

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Our policy



Save the Children

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With thanks to Britt Kalla, Eva Bludau, Sylvia Moede and the Board

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INTRODUCTION

Foreword from the Executive Board

Why are we at Save the Children so strongly committed to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)? For us, DEI is not just a social obligation, but a central part of our organisational responsibility and our daily work. An anti-discriminatory, fair and inclusive approach is essential for us to carry out our work for and with children effectively, responsibly and in line with our values. It helps us to identify existing inequalities, break down barriers and consistently align our work with the rights and needs of all children. As a child rights organisation, we advocate for the rights of all children – including the right to justice, respect and dignity. A mindset that is sensitive to discrimination and resolutely opposed to racism is essential. DEI is not an abstract ideal but has concrete implications for our daily work. It shapes our decision-making processes, our collaboration and our actions – in our programmatic work as well as in our communications, our staffing decisions and our leadership practise.

In different contexts, people have long been campaigning for human rights and a just and inclusive society. They draw attention to injustices within society; often they are not heard sufficiently. In recent years, these issues have moved to the forefront of our society, thanks in particular to the Black Lives Matter movement, #aidtoo, the #MeToo debate, the attack in Hanau and the resistance to the inadequate investigation of the NSU murders – and this is but a small selection of events. Those affected are becoming increasingly active and vocal in their fight for their rights.

Unfortunately, we are currently witnessing in the US, but also here in Germany, that efforts to ensure the equal participation of all people in organisations, businesses and society are increasingly coming under attack and being vilified. Despite these negative trends, the global Save the Children movement remains committed to the position set out in its 2025–27 Strategy that diversity, equity and inclusion remain a priority. We want to be an inclusive organisation, in which people from all walks of life feel valued. Hence this update to our policy comes at exactly the right time. It continues to reflect a fundamental part of our identity as an organisation committed to strengthening the rights of all children.

At Save the Children Germany, we aim to reach particularly vulnerable children through our work, including those affected by racism and other forms of discrimination. In doing so, we want to focus more explicitly on the issue of racism, as it is closely linked to the structures within which we operate as an organisation involved in international cooperation and humanitarian aid. When we speak of this sector – particularly when the term ‘development’ is used – we always need to consider power relations. It is often assumed that a specific standard, a certain way of doing things, is the only relevant one. This perspective is based on the presumption that certain regions, countries and, consequently, people do not meet this standard and therefore need to be supported. It is important to note that this standard way of doing things and assumptions about whether people meet it or not arose primarily in the context of colonialism and exploitation. The paradox of our work is that, whilst we do not wish to actively promote these power relations and structures, we do not always take them into account. We have to be aware of the fact that our work is not automatically ‘good’, even though we do an important job and pursue ostensibly noble goals. It is therefore essential, *particularly* for us as an actor in international cooperation across some 100 countries, to constantly remind ourselves of these relationships and contexts and to incorporate them into our daily work.

In 2021, we first started at Save the Children Germany to think about our own position regarding this topic. We identified initial needs, refined our recruiting to become more sensitive to discrimination, and

drew on our new Save the Children Germany strategy to expand the area of anti-racism to also encompass diversity, justice and inclusion. This was followed by the creation of the DEI officer position, awareness-raising workshops, conversations with colleagues, and dialogue formats to discuss current global events. These efforts make it possible for us to pursue this process with even more courage and openness.

Many people in our organisation have already dealt with this topic in depth, including – unfortunately far too often – those who have been directly affected. We make use of this knowledge and interest where possible and invite all employees to contribute to our work on this topic as we move forward. However, we cannot automatically expect those affected by discrimination to educate others (do unpaid work) or even to share their knowledge with those not affected as a matter of course. Those who are not affected by discrimination or racism have a special obligation to engage, learn, and become genuine allies without being asked to do so.

In recent years, Save the Children Germany has continuously developed its work related to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and increasingly integrated it into everyday operations. Among other activities, we have developed guidelines, organised workshops, and conducted various other consultations, exchanges and reflection exercises. In this process, existing approaches have been further developed and new topics taken up. At the same time, we are aware that addressing DEI is an ongoing process and that we still have a long way to go. In view of current social and political developments, it has become particularly important to reaffirm, refine and make our stance visible. We aim to make clear what we stand for, how we fulfil our responsibilities as an organisation, and we want to reflect on whether our positions and working methods continue to align with current professional, societal and anti-discrimination discourses.

Save the Children has been campaigning for children's rights for over 100 years, doing important work in child protection, health and education. Now we want to make our efforts even more just, guided by a critical perspective on power relations. Above all, we want to create space for the perspectives of marginalised people. That means not only doing an even better job of reaching them through our project work, but also connecting with them in our own structures, our teams, and through our organisational culture. Because how we do this inside the organisation is also reflected in our work in the outside world. To achieve this goal, we need clear and transparent communication. We want to make the process of implementing DEI in the organisation comprehensible to you and, above all, to learn and grow together with you. This policy provides the foundation for this work. It expresses our will to assume the responsibility to further develop DEI as an integral part of our organisational culture. It serves as a binding orientation for our joint actions – today and in the future.

March 2026: Florian, Luis and Tania (Executive Board)

SCOPE

Who is this document for?

This document is **intended for all** employees of Save the Children Deutschland e. V., as well as those involved in its various bodies, i.e. the management and Executive Board, members of the Supervisory Board, the Members' Meeting, trainees, consultants, student employees, interns, pupils, freelancers and volunteers (hereinafter referred to as "employees" for better readability).

It is the responsibility of all employees to live DEI within the organisation. This is something that requires targeted and joint action every day.

Every employee at Save the Children Germany is responsible:

- being mindful and treating one another with respect
- fostering an inclusive working environment that is aware of discrimination and critical of racism
- becoming aware of their own (unconscious) prejudices and reflecting on how these may hinder an inclusive work environment
- reflecting on their own position (of power) and privileges within the organisation
- consciously incorporating *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion* (DEI) into their own actions
- committing to an individual target as part of the annual target agreements to support our organisation in achieving our shared DEI goals

This document is **primarily for the protection of all** employees affected by racism; for all women and LGBT*IQ+ employees; for employees who are disabled, those with a chronic illness and/or mental health conditions; for all employees affected by classism; and for all employees affected by discrimination. The document applies to all internal staff as well as to the communities and external colleagues with whom we collaborate.

With our clear policy and position, we are helping marginalised employees in particular to enjoy the safest possible working environment, and to take part, while distributing opportunities fairly.

External points of contact

Our policy and this document alone cannot guarantee protection against discrimination. That is why we are providing you with a list of some of the internal and external points of contact to whom you can turn if you have experienced discrimination. You can also find more information in our [policy on protection against discrimination, harassment and sexual violence](#).

External contact points:Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency:Email: beratung@ads.bund.de

Phone: 0800 5465465 (consultations Monday – Thursday 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.)

TBB Berlin Anti-Discrimination Network (ADNB):

Richard-Sorge-Straße 13, 10249 Berlin

Email: adnb@tbb-berlin.de

Phone: 030 55065905

Reach out:

Kopernikusstr. 23, 10245 Berlin-Friedrichshain

Email: beratung@reachoutberlin.de

Phone: 030 69568339

Further external points of contact can be found in our open [resource list](#) – please feel free to add your own recommendations to this list.

What is in it - and what isn't?

With this document, we are creating a framework for DEI work in our organisation. This should help us to develop a shared understanding and serve as a foundation for our daily work, defining our position and serving as a point of reference. This document does not provide concrete recommendations, for example how to act in a way that is anti-racist or sensitive to discrimination, nor should it be seen as a list of dos and don'ts. These will be developed in other tools, such as checklists or guidelines, and made available to the respective departments/areas accordingly. With this document, we aim to establish an overall framework and provide guidance so that we can consistently incorporate and live out DEI as an attitude in our work.

As discourses on anti-racism and anti-discrimination are constantly changing, this should be seen as a living document that will be regularly updated and adapted. Your feedback and suggestions are very welcome and should be addressed to the Advisor for Anti-Discrimination (silver.dogan@savethechildren.de). This document is reviewed every two years.

Background – Why are we centring DEI?

As a children's rights organisation, we have made it our mission to advocate for children's rights – including the right to justice, respect and dignity. It is a philosophy that must not be limited to our work

with children. This commitment must also be reflected in relation to the communities in and with which we work, the partner organisations with which we cooperate, and within our organisational structures. We therefore bear a special responsibility.

To fulfil this responsibility, it is essential to address DEI issues as an organisation, to establish and promote DEI throughout Save the Children Germany, and for all of us to live this philosophy on a daily basis. We have already created a space in which this can take place and will be intensifying dialogue in future. We address various forms of discrimination and engage in critical reflection to bring about change together. It is important that this approach is honestly reflected both at the organisational and staff levels and in our external image.

When many people with different experiences, perspectives, attitudes and background knowledge come together to address the same issues, friction is inevitable. This friction can be productive and drive a process of change. The prerequisite for this is a common basic understanding that enables us to enter into a dialogue in a respectful and reflective manner and to better understand different perspectives. This shared understanding can – and must – continue to evolve.

What do we actually mean by ...?

Diversity describes the variety of people and their life experiences – it encompasses both the ‘who’ and the ‘what’. It is not just about demographic differences, but also about the diversity of perspectives, experiences, identities, temperaments (introverted/extroverted), and individual stories. At SCDE, we understand diversity as the existence and recognition of these differences. At the same time, diversity encompasses all activities aimed at making this variety visible, valuing it and promoting it – this can involve dimensions such as gender, disability, level of education, background or other forms of human diversity.

Inclusion is the ‘how’. It consists of the conscious actions, structures and framework conditions that break down barriers and enable all people – regardless of their backgrounds and differences – to experience tangible participation, appreciation and involvement. Inclusion aims to design access points (e.g. processes, language, spaces, technologies) in such a way that everyone can participate fairly; in doing so, it creates the conditions under which diversity becomes visible and can be lived out.

Equity recognises different starting points and needs and provides targeted, appropriate support to address and compensate for unequal conditions – including those that are social and historically rooted. Equity may therefore involve different measures for different groups to ensure fair outcomes and genuine participation. This means that “not everyone gets the same”.

Equality stands for the absence of discrimination and equal access to rights opportunities and resources – for all people, regardless of, for example, racialised background, disability or gender identity. At the same time, formal equal treatment alone does not automatically lead to fair outcomes without taking structural inequalities into account; we therefore understand equality as an ongoing task of identifying and dismantling disadvantages – hand in hand with equity. There is no such thing as a complete absence of discrimination in societies or organisations. We can only work towards acknowledging it and minimising it.

Power refers to influence over decisions, resources and norms – and thus to whose perspectives carry how much weight within organisations. In the context of diversity & inclusion, anti-discrimination and anti-racism, power operates at individual, institutional and systemic levels; dominant groups shape rules, processes and culture. Awareness of and accountability for power are therefore central to making inequalities visible, enabling the sharing of power – and thus also resources – and creating just structures.

Privilege is a form of social power that individuals do not acquire through their own efforts, but which is structurally attributed to them by virtue of their membership of the dominant majority society. These advantages arise from formal and informal social institutions that systematically create favourable conditions for certain groups.

Privileges often remain **invisible** to those who possess them, because social norms and socialisation processes teach us not to recognise them. At the same time, they confer concrete advantages over people who do not possess these privileges – for example, when looking for housing or work, or within the education system.

Examples include:

- when the language of the majority society (e.g. German) is also one's own family language,
- a name that suggests belonging to the majority society and therefore does not generate negative associations or barriers.

These structural advantages operate at the individual, institutional and societal levels and have a lasting impact on opportunities for participation.

Intersectionality (from the English 'intersection') is a concept developed by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw and describes the interplay of multiple dimensions of discrimination that overlap, reinforce one another and thereby create distinct forms of discrimination.

It highlights the fact that, depending on their social affiliations – such as gender, origin, class, sexuality or disability – people face very different realities of life and experience varying risks of disadvantage.

Intersectionality therefore examines how mechanisms of discrimination overlap, intertwine and reinforce one another. It also looks at the impact this multiple discrimination has on individual experiences, institutional practices and social structures. Social privileges, too, have an intersectional reinforcing effect and can further entrench social inequalities.

This makes intersectionality a key analytical tool for recognising inequality in all its dimensions and for devising effective anti-discrimination measures.

Save the Children and religion: We are an independent children's rights organisation. Our values are based on children's rights; as an organisation, we are free from religious beliefs and completely neutral in this regard. In line with our stance against all forms of discrimination, we also place great importance on sensitivity when dealing with different (marginalised) life experiences.

The majority society in Germany is Christian in character, meaning that people of other faiths may be affected by, for example, anti-Muslim racism or anti-Semitism. Against this backdrop, we also wish to raise the profile of other religions – both internally and externally. This may mean, for instance, that we send greetings on religious holidays and offer internal forums for discussion. Of course, this also applies to Christian holidays. To ensure we always address the entire workforce, we do not wish to link team events organised on behalf of the entire organisation to religious holidays. Specifically: we can, for example, wish

people a blessed Ramadan, a happy Hanukkah and a very Merry Christmas. We can also use religious festivals as opportunities to encourage people to donate. The important thing is that we do not perceive the already very prominent Christian festivals as the only significant ones, and that we are sensitive to the fact that other holidays play a role for some colleagues and some supporters.

OUR VISION & VALUES

Diversity & Anti-racism in the Future of Our Work

We have also anchored the topics of diversity, equity and inclusion and a focus on anti-racism in our Strategy 2025–27. As an employer, Save the Children Germany aims to provide a engaging, creative and inspiring working environment in which all employees can feel comfortable, safe and productive.

We want to attract, develop and retain a diverse, motivated and dedicated employees. That is why we foster a sustainable working culture, are increasingly addressing the issues of diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism, and wish to deepen our work on values. DEI issues are firmly established in our organisation, and we aim to develop this further on an ongoing basis. This means that we have developed various structures, processes and criteria at different levels, including at the human resources, organisational and communication levels. In this way, we want to reach all children and their caregivers, regardless of their credentials, and offer employees from marginalized groups in particular the opportunity to work in an environment that is sensitive to discrimination, while treating partners with respect. The measures for implementation can be found in a detailed implementation plan. This work is based on our organisational values as well as three additional values that are particularly important in relation to DEI:

Commitment and ambition – We hold ourselves and our colleagues to high standards, set ourselves demanding goals, and are committed to improving the quality of our anti-racism and diversity work.

Collaboration – We respect and value one another and grow through our diversity. We work with partners who share our values and vision to leverage our global strength and make diversity more impactful.

Creativity – We are open to change and new ideas and take reasonable risks to sustainably break through discriminatory structures and live diversity in all its variety. We are grateful for the communication of new ways of thinking that broaden the horizons of our knowledge and help to overcome the reproduction of power structures.

Integrity – Our working practices are in line with our organisational values and reflect sincere engagement with diversity and anti-racism.

Accountability – Each of us must take responsibility for our own behaviours and actions on a daily basis. This includes responsibility for achieving sustainable diversity and continuously addressing racism and forms of discrimination.

The following values are also important:

Transparency – We want to make processes as transparent and inclusive as possible, and share progress, mistakes and setbacks openly, in order to continuously learn from and with one other in a constructive process.

Willingness to learn and unlearn & self-positioning – We are open to learning new things and unlearning others, thereby changing our perspectives and attitudes. Self-reflection and admitting our own mistakes are the basis for unlearning patterns of thought and behaviour that we have internalised through socialisation and societal power structures. For us, unlearning also means recognising and questioning well-meaning but discriminatory attitudes and routines. We reflect on our own positioning and privileges within society. We position ourselves on the side of people who are discriminated against and affected by racism; we take a position that is critical of power and society.

Considering intersectionality – We recognise the multidimensionality of discrimination and always account for the fact that discrimination categories can intersect and occur together when doing our work. We always integrate intersectional approaches into our work.

Our commitment

Our founder Eglantyne Jebb was already drawing attention to inequalities over 100 years ago, and racism and discrimination continue to be a reality today. Although all children have the same rights, not all of them can enjoy them equally. Many Black children and children of colour, children with disabilities or children affected by poverty, for example, are denied their rights in Germany and worldwide – including their right to participate in society, to education and to good health. Structural racism and discrimination help keep families in a cycle of poverty and injustice.

As a children's rights organisation, it is our mission to achieve equal rights for all children. Our policy of being aware of discrimination and of being anti-racist is essential, not least because we would not otherwise be able to reach all children and would therefore fail in our mission. Living DEI at SCDE means working for social justice. In our organisation, this process has emerged from an anti-racist focus. Anti-racism remains our priority, but we also want to turn our attention to other dimensions of discrimination so that we can act holistically and effectively. Only in this way can we achieve justice – or at least take steps in the right direction.

We want to use the opportunity given to us to decisively counter (racist) discrimination against children and their families at all levels of society and in all its forms. To do this credibly, we must also take a critical look at ourselves. We must begin with our own structures and ensure that these are critical of racism and sensitive to discrimination; we must also cast a critical eye on our actions and interactions and reflect on our own position within society. This also means that we must openly address power structures. We recognise that there is still much work to be done on diversity, equity and inclusion.

We are committed to doing this work. Our commitments are public and entered into in a spirit of accountability. We are still engaged in a learning process and will modify and expand these commitments as we continue our learning. We embrace the challenges before us – knowing that this is not a process to be completed, that we will make mistakes, and that we will need to be called on again and again to put active anti-racism and anti-discrimination into practice.

Focus on Anti-Racism

Racism operates globally – both in the past and the present – as a form of systemic violence, the effects of which have become clearly visible in recent years. In Germany, for example, the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency recorded a record high of 11,405 complaints of discrimination in 2024, 3,858 of which related to racist or anti-Semitic discrimination – three times as many as in 2019. At the same time, racist attacks rose in several cities, such as Magdeburg, where, following a fatal attack in December 2024, assaults on people with a migrant background increased by more than 70%. Across Europe, too, the number of racially motivated violent acts rose: in the United Kingdom, for example, an increase in attacks on Muslim, Black and other marginalised communities was documented in 2025 – ranging from physical assaults to attacks on children.

Global movements such as #AidToo, #CharitySoWhite and #BlackLivesMatter have also played a key role in recent years in highlighting structural inequalities and building international pressure on organisations, institutions and social actors to actively address racism and power imbalances. Repeated statements by courageous colleagues within our organisation have also triggered important, long-overdue discussions about racism at Save the Children Germany.

These developments make it clear that racism is not merely a phenomenon of radical groups (such as the AfD or neo-Nazis) or other countries. It is deeply embedded in social structures and the ways they function – including in Germany and particularly within the NGO sector. Organisations involved in international cooperation and humanitarian aid have historically and continue to perpetuate colonial legacies in language, decision-making processes, resource allocation and power structures. This is evident, for example, in:

- **Unequal decision-making structures:** strategic decisions are frequently made in the Global North, whilst partner organisations in the Global South primarily carry out the work.
- **Funding logic:** Funding allocation often follows Eurocentric criteria; local organisations receive fewer resources or are subject to stricter conditions.
- **Career paths:** Leadership positions in the NGO sector are predominantly held by white and European individuals, whilst Black people and people of colour have less access to leadership roles despite their high level of expertise.
- **Narratives:** Fundraising communications frequently reproduce stereotypical portrayals of the 'Global South' (e.g. images of helplessness or suffering) in order to raise funds.
- **Language and working culture:** Dominance of English or German-European technical jargon; lack of recognition of other knowledge systems.

Nevertheless, it can be observed overall that in many contexts it is difficult to address and discuss racism. Racism is often not recognised as such and is more readily attributed to others than to oneself. Particularly in the NGO sector, there is often an assumption that having “good” goals automatically means being free of racist structures. This self-attribution has a depoliticising effect and prevents the necessary examination of internal power dynamics within organisations. Racism affects us all – and those not directly affected in particular bear a responsibility to question their own privileges, institutional processes and everyday routines, as well as to actively contribute to change.

As already described in the Executive Board's foreword, anti-racism is therefore a central focus of our DEI work. This is partly due to the difficulty of even recognising racism and addressing it openly – including within our own organisation. We want to create spaces where conversations about personal, structural

and, in particular, institutional racism become possible. On the other hand, this focus is rooted in the colonial structures within which our field of work emerged and which continue to have an impact to this day. We wish to face up honestly to these historical and present-day conditions and invest resources in changing them.

Many colleagues who have themselves been affected by racism have made a decisive contribution to bringing these issues to the fore within the organisation. In addition to their regular work, they have often, under emotionally taxing circumstances, provided important impetus, opened discussions and shared perspectives. We expressly acknowledge this work and are grateful for it. Their commitment serves as both an example and an obligation for us to distribute responsibility more equitably in future, and to share the burden—which has often fallen on those affected—more fairly amongst colleagues and/or to transfer it entirely to the organisation's responsibility.

As part of a sector shaped by colonial and racist structures, we bear the responsibility to actively contribute to a more just future. We want to listen, unlearn, relearn and take courageous steps. And we want to create spaces where honest, critical and supportive conversations are possible – so that together we can initiate concrete, sustainable change.

THE WAY FORWARD

Since 2021, we have been addressing the issue of DEI within the organisation. Through various formats, such as workshops, internal reflection sessions and regular meetings of the DEI working group, initial needs, challenges and opportunities for development have been discussed.

On this basis, four key areas were identified in 2022 that are particularly relevant to sustainable DEI development:

- **Strategy/Leadership Culture**
- **Human resources**
- **Communication**
- **Programme work**

These areas have since formed the structural framework for our DEI work and highlight where our organisation needs to drive targeted change.

In addition, we have defined four cross-cutting themes that affect all areas and are considered across the organisation:

- **Racism**
- **Sexual and gender identity**
- **Disability, chronic illness and mental health issues**
- **social status**

These cross-cutting themes are overarching perspectives that help us to consistently consider the risks of discrimination and highlight structures of inequality. They affect us all – as an organisation and as employees.

The levels and cross-cutting themes are explained in more detail below.

Levels of action

Diversity and anti-racism in strategy and leadership

Objective: Save the Children Germany embeds diversity, equity and inclusion as a cross-cutting and leadership priority at all levels of the organisation. Diversity, equity and inclusion shape our strategic decisions as well as our day-to-day collaboration.

We recognise that anti-racism and DEI are not issues that fall under the responsibility of individual roles or departments. They affect the entire organisation and require a shared approach as well as structural changes. That is why we aim to embed DEI sustainably at all levels of the organisation.

To establish DEI in the long term, a DEI action plan has been developed that sets out specific goals and appropriate implementation steps. This is reviewed and refined annually. Managers bear a particular responsibility in the implementation of DEI: they create spaces for dialogue, reflection and further development, encourage critical self-reflection within their teams, and work with their colleagues to formulate ambitious yet realistic goals.

Human Resources

Objective: Save the Children Germany aims to increase the proportion of marginalised people within the organisation, make their perspectives more visible, and actively support their professional development. At the same time, we ensure that all staff members have the necessary knowledge and skills to act in a way that is sensitive to discrimination and confident in dealing with issues of racism and discrimination.

We want all areas of our organisation to reflect the **diversity** of society and the contexts in which we work. To increase the representation of marginalised people (for example, Black people and people of colour, queer people and people with disabilities), we must critically examine our own structures and break down discriminatory barriers. This includes, in particular, the further development of our internal processes, including a recruitment process that is sensitive to discrimination, accessible and fairer. However, diverse recruitment alone is often not enough. We therefore want to increase the representation of staff with experiences of racism at *all levels* of the organisation and ensure that their perspectives and expertise are actively considered.

All staff members are to be **made aware** of racism and forms of discrimination through targeted training and professional development. On the one hand, this serves as a safeguard, as people in our organisation should not be subjected to racism or any other form of discrimination. On the other hand, we want to equip our staff with the confidence to act so that they can actively incorporate **discrimination-sensitive, anti-racist and intersectional approaches** in their areas of work – whether in project planning and implementation, in contact with partner organisations, or in internal and external communication.

Furthermore, we aim to **create spaces for exchange, reflection and empowerment, particularly** for Black people and people of colour. We also aim to provide spaces where privileges can be critically examined. We foster an organisational culture in which we **hold one another accountable** for drawing attention to discriminatory statements and behaviour, learning from one another and driving change together.

Internal and external communication

Objective: Save the Children Germany aims to use language and imagery that is sensitive to issues of racism, discrimination and power in both its internal and external communications.

Our language and imagery shape how we portray the world, how we reproduce or challenge power relations – and how social perceptions arise or persist. We acknowledge that we, too, have perpetuated racist and discriminatory stereotypes through our choice of language and imagery. In future, we want to take greater responsibility in this area and actively contribute to countering such prejudices.

We wish to use **our (visual) language in a more conscious and reflective** manner, continuously evaluating and improving it. We are aware of the power that images, words and frames hold in the public presentation of our organisation. We therefore aim to consistently avoid the production and reproduction of racist and discriminatory stereotypes.

We strive for anti-racist, non-discriminatory and inclusive (visual) language and view every creative process – from the initial idea to the final implementation – as an opportunity to move closer to this goal.

Programme work

Objective: Programme design and implementation follow a non-discriminatory, anti-racist and decolonial approach.

We aim **to engage with** the communities we work with in Germany and worldwide **as partners and on an equal footing**. In the long term, this means structuring our communication and collaboration in such a way that expertise and decision-making power increasingly lie with our local colleagues and partners. This includes actively involving project participants in decision-making and defining needs together with them.

The design of our projects should therefore be gradually localised. Colleagues in our programme countries take an active and leading role in determining which issues are relevant and which approaches should be pursued. In doing so, we consciously support the international localisation strategy of the entire Save the Children movement and work closely with our international partners to achieve this.

Another key focus is on ensuring that our programmes themselves are inclusive, so that they appeal to all children and no one is excluded. This means, for example, ensuring barrier-free access, working in a gender-inclusive manner, taking intersectional perspectives into account, and systematically checking whether our programmes create unintended barriers or exclusions.

We aim to develop programmes that both reflect global power dynamics and place the self-determination of communities at the centre – so that our work becomes fairer, more effective and more decolonial in the long term.

Beyond the levels mentioned so far, we wish to highlight the following four cross-cutting themes, each with its own objectives, for our work:

Racism

Objective: Foundations are being laid within the organisation to identify, address and dismantle institutional racism.

We want to create safe spaces and structures where institutional racism can be discussed openly and on an ongoing basis. This includes ensuring that staff can engage with the issue of anti-racism and to critically reflect on their own knowledge, actions and decision-making. At the same time, it is important that staff affected by racism have spaces for empowerment where they can exchange ideas, build resilience and support one another without having to undertake additional educational work.

Sexual and gender identity

Objective: Save the Children Germany is committed to raising the profile and empowering trans, inter*, non-binary and queer identities.*

To integrate and make visible sexual and gender diversity within the organisation, we aim to raise awareness of these issues among our staff. This includes developing and consistently using a shared gender-sensitive language to reach not only all colleagues, but also donors and children in our projects. Sexual and gender identities should also be systematically considered in our programme work. This means that we design our services, materials and working methods in such a way that they are more inclusive, safe and accessible for all children and their families – regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Disability, chronic illness and mental health conditions

Objective: Save the Children Germany aims to ensure barrier-free and inclusive access within the organisation.

The issue of accessibility and barriers has not yet been given sufficient attention within our organisation. We want to work together to identify any physical, technical, structural or communication barriers that exist and take targeted action to remove them. These relate, for example, to the accessibility and usability of our premises, the accessibility of our website, and the design of our social media platforms. Accessibility also encompasses processes such as return-to-work support, ensuring that employees receive adequate support following illness or stress. Another key point is the destigmatisation of disabilities, chronic conditions and mental health issues. To this end, we offer regular training for managers and teams on accessibility, inclusion and ableism. The Representative Body for People with Severe Disabilities (SBV) is involved early on and comprehensively in all measures relating to accessibility and inclusion to ensure that decisions are made jointly and needs are considered.

Social background

Objective: Save the Children aims to break down institutional and linguistic barriers for applicants and staff.

Social background or social status is a dimension that often remains invisible and is rarely addressed openly. Many barriers are structurally embedded within organisations, whether through specific expectations regarding language, educational background, appearance or specific/defined professional experience. We therefore want to work together to identify the hurdles people face with us due to their social background and explore the scope for action to break these down. We particularly want to reduce

these hurdles in the recruitment process. This includes, amongst other things, assessing which language skills are genuinely required, which formal qualifications are actually relevant, and where we can create more flexibility to value diverse CVs and experiences. Our aim is to highlight social background as a factor influencing equal opportunities and to create structures in which people have equal opportunities to apply, develop and participate, regardless of their social status.

Evaluation:

With external support, we have broken down our ambitions and goals into specific targets in a separate action plan and developed appropriate measures for their implementation. These measures are regularly reviewed against defined indicators. As part of our evaluation process, we conduct an annual survey on identity and positioning, amongst other things, and welcome feedback wherever possible. In particular, in our programme, communication and fundraising work, we consciously explore new approaches and evaluate them on an ongoing basis. In doing so, we reach new target groups and increasingly reduce stereotypes and outdated assumptions.

GLOSSARY

Our glossary is intended to provide us with a common language and to facilitate communication and mutual understanding. You can also find further information in our [language guide](#).

Black is a self-designation by and for Black people who have African or Afro-diasporic connections. It does not describe skin colour, but rather a shared social experience: Black people are affected by racism, exclusion and colonial power structures. The term thus emphasises a shared social position, not biological characteristics. 'Black' is capitalised to show that it is a political and empowering self-designation.

PoC (Person of Colour) is a political self-designation by and for people who experience racism. The term does not describe skin colour, but rather a shared social experience, namely that of being affected by racial discrimination. The term originated in the civil rights movements in the USA to unite different groups experiencing racism and to fight together against oppression and exclusion. Today, "PoC" is also used in German-speaking countries to emphasise a perspective of solidarity and empowerment and to clearly distinguish itself from labels imposed by others.

'White' does not describe skin colour, but rather a social position associated with privilege, power and the setting of social norms. People who live in a white majority society and are white benefit from structures that give them advantages – often without realising it. Unlike the terms 'Black' or 'PoC', 'white' is not a self-identification but a designation for a dominant social position. To highlight this powerful, often invisible position, 'white' is often written in lower case and/or italics in German.

Prejudices and stereotypes are simplified notions or attributions about groups of people. They often arise without personal experience and are adopted through family, the media or social influences, rather than being examined critically. These notions can be deeply ingrained and influence entire structures and decisions – for example, who finds it easier to secure housing, who is favoured in the workplace, or who is deemed to lack certain abilities. When prejudices interact with power, they can systematically disadvantage people and reinforce social inequalities.

Discrimination means that people are treated unequally and unfairly on the basis of certain characteristics or attributions. This unequal treatment does not happen by chance but follows societal notions about which groups are 'normal', 'belonging' or 'more valuable' than others.

Discrimination arises when people are categorised into stereotypical groups – for example, based on skin colour, origin, religion, gender, disability or social status – and this makes it harder for them to access rights, opportunities or participation.

It is important to note that discrimination does not occur solely between individuals. It is reinforced by social rules, routines and institutions. As a result, people who are discriminated against are often denied the status of equal members of society. Their disadvantage is then not perceived as unjust, but mistakenly as 'normal', 'natural' or because of their supposed 'otherness'.

(Structural) racism means that people are classified as 'different' based on attributed physical, cultural or social characteristics. This classification leads to them being disadvantaged, devalued or excluded. Racism arises from the interplay of prejudice, discrimination and power. It operates not only in individual situations, but is embedded in the rules, routines and structures of our society. As a result, people are treated differently – not because of individual characteristics, but because they are assigned different

social positions and affiliations. In this context, *whiteness* is established as the social norm and associated with advantages, whilst blackness and other *non-white* positions are marked as 'different' and structurally disadvantaged. These power relations have developed historically. Racism was used to justify colonialism, slavery and economic exploitation. Its effects are still felt today. Racism is therefore not individual misconduct, but a system that operates globally and reinforces social inequalities.

In Germany, the terms 'racist' and 'racism' are often heavily laden with moral connotations. Many people understand racism primarily as deliberate misconduct on the part of individuals. This frequently leads to defensiveness when discussing one's own racist patterns of thought and behaviour. However, it is important to understand that we all grow up in a society shaped by racist images, norms and structures. Racism is therefore not a matter of individuals 'being evil', but a social power dynamic that shapes our perceptions and decisions – regardless of how we see ourselves.

Other forms of structural oppression include, for example, classism, sexism, anti-Semitism, ableism and homophobia.

Classism means that people are devalued or disadvantaged based on their social background or attributed social position. Classism particularly affects workers, the unemployed, people affected by poverty, or those who grew up in precarious circumstances. It is not just about how much money someone currently has at their disposal, but also, for example, the financial and social circumstances in which a person grew up, the status this confers on them in society, and how these attributions influence their educational, housing or employment opportunities.

Sexism refers to discrimination based on gender or gender assignment. It applies to women, girls, trans people, non-binary people and those who are read or perceived by others as female, regardless of how they identify themselves. Sexism manifests itself in the devaluation of femininity, in expectations regarding gender roles, and in structures that grant men more power and advantages. This results, for example, in women earning less on average, in care and organisational tasks frequently being assigned to them in professional life, or in a greater "mental load" being placed upon them – that is, more emotional and organisational work that is often taken for granted.

Ableism is derived from the English term 'able' and describes the discrimination against people with disabilities, where people are reduced to their impairment(s) or where social structures are designed in such a way that they make life difficult for people with disabilities or deny them access (people *are* disabled). Examples of this include a lack of accessibility, the assumption that a person is "unfit for work", or that mental health conditions are not taken seriously. It is therefore not just about physical or mental health, but about which bodies, abilities and life realities are considered "normal" and who is consequently denied opportunities. Ableism creates and reinforces social and structural barriers that hinder people, rather than changing the environment.

Queerphobia encompasses discrimination against queer people, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, inter, non-binary people and other sexual and gender identities that do not fit within cis-heterosexual norms. Queerphobia can manifest itself in prejudice, hostility, insults, exclusion, but also physical and psychological violence. It is at work both in everyday life and within social structures, e.g. in laws, language, schools, the workplace or healthcare systems. To make queer people visible and to name them, the acronym LGBTIQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer) is often used. It shows that there are many different identities, all of which deserve respect and protection.

Anti-Semitism is a term coined in Germany and describes a form of discrimination directed against Jewish people – or against people who are perceived to be Jewish or to whom 'Jewish interests' are attributed.

Anti-Semitism can also be directed against Jewish communities or the State of Israel as a supposed 'Jewish collective', if this results in Jewish people being addressed or attacked collectively. It involves prejudices, false images and conspiracy theories about Jewish people. This is expressed through derogatory language, hate speech, exclusion, threats or physical violence. Anti-Semitism is closely linked to colonial history, Christian anti-Judaism, racial theories, Nazism and the Shoah. It persists to this day – structurally, socially and in everyday life.

Institutional racism means that racism is not merely reflected in the behaviour of individuals, but is embedded in the rules, routines and decisions of institutions, for example in schools, universities, businesses, public authorities or the healthcare sector. It manifests itself in the fact that certain groups are disadvantaged by organisational processes, guidelines or unwritten standards, even if no one intends to act in a racist manner. This can relate to who has easier access to education, support or career opportunities, whose perspectives are considered in decisions, or whose experiences are overlooked or not taken seriously. Institutional racism therefore operates where structures systematically exclude or disadvantage certain people, thereby automatically favouring others. It concerns racist norms and expectations that are deeply embedded in institutions and shape everyday processes.

Everyday racism or microaggressions are everyday verbal, non-verbal and situational slights and derogatory messages. These can be sent consciously or unconsciously. Those affected experience such actions because they are attributed to a (perceived) membership of a marginalised group. Microaggressions repeatedly remind those affected that they do not fit the social norm or are seen as 'different'. One example of this is the question "And where are you (actually) from?". It signals that the person affected is not automatically perceived as German. Underlying this is the assumption that *white* people are considered German. Everyday racism often appears subtle, but its constant repetition can be distressing and reinforce the feeling of not fully belonging.

Anti-racism means actively standing up against racism and driving change in personal behaviour, within organisations and in society. Acting in an anti-racist way means recognising racist structures, counteracting them and creating conditions in which all people have equal rights, opportunities and security. Anti-racism is therefore more than simply 'not being racist'. It means highlighting inequalities, supporting those affected and taking a clear stand against discriminatory language, decisions or structures – in everyday life as well as in political, economic and social spheres.

Colonialism describes the extension of European states' power over non-European territories through occupation, with the primary aim of exploiting these regions economically and controlling them politically. To justify this approach, colonised peoples were portrayed as 'backward' or 'less developed'. These fabricated distinctions served to assert European superiority and to present oppression, exploitation and violence as 'necessary' or 'civilising'. Colonial rule manifested itself, among other things, in slavery, genocide, racist structures of violence, cultural oppression and the imposition of European norms (such as ideals of beauty, language, religion or conceptions of family and society). After the Second World War, many colonies gained formal independence. However, this political independence does not mean that colonial power relations disappeared entirely. Many of the old structures persist to this day, for example economic dependencies, global inequality, the dominance of European forms of knowledge, or internalised notions of "superiority" and "inferiority". **Decolonisation** therefore means more than just countries becoming independent. It means recognising, questioning and dismantling existing colonial power structures. This also involves engaging with norms, images and ideals that stem from colonial oppression, and actively unlearning them.

White saviourism describes a behaviour in which *white* people position themselves as 'saviours' for people in countries of the so-called Global South. This is often done with good intentions, such as 'wanting to

help', 'giving something back' or 'doing good'. Nevertheless, this attitude is problematic because it perpetuates colonial power structures and reproduces stereotypical notions (Teju Cole). The term describes aid from the so-called Global North that is based on inequality, devaluation and one-sided portrayals: *white* people are depicted as knowledgeable and proactive, whilst Black people or people in the so-called Global South are portrayed as in need of help or passive. This model of thought and action has its origins in colonialism, when *white* European colonisers ascribed to themselves a "mission of education and civilisation" (Natasha Kelly). *White saviourism* often has a performative aspect. Acts of assistance are publicly displayed or staged, reinforcing the *white* person's positive self-image. Examples of this include volunteers travelling to so-called "developing countries" without the appropriate experience or qualifications to "help" in schools or care homes, or taking photos of themselves with BIPOC children and, in the worst cases, sharing these online without consent. Another example is when children from other countries are adopted, rather than, for instance, supporting local families or support structures. White saviourism overlooks questions such as: What do people really need? What do they want themselves? What local solutions already exist? And which power dynamics are actually reinforced by certain forms of "help"?

Unpaid educational work refers to the expectation that people affected by discrimination or racism should share their experiences, explain situations or educate others without receiving any recognition or payment in return. This overlooks the fact that this kind of education is educational work. It takes time and energy, and often stems from personal, painful experiences through which those affected have had to acquire knowledge. Today, there are many ways to find out about discrimination and racism independently and free of charge. If those affected are nevertheless expected to carry out additional educational work, for example in a professional context, in workshops or in teams, then this work must be paid for and valued. Otherwise, unpaid educational work leads to people who are already experiencing discrimination being placed under additional strain and having to do more work than those who are not affected.

THESE DEFINITIONS ARE BASED ON THE FOLLOWING SOURCES

[2019-Solidarity-makes-you-strong.pdf \(gladt.de\)](#)

[Glossary of terms – Migrationsrat Berlin e.V.: Migrationsrat Berlin e.V.](#)

[Dictionary | Diversity Arts Culture \(diversity-arts-culture.berlin\)](#)

[Awareness Glossary \(wirmuesstenreden.blogspot.com\)](#)

[My Family WEB compressed.01.pdf \(mcusercontent.com\)](#)