

**LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND: A SERIES OF BRIEFING PAPERS ON FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS. BRIEFING PAPER # 3<sup>1</sup>**

## FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF AND EDUCATION

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**The right to freedom of religion or belief is linked in important ways to the achievement of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This includes SDG 4 on education. If we want to achieve inclusive and equitable quality education for all, we must ensure due attention to those who are subject to discrimination, marginalisation and inequality on the grounds of religion or belief. Parliamentarians and religious/belief leaders can play an important role in this. This paper provides a brief introduction to the relationship between freedom of religion or belief and education, identifying key areas of concern, and suggesting concrete actions that parliamentarians and religious/belief leaders can take to address them.**

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### **THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF<sup>2</sup>**

The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion – commonly known as the right to freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) – is a human right. It endows all individuals with the right to have, adopt, change or leave a religion or belief; to manifest and practice this religion or belief, alone or in community with others; and to be free from coercion and discrimination on the grounds of their religion or belief. It also protects the right not to have or practice a religion or belief.

Children and young people also have a right to FoRB. They have the right to be free from discrimination on the grounds of their religion or belief, or that of their parents. And they have a right to have and practice a religion or belief, or not to have or practice a religion or belief. Parents have a right to provide direction to their child in conformity with their own beliefs, in a manner consistent with the child's evolving capacities.<sup>3</sup>

The right to have, adopt, change or leave a religion or belief can never be limited or restricted. The right to manifest and practice a religion or belief, however, can be limited in certain circumstances, most importantly when religious or belief manifestations or practices violate the rights and freedoms of others. For instance, parents must not impose on their children religious practices that injure the child's physical or mental health. Likewise, teachers must not coerce or force their students to comply with certain religious practices. Limitations must always be strictly necessary, proportionate and non-discriminatory in their application.

As such, the legal responsibility to uphold the right to FoRB lies with the State. Non-state actors with power to affect the lives of rights-holders may, however, be said to have a moral responsibility to contribute to the respect, protection and promotion of FoRB and other human rights. This includes e.g. religious/belief leaders, politicians and other non-state actors who hold powerful positions in society or otherwise enjoy strong authority and social influence.<sup>4</sup>

## CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO FoRB

### *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*

Art. 14 (1): States Parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Art. 14 (2): States Parties shall respect the rights and duties of the parents and, when applicable, legal guardians, to provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her right in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child [...] (c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own.

Art. 30: In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.

### *UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief*

Art. 5 (3): The child shall be protected from any form of discrimination on the ground of religion or belief. He shall be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood, respect for freedom of religion or belief of others, and in full consciousness that his energy and talents should be devoted to the service of his fellow men.

Art. 5 (5): Practices of a religion or belief in which a child is brought up must not be injurious to his physical or mental health or to his full development, taking into account article 1, paragraph 3, of the present Declaration.

\* For a full overview of human rights standards related to FoRB, see the website of the OHCHR: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/freedomreligion/pages/standards.aspx>

**FoRB is a universal right.** It is a right of all individuals, regardless of citizenship status and what religion or belief they adhere to, or if they do not adhere to any religion or belief. Religious/belief minorities and indigenous peoples are often vulnerable to FoRB violations, but violations also affect other groups and individuals, in particular converts, atheists, women, sexual orientation and gender identity minorities, refugees, and children.

**FoRB entails both collective and individual rights.** While due attention should be given to respect the autonomy of religious/belief communities, individuals always have the right to interpret and practice their religion or belief as they want, including to criticise or leave their religion or belief, even when this challenges the mainstream orthodoxy of religious/belief authorities.

**FoRB is closely intertwined, interrelated and mutually interdependent with other human rights.** To enjoy FoRB fully, several other rights must also be protected – and the other way around. FoRB is also related to other human rights in the sense that discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief rarely concerns only restrictions of religious practices and manifestations, but also entails violations of other rights.

**FoRB is important in the implementation of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.** If we want to improve the lives and prospects of everyone, ‘leaving no one behind’, we must ensure due attention to those who are subject to discrimination, marginalisation and inequality on the grounds of their religion or belief (or lack thereof).

## RIGHT-SIZING FORB

Discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief is not only about FoRB. For instance, if people are being excluded from job markets, discriminated against in the health care system, or persecuted on grounds of their religious or belief identity, a range of other rights are typically also being violated, and the violation of FoRB is not necessarily the most pressing concern for these people. Also, marginalisation, discrimination or persecution of people with a particular religious identity is not necessarily religiously motivated. Even hostility that seems to have a clear religious motivation is rarely *only* religiously motivated. Conflicts are complex and multifaceted, and the role of religion is intertwined with many other factors, including economic, political, cultural, social, and historical ones. It is vital not to underestimate the role of religion in marginalisation, discrimination and persecution, but also not to overestimate its role.<sup>5</sup>

## SDG 4: ENSURING EDUCATION FOR ALL

Agenda 2030 is a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere. Consisting of 17 SDGs, each with their specific targets and indicators, Agenda 2030 calls for action in a wide range of areas, including education. SDG 4 is dedicated to ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all, addressing the multiple forms of discrimination, exclusion, marginalisation, and inequality that may impede the fulfilment of the right to education.<sup>6</sup>

### SELECTED SDG TARGETS ON EDUCATION

**Target 4.1** By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning

**Target 4.7** By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

**Target 4a** Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

Education is also a key human right, as outlined in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, as well as in the legally binding International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and various other human rights instruments. Every child has a right not only to *access* to education, but also to education of a certain *quality*, directed to “the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin.”<sup>7</sup> All children should also be guaranteed a safe, non-violent, and inclusive learning *environment*.

## THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

### *Article 13, International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights*

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
2. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize that, with a view to achieving the full realization of this right: (a) Primary education shall be compulsory and available free to all; (b) Secondary education in its different forms, including technical and vocational secondary education, shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education; (c) Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education; (d) Fundamental education shall be encouraged or intensified as far as possible for those persons who have not received or completed the whole period of their primary education; (e) The development of a system of schools at all levels shall be actively pursued, an adequate fellowship system shall be established, and the material conditions of teaching staff shall be continuously improved.
3. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to choose for their children schools, other than those established by the public authorities, which conform to such minimum educational standards as may be laid down or approved by the State and to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.
4. No part of this article shall be construed so as to interfere with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions, subject always to the observance of the principles set forth in paragraph 1 of this article and to the requirement that the education given in such institutions shall conform to such minimum standards as may be laid down by the State.

If education is to be truly inclusive and equitable, it must be FoRB-friendly. Education must be accessible for all, without discrimination or inequalities on the grounds of religion or belief. Teaching materials and methods must be inclusive, non-discriminatory and non-coercive. And the learning environment must be one in which students are not harassed or abused because of their religion or belief, whether by fellow students or teachers.

In addition to ensuring the freedom of religion or belief of individual students, such FoRB-friendly education can also contribute to breaking cycles of exclusion, marginalisation and underrepresentation of religious or belief minorities, furthering their social mobility, political representation, and economic prosperity.<sup>8</sup> And it can encourage cultures of pluralism, equality and non-discrimination, challenging stereotypes and prejudices related to religion or belief and fostering understanding and critical thinking.<sup>9</sup>

### **FORB AND EDUCATION: WHAT ARE THE MAIN CHALLENGES?**

Around the world, children's right to education is routinely violated – whether in terms of restrictions on their access to education, quality education or a safe educational environment. For some children, the educational sector is also a site of FoRB violations and broader discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief. This presents serious obstacles to SDG 4's aspirations of achieving inclusive and equitable quality education for all.

Laws, government policies, practices and infrastructure, as well as societal norms and practices contribute in different ways to restricting or outright violating students' right to FoRB in education. Students from religious minorities or indigenous communities are often particularly exposed to violations, but other students whose religious or belief identity differs from that of the majority may also be in a vulnerable position. This includes e.g. atheists, humanists, and other non-believers as well as religious feminists and others who may belong to the majority religion but who interpret and practice this religion in ways that challenge mainstream interpretations and practices.

The remainder of this brief looks at some of the biggest challenges related to FoRB in the education sector.

## THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS ACTORS IN EDUCATION

The role of religious actors in providing inclusive and equitable education for all is complex. In many parts of the world, religious actors play a key role in the provision of education for the poor and marginalised, e.g. by building and running schools and other educational institutions. At the same time, some of these schools may provide education that is religiously discriminatory or coercive, whether in form or content. Even when not directly involved in the provision of education, religious actors can be important norm setters around education; when religious actors place value on education, education tends to flourish – and the other way around, religious actors can also discourage education, especially for girls.

**Access to education is restricted for various religious or belief minorities around the world.** This is a key challenge to achieving target 4.1 which aims to ensure that all girls and boys complete primary and secondary education by 2030. In contexts where religious or belief minorities and indigenous peoples are marginalised or discriminated against, their levels of enrolment in school are often lower than that of the majority population. In a few cases, certain minority groups' access to public education is explicitly restricted by law, primarily at university level.<sup>10</sup> Elsewhere, discriminatory citizenship laws mean that certain groups are prevented from accessing a range of public services, including education.<sup>11</sup>

Even in situations where the law is non-discriminatory, state policies, structures and practices may still be discriminatory, restricting minorities' access to education in different ways. In areas with a predominance of religious/belief minorities or indigenous peoples, for instance, it is not uncommon that there are comparably fewer schools than in other areas, reflecting bias in government priorities. Furthermore, schools in areas with a predominance of minorities, or schools that serve predominantly minority students, are "often of lower quality, poorly equipped, inferior in terms of infrastructure and served by the least-qualified teachers."<sup>12</sup>

## POVERTY

Poverty is a determining factor in shaping people's access to education. Poverty surveys consistently show disproportionately higher levels of poverty for minority groups than for the population in general.<sup>13</sup> Obviously, belonging to a religious/belief minority does not necessarily entail that one is poor; in some contexts, some minorities may be poor while others are not, reflecting broader patterns of discrimination and exclusion.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, religious/belief minorities do not per definition belong to the lowest educational levels; in some contexts they are among the most well-educated, but in many others the level of education among minorities is far below the majority population.

**Situations of violent conflict contribute in important ways to restricting access to education.** Where religious/belief minorities and indigenous peoples are being oppressed, destruction of schools and even attacks on school children may be part of a broader strategy to intimidate minorities and obstruct their access to public goods.<sup>15</sup> Perpetrators are typically militant groups and other non-state actors, sometimes in complicity with or tacitly supported by the military or other state actors state. In some cases, abductions, forced marriages and forced conversions of school girls are also part of minority oppression.

Such types of gender-based violence have detrimental consequences for the individual girls; they also have consequences for minority girls' education more broadly, leading parents to refrain from sending their daughters to school in order to protect them, especially when they have to travel far to get to the school.<sup>16</sup> Even when religious minorities are not directly targeted, they may be disproportionately hit by the consequences of violent conflict, including in the area of education. When public schools must close or function at a minimum, those who are poor have few possibilities to provide their children with alternative education.

**Bias and discrimination in curriculum and teaching material** can play an important role in perpetuating discrimination on the grounds of religion, not only in the context of religious education, but also in history, social science and various other topics.<sup>17</sup> This is a serious obstacle ensuring 'a safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all', as outlined in SDG target 4a. There is little data on the extent to which issues related to e.g. human rights, diversity and tolerance are integrated into the school curriculum around the world. However, a growing body of research shows that much educational material "nurture[s] the formation of divisive stereotypes," very often around religion.<sup>18</sup>



## FAITH4RIGHTS, COMMITMENT XII<sup>19</sup>

*We commit to further refine the curriculums, teaching materials and textbooks wherever some religious interpretations, or the way they are presented, may give rise to the perception of condoning violence or discrimination. In this context, we pledge to promote respect for pluralism and diversity in the field of religion or belief as well as the right not to receive religious instruction that is inconsistent with one's conviction. We also commit to defend the academic freedom and freedom of expression, in line with Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, within the religious discourse in order to promote that religious thinking is capable of confronting new challenges as well as facilitating free and creative thinking. We commit to support efforts in the area of religious reforms in educational and institutional areas.*

Text books may propagate stereotypical conceptions of particular groups or individuals, e.g. by describing certain religious/belief minorities and indigenous peoples as 'heretical', as 'misguided' or as a threat to national unity. Historical and factual incorrectness is another common problem; e.g. in the form of past or present injustices against minorities being disregarded or blamed on the minorities themselves. Invisibilisation and lack of attention to religious/belief minorities is also widespread, with text books overlooking important societal contributions of individuals from these minorities or simply attributing them to others. Discriminatory or stereotypical content, or lack of diversity, in learning materials can reinforce and perpetuate experiences of exclusion, dispossession, and loss of identity among minority students as well as encourage broader cultures of exclusion, stigmatisation and polarisation.

## RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

In some countries, confessional religious education, or 'religious instruction', is mandated by law. From a human rights perspective, *neutral* religious education can be obligatory. Learning about religion is important and can contribute to "respect for everyone's right to freedom of religion or belief, foster democratic citizenship, promote understanding of societal diversity and, at the same time, enhance social cohesion [and reduce] conflicts that are based on lack of understanding for others' beliefs."<sup>20</sup> *Confessional* religious instruction, however, cannot be obligatory insofar as it may violate children's right not to receive religious instruction that goes against their convictions, and parents' right to ensure the religious and moral education of their children.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, mandatory religious instruction will typically focus exclusively on the majority religion, while other religions and beliefs are omitted or – if mentioned – stigmatized.

## SEXUALITY EDUCATION

According to international human rights bodies, children and young people have the right to receive comprehensive, accurate, scientifically sound and culturally sensitive sexuality education.<sup>22</sup> However, in many countries, sexuality education is seen as a threat to public morality and religious values and is not included in national curriculum. In countries where sexuality education is part of the curriculum, this is sometimes met with strong opposition from parents who fear that this might compromise their right to raise their child in conformity with their own convictions and ask for their children to be exempted from sexuality education.<sup>23</sup> But international human rights standards on FoRB do not entitle parents to withdraw children from sexuality education classes where relevant information is conveyed in an objective and impartial manner.<sup>24</sup> In 2018, a Swiss woman who wanted her child to be exempted from sexuality education brought her case to the European Court of Human Rights. The Court ruled against the woman, arguing that it was in the best interest of the child to have access to information that could protect her health.<sup>25</sup>

**Everyday harassment, bullying and abuse** in school is common for minority students and others who are seen to be different from the majority. In the classroom, minority students are often more likely than majority students to be victims of corporal punishment, psychological abuse, harassment and bullying from teachers who are from the majority community themselves. Teachers may ridicule religious/belief minority students in the classroom, ignore them, expect little from them, fail to recognise and encourage their individual talents, or otherwise maltreat minority students.

Minority students are also generally more likely than majority students to be victims of psychological abuse, harassment and bullying from fellow students, singled out because of their religion or belief. There are examples of students trying to convince or pressure others to convert, ridiculing them in the classroom, or otherwise maltreating fellow students.<sup>26</sup> Such experiences of discrimination and exclusion can have a negative impact on students' academic performance and well-being, and in the worst case, prevent children and youth from going to school.<sup>27</sup>

**Coercion in school is not uncommon.** In some contexts, students are under heavy pressure, or even legally obliged, to comply with a particular religious dress code. Forced participation in religious activities, such as joint prayer or religious ceremonies, is another example. There are also accounts of teachers and school authorities pressuring, manipulating or forcing students to convert. This is particularly prevalent in religious schools. Sometimes, poor families are offered free education in a religious school, only to have their children converted at the school without their knowledge or accept.<sup>28</sup>

## RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF RELIGIOUS APPAREL OR SYMBOLS IN THE SCHOOL

From a human rights perspective, forcing students to wear religious apparel or symbols constitutes a violation of their right to FoRB. But the ban of religious apparel or symbols in an educational setting is more complicated. In a number of – primarily European – countries, there are legal restrictions on wearing face veil or headscarf in public schools. Restrictions on the use of religious apparel and symbols can be acceptable, for instance if they are crucial to protect the rights of girls, religious minorities or vulnerable groups, and as long as restrictions are neutrally worded and not discriminatory or inconsistently applied.<sup>29</sup>

## HOW TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES IN RELATION TO FoRB AND EDUCATION? SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR RELIGIOUS/BELIEF LEADERS AND PARLIAMENTARIANS

Parliamentarians and religious/belief leaders can contribute in important ways to ensuring inclusive and equitable education for all.

**Parliamentarians** are responsible for proposing, scrutinising and eventually adopting laws, including those related to education, as well as for overseeing and passing budgets to allocate funding for education. In addition, parliamentarians must represent their constituents, ensuring that their perspectives, experiences and needs are taken into consideration and promoting citizen participation in political processes.<sup>30</sup> In this, they can ensure attention to FoRB. They can:

- Work for reform of educational laws and policies that discriminate on the grounds of religion or belief. Raise the issue in parliamentary debates, as well as in questions and letters to relevant ministers.
- Encourage review and revision of national curricula and textbooks, with a view to ensuring that education is inclusive, non-discriminatory and human rights-based. UNESCO's *Toolkit on revision/adaptation of curricula, school textbooks and other learning materials to remove cultural, religious and gender-biased stereotypes* can be useful in this regard.
- Engage in dialogue and consultations with religious and belief minority representatives, including teachers and students, to ensure that their perspectives and experiences are heard.

**Religious/belief leaders** often enjoy popular support, legitimacy and authority. They have vast networks and relations; and have extensive knowledge of the local context in which they work. All this means that they can play a key role in raising awareness of FoRB and encourage non-discrimination in the context of education.

They can:

- Develop modules for training of teachers in religious schools, actively and explicitly addressing discrimination, stereotyping and bias and encouraging inclusive and non-discriminatory teaching methods and approaches.<sup>31</sup> Applying the peer-to-peer learning methodology of the *#Faith4Rights* toolkit could be useful in this regard.<sup>32</sup>
- Organise interreligious dialogue initiatives between students from religious/belief minority and majority communities to encourage pluralism, non-discrimination and greater understanding
- Speak out against discrimination against religious/belief minorities and indigenous peoples in the formal education system

## ABOUT THE PAPER

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The information contained in this paper represents the views and opinion of the author and does not necessarily represent the views and opinions of any of the above-mentioned entities or persons.

## NOTES

- 1 The series include six papers: Freedom of Religion or Belief and the Sustainable Development Goals (paper #1), Freedom of Religion or Belief and Health (#2), Freedom of Religion or Belief and Education (#3), Freedom of Religion or Belief and Women's Rights (#4), Freedom of Religion or Belief and Climate Change (#5), and Freedom of Religion or Belief and Freedom of Expression (#6). All briefs build in part on the author's report *Promoting Freedom of Religion or Belief and Gender Equality in the Context of the Sustainable Development Goals: Reflections from the 2019 Expert Consultation Process*, Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2020
- 2 See also Marie Juul Petersen and Katherine Marshall, *The International Promotion of Freedom of Religion or Belief. Sketching the Contours of a Common Framework*, Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2019
- 3 See also Heiner Bielefeldt, *Interim Report of the Special Rapporteur on FoRB* (focus: the rights of the child), A/70/286, 2015.
- 4 Several declarations, resolutions and action plans point to the roles and responsibilities of religious actors as moral duty-bearers, including e.g. the *UN Declaration on Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (1981)*, the *Rabat Plan of Action on the Prohibition of Advocacy of National, Racial or Religious Hatred that Constitutes Incitement to Discrimination, Hostility or Violence (2012)*, and the *Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes (2017)*.
- 5 Marie Juul Petersen and Katherine Marshall, *The International Promotion of Freedom of Religion or Belief*, Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2019, p. 24
- 6 UNESCO et al., *The Incheon Declaration and Framework for the implementation of SDG 4*, 2017, par. 13
- 7 UN, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 1989, article 29(1).
- 8 The Right to Education website, *Minorities and Indigenous Peoples*, <https://www.right-to-education.org/issue-page/marginalised-groups/minorities-and-indigenous-peoples>
- 9 See also *Final Document of the International Consultative Conference on School Education in Relation to Freedom of Religion or Belief, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination*, 2002 (<https://undocs.org/e/cn.4/2002/73>, appendix)
- 10 Sophie Gregory, Baha'is in Iran are redefining educational advancement, *Times Higher Education*, October 6, 2018
- 11 Julia Wallace, Myanmar casts minorities to the margins as citizenship law denies legal identity, *The Guardian/IRIN*, November 3, 2016
- 12 Right to Education website, *Minorities and Indigenous Peoples*, <https://www.right-to-education.org/issue-page/marginalised-groups/minorities-and-indigenous-peoples>
- 13 Corinne Lennox, Minority and Indigenous women and the Millennium Development Goals, *State of the World's minorities and Indigenous Peoples*, Minority Rights Group International, 2011, p. 22; UN Women, *Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, UN Women, 2018
- 14 In India, for instance, Muslims and Buddhists are, on average, poorer than the general population, while Sikhs and Christians are wealthier. Sukhadeo Thorat and Mashkoor Ahmad, *Minorities and Poverty: Why some minorities are more poor than others?*, *Journal of Social Inclusion Studies*, vol. 1(2), p. 128. See Amy Chua, *World on Fire*,

- Doubleday, 2004, for an account of ‘market-dominant minorities’ in e.g. China, the Philippines and Indonesia.
- 15 Christian Solidarity Worldwide, *Faith and a Future: Discrimination on the Basis of Religion or Belief in Education*, CSW, 2018, p. 24
  - 16 Maham Javaid, Forced conversions torment Pakistan’s Hindus, *Al Jazeera*, August 18, 2014; Stephanie Busari, UNICEF: Boko Haram has kidnapped more than 1.000 children in Nigeria, *CNN*, April 13, 2018; Right to Education website, *Minorities and Indigenous Peoples*, <https://www.right-to-education.org/issue-page/marginalised-groups/minorities-and-indigenous-peoples>.
  - 17 UNESCO, *Making textbook content inclusive: a focus on religion, gender and culture*, 2017, p. 7
  - 18 UNESCO, *Making textbook content inclusive: a focus on religion, gender and culture*, 2017, p. 7
  - 19 The 2017 “Faith for Rights” Declaration and its 18 commitments, spearheaded by the OHCHR and developed by faith-based and secular civil society actors, provides a framework for cross-disciplinary reflection and action on the connections between religions and human rights. The objective is to foster the development of peaceful societies, which uphold human dignity and equality for all and where diversity is not just tolerated but fully respected and celebrated. In 2020, the #Faith4Rights toolkit was launched, translating the framework into practical peer-to-peer learning and capacity-building programmes. See the OHCHR website for more information, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/FreedomReligion/Pages/FaithForRights.aspx>
  - 20 ODIHR, *Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools*, 2007, p. 14
  - 21 According to the UN Human Rights Committee General Comment no. 22, “public education that includes instruction in a particular religion or belief is inconsistent with Article 18(4) unless provision is made for non-discriminatory exemptions or alternatives that would accommodate the wishes of parents and guardians.” See also Human Rights Council, *Recommendations of the Forum on Minority Issues at its sixth session: Guaranteeing the rights of religious minorities*, A/HRC/25/66, 2013, par. 42.
  - 22 Dunja Mijatovic, *Comprehensive sexuality education protects children and helps build a safer, inclusive society*, Council of Europe, 2020
  - 23 Heiner Bielefeldt, *Interim Report*, 2013, paras. 51f.
  - 24 Dunja Mijatovic, *Comprehensive sexuality education protects children and helps build a safer, inclusive society*, Human Rights Comment, Council of Europe, 2020
  - 25 European Court of Human Rights, *Case of A.R. and L.R. v. Switzerland*, 18/1/2018 (no. 22338/15), 2018
  - 26 Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children, *Tackling violence in schools: a global perspective*, 2012, p. 12; Sameer Hinduja and Justin W. Patchin, *School Bullying Based on Religion*, Cyberbullying Research Center, 2019
  - 27 The Right to Education website, *Minorities and Indigenous Peoples*, <https://www.right-to-education.org/issue-page/marginalised-groups/minorities-and-indigenous-peoples>
  - 28 Christian Solidarity Worldwide, p. 27

- 29 The former UN Special Rapporteur on FoRB, Asma Jahangir, developed a set of criteria to assess whether or not restrictions on religious apparel would contravene human rights standards (*Report of the Special Rapporteur on FoRB*, E/CN.4/2006/5, 2006, paras. 51-60). See also Heiner Bielefeldt, *Interim Report*, 2015. See also OSCE/ODIHR, *Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools*, 2007
- 30 Kevin Deveaux and Charmaine Rodrigues (2017) *Parliament's role in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals*, UNDP, GOPAC and Islamic Development Bank.
- 31 Human Rights Council, *Recommendations of the Forum on Minority Issues at its fourth session: guaranteeing the rights of minority women and girls*, 2011, par. 57
- 32 Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *#Faith4Rights toolkit* (2020), available online at <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Press/faith4rights-toolkit.pdf#page=62>