- b. Show Figure 1. What other reasons for exclusion are there at school?

Task:

- Imagine you are the individual in the picture. What does the group say to you?
- The students/confirmands should collect statements in speech bubbles (Figure 2)



Figure 1



Figure 2



»Unfortunately, there is discrimination everywhere in Cameroon. But those who suffer the most from it are the indigenous peoples from the eastern, central, southern, and northern parts of the country. Because of their lack of education, they suffer the most from land-grabbing and are therefore homeless. I want to let them know that there are institutions that could help them get their land back. Our church's schools guarantee them a good education, and the hospitals offer the best possible health care. The most important thing is to preach the message from the Gospel of true love, the love that Jesus Christ gave us. I've seen how people are marginalized because of their origins and I want to fight back against this discrimination.«

Nemboue Kuitichou Yvan Rolly (Cameroon)

Analysis of a peer group

a. Case study

Explain the following scenario:

A class is going on a school trip. Everyone hands in their registration. Only one child does not sign up. The other pupils ask why the child did not register. At first the child does not respond, and after much hesitation replies that their parents cannot afford the trip.

After school, a message appears in the class chat:

»You're so poor, your parents can't even afford the school trip.«

- For the next step, you can use a digital tool (<https://tweedback.de/>). You can put ideas and statements for discussion on this live chat wall and the participants can give feedback anonymously. Alternatively, you can also create a digital, collaborative document (e.g., Etherpad) and facilitate a discussion there. One analogous alternative is to hand out Figure 3 for group work and initiate a quiet discussion.
- Ask the group:
 - »Why is this statement unfair?«
 - »Do you think it is okay for the child to be annoyed about the parents' supposed situation?«

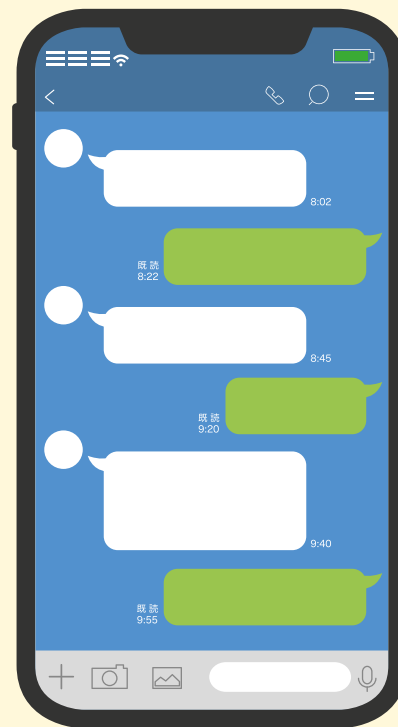


Figure 3

b. Contextualizing life realities

- Ask your group whether they have ever seen classmates being annoyed or bullied inside or outside school because their parents were less financially well-off.
- The feedback should be anonymous, depending on each group. The digital options mentioned above are particularly appropriate for this.

EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL

Biblical contextualization and opportunities for action

a. Share the following Bible verse with the study group:

»Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute« (Proverbs 31:8; ESV)

- Key questions:
 - »What occurs to you when you read this?«
 - »What have I not understood?«
 - »Why do I need an explanation?«
 - »What is most important to you in the verse?«
 - »Who do you think is being referred to in the verse?«
 - »What is the verse asking you to do?«
 - The pupils/confirmands should answer the questions for themselves. Afterwards, have the children/youths exchange their thoughts with a partner or in groups.
- #### b. Develop opportunities for action
- The groups should continue to stay together and consider amongst themselves what they can do about discrimination because of social background. Three mind maps should be created for this purpose:
 - What we wish the school/community would do about it...
 - What we wish the class/confirmation group would do about it...
 - What we can do about it...
 - The results of the group work should be shared with the larger group.
 - The larger group decides which idea is the most viable.

c. Research

- The groups or individual pupils are assigned to research what can be done about discrimination specifically and exclusion based on social background.
- (Further reading tips are below)
- Encourage the group to come up with their own project idea.

d. Change of perspective

For schools:

- Have your pupils contact other schoolchildren worldwide. The international school network GPENreformation (<https://www.gpenreformation.net/de/>) is ideal for this.
- Your pupils should find out what experiences of discrimination students in other countries have had.
- Reflect with your students on how you can internationalize the opportunities for action.
- Your students should take the project ideas they have developed and present them to other groups from the international school network, obtaining feedback and then starting the project planning process again to allow international project ideas to arise.

For confirmation groups:

- Have your confirmands contact other confirmands/youth groups worldwide. You may contact the UEM directly to accomplish this. (Contact person: Julian Elf, elf-j@vemission.org)
- Your confirmands should find out how confirmands in other countries have experienced discrimination.
- Reflect with your confirmands on how you can internationalize the opportunities for action.
- Your confirmands should present their project ideas internationally and then begin the planning circle anew to generate international project ideas.

References

- Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes (ed.): *Diskriminierung an Schulen erkennen und vermeiden. Praxisleitfaden zum Abbau von Diskriminierung in der Schule*. Berlin 2019.
- Sven Jennessen et al.: *Diskriminierung im vorschulischen und schulischen Bereich. Eine sozial- und erziehungswissenschaftliche Bestandsaufnahme. Expertise im Auftrag der Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes*. Berlin 2013.



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Campaign 2021 on the website of the UEM
www.vemission.org/humanrights2021

- brochure with projects, background information on the campaign, educational material, worship service and devotion material
- Poster
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