A CONSULTATION ON SOCIETAL CHALLENGES RELATED TO COVID-19 IN EUROPE TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO UNESCO 6 10 20

**“SPEAK UP AND TAKE ACTION”**

In order to address racism, we need to defend quality education for all (SDG 4). In addition, we must develop historical knowledge and critical thinking, whilst holding ourselves and our societies accountable.

UNESCO milestones

* Declaration of Race & Race Discrimination 1978
* Slave Route Project
* General History of Africa
* Network of Inclusive & Sustainable Cities

The EU has just launched its Anti-Racism Action Plan for 2020-2025; in 2019 only 15 EU state parties had implemented action plans to combat racism. Afriphobia/Afrophobia is one of the commonest forms of discrimination in the EU. This can sometimes intersect with Islamophobia, which results in barriers to housing, health, education, etc. For example, 40% of those reporting discriminations reported unfair healthcare treatment.

COVID-19 has exacerbated inequality and discrimination encountered by ethnic minorities in Europe. Moreover, there has been an increase in violence against women and girls; e.g. in France a 30% increase in domestic and sexual violence against women and girls has been reported.

Gabriela Ramos, Asst. Director General for Human & Social Science, UNESCO

“Hate speech, fake news and the resurgence of the far-right movement has rekindled age old hatreds. It is an opportunity to (thwart?) this crisis with a political cost that is lower (…) now that racism is in the eyes of everyone”

Lorenzo Kihlgren Grandi, Moderator

**QUESTIONS**

IN YOUR OPINION HOW HAS RACISM EVOLVED DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS?

* Rise of the “I Am Not A Virus Movement”, that is based on the idea that Asians specifically are carriers.
* CERD paper cites racial bias stemming from state actions, e.g. policies that are discriminatory.
* Hate speech including stigmatisation and harassment of PAD.
* Impact on already marginalised communities’ access to health, housing, education, employment and other human rights.

Professor Mehrdad Payandeh, CERD

* We are not talking about diversity or inclusion at this moment but about racism. This is the first we have done so for a long time.
* Open-ended police powers are concerning especially as they are being used against people of colour.
* Things that were impossible to solve became possible; e.g. UK government finding money to house homeless people in hotels during lockdown.

Nick Glynn, Univ. of Cambridge

* Institutions trying to blame migrants and people of colour for the associated with COVID-19 and lockdown.
* We must engage with public policies.

Moha Gerehou, Spain

WHAT INTERSECTIONAL DIMENSIONS ARE EMERGING & RE-EMERGING?

* Intersectional discrimination based on race, age, gender and other categories.

Professor Mehrdad Payandeh, CERD

**“WE MUST TAKE ACTION”**

* The pandemic has exacerbated existing problems, e.g. in connection to migrants/refugees. Migrants have been working to maintain European society, as carers and in agriculture but in return they have experienced more exclusion and hate speech.
* Although youth have been pushing for changes in society, there has been a lack of interest from institutions in recent years.

Moha Gerehou, Spain

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO UNDERSTAND THE DYNAMIC, BUT ALSO CONCRETE LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ACTIONS THAT CAN BE TAKEN?

The need exists for greater collaboration and knowledge exchange between academia and others, to develop a common set of expectations and examples of best practice (as asserted by SDG 17). In that regard, treaty bodies have been issuing statements in relation to COVID-19 jointly and separately and can work together to raise the visibility of each other. State parties have obligations to protect as well as promote anti-disciplinary policies, in accordance with ICERD 1965. There is need for more data to highlight the disproportionate effects of racism in Europe.

Professor Payandeh, CERD

Barcelona established its Municipal Migration City Council in 1998, which has mostly migrant associations with a cultural or national background; other organisations in the Council have more of an advocacy role. Meetings are held fortnightly on a topic that is decided annually, to raise awareness, provide training to other city councils, activities and campaign. Past topics have included housing, and migration and the elders. The City administration aims to empower migrant community organisations but does not collect data on ethnicity or racial origin, only on place of birth and nationality, and admits it has not solved the problem of data collection (advocated by SDG Target 17.18).

Aida Guillen, City of Barcelona

Rooted prejudices impact on individuals’ psyche, how do we combat this? (four scenarios)

1. European constitutions have been based on erroneous concepts of race for 200 years, and we need time to adjust.
2. Racism is synonymous with domination of one group of people by another, “socialisation of people to do things because it is inherent in their biological nature.” *(E.g. racist white supremacist ideologies of scientific racism were used to justify capitalistic overexploitation and abuse of enslaved African labour in European colonies).*
3. All of us have ancestors coming from Africa, basically people no matter where they come from are not that different.

Professor Heyer, France

**“WE NEED TO BE EXPLICIT ABOUT TACKLING RACISM AS CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS”**

In Nice, there is a project where the Police and youth work together to break down barriers with modest support. Some of the structures we are called to work in can seem colonial, and (we should question) therefore, are we supporting the people we represent and challenging white privilege?

Civil society needs to work harder to hold public authorities accountable for equality data collection (to support the scientific and academic approach to this work).

Nick Glynn, Univ. of Cambridge

HOW CAN SOCIAL MEDIA PLAY A ROLE IN PROMOTING SOCIAL JUSTICE?

Black Lives Matter Movement exemplifies social media being used to achieve racial justice. A lot of (youth) voices that have been excluded have access and can therefore address issues such as homophobia and climate justice.

Black Lives Matter is pushed by young people, but they are not in the places where decisions are taken.” We need to be there, people saying we should not be in politics is harmful for young people. We need to be more in contact with the institutions. Migrants and young people face similar problems in that we are always being excluded from sharing our new ideas and perspectives which are not seen as valuable, this a key thing that we must change.”

Many immigrants are working 12-14 hours a day and just have Sunday afternoons off. They should have fundamental rights.

Moha Gerehou, Spain

**THERE IS NEED FOR ADDITIONAL EFFORT BY PUBLIC BODIES TO EMPOWER YOUNG PEOPLE**

Lorenzo Kihlgren Grandi, Moderator

We need to consider socioeconomic discussion that also impacts ethnic minorities.

Professor Payandeh, CERD

Hate speech has increased against Chinese, Italians and finally refugees and migrants are blamed for COVID-19 and the lockdown.

Racism can be structural, ingrained in the legislature, or by individuals; (the urbanism) resists discriminatory structures and integrates human rights e.g. through membership of the UN Coalition of Cities Against Racism, and having a Human Rights Council.

The UNESCO Centre for Human Rights has a specific task to train people from all over the World. A forthcoming event being planned for 2021 will also enable knowledge exchange on how we can make cities a place where people can enjoy a high quality of life.

Siegfried Nagl, Mayor of Graz

***You 10:34 AM***

***Many grass roots organisations had difficulties securing funding due to austere fiscal policies in the EU before COVID-19, although they provide much needed services to minority communities. How can UNESCO assist these minority led organisations to continue to engage through community participation in policy making to reduce racism and discrimination?***

Garance Sarlat (UNESCO) 11:37 AM

Thank you for your question! This was answered live.

*Funding organisations need to be self-critical of ourselves in funding smaller organisations. It is often difficult and time consuming for small organisations, and therefore big organisations should make it easier for smaller organisations, e.g. by issuing guidelines through their networks.*

*Nick Glynn, Univ. of Cambridge*

UNESCO IN THE GLOBAL FIGHT AGAINST RACISM - RECOMMENDATIONS & KEY TAKEAWAYS

UNESCO is the soft power of the UN, that convinces cities that they are essential tools. UNESCO should continue to strengthen cooperation between cities, support data collection and research, share experiences and lessons learnt, always remain vigilant and work together with Mayors.

Siegfried Nagl, Mayor of Graz

UNESCO should publish guidelines for data collection that can be used across countries and continue to pursue current activities.

Professor Heyer, France

Policies can have transformative impact for structural and institutional change; UNESCO can play a role to build on the diversity of mankind from a global perspective.

Aida Guillen, City of Barcelona

A UNESCO run observatory to collect data on racism could play an important role coordinating labour, e.g. in Spain some organisations collect data but don’t share a common perspective.

Moha Gerehou, Spain

UNESCO should be brave and explicit about racism, and continue to be a champion against racism, as it has such a powerful position (…) being clear this is a movement and not a moment.

UNESCO should hold organisations to account to continue a long-term focus on racism (…) and do something around a common minimum standard of data collection; sharing things that don’t work well as well as things that do work.

Nick Glynn, Univ. of Cambridge

UNESCO should understand itself as part of a broader group of institutions tacking racism. It should address economic, social, and cultural inequalities, and adopt a participatory approach integrating the voices of all stakeholders. It should provide political leadership that is inclusive and able to harness (…) strengthen multilevel multi-stakeholder participation.

There is an urgent need to fill the data gap in Europe as well as other regions, including best practices and learning against racial discrimination including intersectionality with gender discrimination.

“WE ARE EXPERIENCING A MOMENTUM”

Professor Payandeh, CERD