

EXCLUDED BUT ESSENTIAL: THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CDWD TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS





Global Forum of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (GFoD) is a platform to voice the rights and entitlements of communities across all continents, especially in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and North America, that are discriminated on work and descent.

GFoD aims for full realisation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of CDWD and to ensure access to sustainable development goals.

GFoD was founded in 2019 and formally recognizes the core motto of *'Leave No One Behind'* propounded by "Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", which ensures People, Planet, Peace, Partnership and Prosperity for all, especially those who are marginalised through generations and suffer social prejudices while aspiring for a life of dignity and peace.

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In Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly in Brazil, the Quilombola population is the most prominent group of CDWD in the region.

Photo: GFoD

1 NO POVERTY



End poverty in all its forms everywhere

2 ZERO HUNGER



End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

13 CLIMATE ACTION



Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

SUMMARY

Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD) refers to a form of social stratification and exclusion that is prevalent in many societies worldwide. CDWD primarily manifests in societies where individuals are categorised into hierarchical groups based on their ancestry, occupation, or birth, often referred to as castes or descent-based groups.

Affecting over 270 million people worldwide, which would constitute the 5th largest country on earth, CDWD faces stigmatisation related to the notions of “impurity,” “uncleanness,” or “pollution.” This results in segregation, limited access to public services and infrastructure, harassment and violence, including sexual violence against women and girls, and the risk of slavery or bonded labour.

CDWD experiences systemic marginalisation. Roma in Europe, Dalits in Asia, Burakumin in Japan, Haratin in Africa, and Quilombola in Brazil, among others, are some of the prominent DWD communities. The status of CDWD in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) highlights significant challenges, leaving them to fall behind across the SDGs:

16 PEACE, JUSTICE
AND STRONG
INSTITUTIONS



Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development



End poverty
in all its
forms
everywhere

SDG 1:

For CDWD, poverty has remained both a cause and an effect of discrimination. Discrimination, limited access to opportunities, economic exploitation, lack of social protection, limited mobility, lack of accessibility to education and landlessness prevent CDWD from accessing basic socio-economic rights.

The consequences of discrimination leaves the community into intergenerational poverty, reproduced mainly through the types of undignified work the community has been pushed into for centuries. The practice of manually cleaning excrement from private and public dry toilets and open drains persists in several parts of South Asia. Following centuries-old feudal and caste-based custom across many parts of India, women from communities traditionally working as “manual scavengers” still collect human waste on a daily basis, load it into cane baskets or metal troughs, and carry it away on their heads for disposal at the outskirts of the settlement.¹

In Africa, hereditary slavery continues to affect several countries. The Haratines in Mauritania are one such community, many of whom are dependent on former “masters” due to limited skills and lack of alternative economic opportunities.² In many communities, women from CDWD face extreme poverty and social exclusion, and are forced into sexual labour through ritualistic forms of sexual slavery and prostitution, such as the Devadasi system in India and the Trokosi system in Ghana.

In Europe, four out of five Roma live at risk of poverty, representing about 80% of the Roma population in each country. Apart from that, 54% of Roma children live in households experiencing severe material deprivation.³



End hunger,
achieve food
security and
improved nutrition
and promote
sustainable
agriculture

SDG 2:

Disruptions in livelihood, limited access to food and barriers to healthcare and nutrition have heightened food insecurity for CDWD across the globe post COVID-19. Nearly 56% of CDWD women in India are anaemic, compared to the national average of 53%. A 2022 study from Turkey shows that an estimated 2.5 to 5 million Roma people living in the country suffer from extreme poverty and poor nutrition.⁴ Similarly, food insecurity is alarmingly high (86%) among the Quilombola communities in Brazil. At least one in five Africans goes to bed hungry and an estimated 140 million people in Africa face acute food insecurity, majority of them being CDWD, according to the 2022 Global Report on Food Crises 2022 Mid-Year Update.



SDG 13:

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Due to the vulnerable situation and the exclusion experiences, climate change disproportionately affects CDWD, exacerbating their existing social, economic, and environmental vulnerabilities. Climate-induced displacement impacts CDWD mostly and it often results in loss of livelihoods, increased poverty, restricted access to health services, access to water and clean environment which frequently leads to forced labour.⁵ Inequalities, discrimination, and marginalisation, further reduce the resilience of CDWD to climate change, amplifying their vulnerabilities.



SDG 16:

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Discrimination against CDWD is systemic and structural, quite prevalent in the justice system. Investigators often refuse to investigate hate crimes or prosecute cases of breach of constitutional rights against CDWD. Atrocities against Dalits have increased post COVID-19 in South Asia, especially in India (from 45953 in 2019 to 57582 in 2022), Bangladesh and Nepal. Nearly 41% of Roma felt discriminated against during post COVID-19 in at least one of these areas in everyday life, including: seeking a job, at work or in school, accessing healthcare, interacting with administrative entities, or visiting stores due to their ethnic origin.⁶



SDG 17:

Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

The commitment by developed countries to achieve the target of allocating 0.7% of their Gross National Income (GNI) to Official Development Assistance (ODA) remains crucial. This target underscores the responsibility of wealthier nations to support global development, reduce poverty, and foster sustainable growth in developing countries, particularly for Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD). Meeting this commitment is essential for advancing international cooperation, addressing the unique challenges faced by CDWD, and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

INTRODUCTION

Discrimination based on work and descent is any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on inherited status such as caste, including present or ancestral occupation, family, community or social origin, name, birth place, place of residence, dialect and accent that has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, or any other field of public life.⁷ This type of discrimination is typically associated with the notion of purity, pollution, and practices of untouchability⁸ and is deeply rooted in the societies and cultures where Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD) are present.

CDWD are one of the most excluded, segregated, and marginalised groups at the global, regional, and local levels within their social, economic, political, and cultural systems. The consequences of this marginalisation are unjust deprivation and systemic exclusion from social relationships and communication, education, health, access to water and sanitation, employment, voting rights, equal access to land and housing, and access to religious institutions in the public sphere. The types of social structures that have evolved and functioned for centuries have inflicted systemic violence on the DWD communities, including:

- **The Haratine in the Sahel region;**
- **Forgeron in West Africa;**
- **Bantu in Sudan;**
- **Roma in Europe;**
- **Burakumin in Japan;**
- **Dalits (formerly known as ‘untouchables’) in South Asia;**
- **and Quilombola and Palenque in South America.**

DWD focuses on occupational descent, where the position within the social stratification (unlike in racism, the colour of the skin) becomes the core factor of discrimination. DWD communities are placed at the bottom of the social ladder and thus are associated with the lowest paying, ‘indecent’ work.

REGIONAL DIMENSIONS OF CDWD

1. EUROPE

Data from the Fundamental Rights Agency 2021⁹ indicates that the monetary poverty of Roma has remained unchanged since 2016. Four out of five Roma live at risk of poverty, with 80% of Roma in European countries at risk in 2021. They live in households with an equivalised income after social transfers that is less than 60% of the median income in their country. About 8 % of Roma children below the age of 18 are at risk of poverty.

A large percentage of Roma people live below the poverty line, which is a clear consequence of antigypsyism in society. The gap between Roma and the rest of society in terms of access to clean and safe water remains highest in Romania, where 68% of Roma lived without tap water in their dwellings in 2016.¹⁰

2. ASIA

Equality and non-discrimination are constitutionally guaranteed rights for all citizens of Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. However, a significant population of CDWD suffer from modern slavery and slavery-like practices in South Asia. The Dalits in South Asia and the Burakumin in Japan are victims of age-old caste-based social stratification that divided people based on their work and descent. Despite constitutional provisions, anti-discrimination laws, prohibition of certain harmful practices, and special measures for the advancement of Dalits, caste-based occupational segregation continue to persist in South Asian countries.¹¹

While most countries have abolished all forms of slavery through national legislations and under the monitoring framework of international human rights, CDWD continue to even participate in the race to achieve Sustainable Development Goals. The discrimination faced by CDWD starts discrimination and extends to economic, political, religious, legal, and other forms of discrimination. CDWD in Asia face a comprehensive, structural form of holistic discrimination as well.

3. AFRICA

Across West Africa, several ethnic groups and societies such as the Tuareg, the Wolof, the Mandinka, the Bambara, the Fulani, the Soninké, the Hausa or the Zarma, exhibit rigid social hierarchies, often described as caste systems.¹² While the 'nobles' are considered freeborn, the 'slaves', regarded as descendants of captive slaves, domestic slaves, and the slave trade, continue to be discriminated and vulnerable to modern and traditional forms of slavery.

Moreover, some communities are grouped into different castes based on hereditary occupations considered "impure". Those groups include 'griots', 'smiths', 'leatherworkers',

270 MILLION

The global coverage of DWD communities includes Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America and the diaspora communities.

and other professions. Together they are commonly referred to as “occupational and artisan castes” and are considered of ‘low status’. Finally, hierarchisation and Discrimination on work and descent also emerge between original settlers of villages and towns and persons who subsequently settled in these villages and towns. These communities do not have a common identity, as many different names are attributed to them depending on the ethnic group/society they are from and the country. However, in the French language they are often commonly identified under the term ‘casted people’ (‘gens de caste’, ‘casté’). Amongst the most affected countries in the region, we can cite the Gambia, Niger, Mali and Mauritania.¹³

In Mauritania for instance, the society is dominated by a group called the Beidane (White moors), representing a small percent of the population who historically enslaved the group called the Haratins, representing around 45 per cent of the population.

The Gambia is another striking example. The Global Slavery Index 2023 estimates that over 16000 people of the 2.4 million¹⁴ of the population are victims of modern slavery in the Gambia and ranks the country as the 12th country in Africa in terms of prevalence of modern slavery. In Nigeria, the Osu are offered to a specific deity as per customary practice and are forced into modern forms of slavery, are treated as outcasts, considered impure and unclean, and are segregated to live in isolation, away from the general habitat. Any social relationship with Osu is strictly prohibited.

Finally, in West Africa, some specific forms of sexual slavery of women are associated to Discrimination based on work and descent, such as the Wahyu practice in Niger. Emerging mostly from the CDWD of Tuareg communities in Niger, Wahyu are domestic and sexual slaves sold to rich Hausa individuals.

4. LATIN AMERICA

In Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly in Brazil, the Quilombola¹⁵ population is the most prominent group of CDWD in the region.

Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent documented in Latin America and the Caribbean show two main social origins: the most prominent and largest group in Latin America can be classed as “Rural Black Resistance Movements”, describing the historical origins of said groups are mostly rural and share the “resistance to slavery, strong territorial ties and relations, and defence and specific ways of life, production, and organisation”.¹⁶

In Brazil for example, the formation of rural black resistance movements called Quilombolas formed with “notable interethnic relations with indigenous and white people”¹⁷, in Colombia known as Palenque with Bantu-inspired language Palenqueiro as well as distinct culture and expression thereof demonstrates the diversity of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent in Latin America and the Caribbean. In Jamaica and Suriname, the term Quilombola communities is also employed.

The other social origin of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent in Latin America and the Caribbean is the Roma people. The reference to ‘Roma’, as an umbrella term, encompasses a wide range of different people of Romani origin such as: Roma, Sinti, Kale, Romanichels and Boyash/Rudari. It also encompasses groups such as Ashkali, Egyptians, Yenish, Dom, Lom, Rom and Abdal, as well as traveller populations, including ethnic Travellers or those designated under the administrative term Gens du Voyage and people who identify as Gypsies, Tsiganes or Tziganes, without denying their specificities. It is important to note that the nature, unique social location and intensity of systematised exclusion varies significantly from country to country and within different social contexts.



IN SOUTH ASIA, 90% OF ALL IN MODERN SLAVERY, AND HALF OF ALL CHILD LABOURERS BELONG TO CDWD.

INTERSECTIONS OF CDWD AND MODERN SLAVERY

Studying modern slavery in the countries where CDWD exists, a clear parallel emerges about the communities associated with modern slavery. Slave descendants in these regions meet various forms of discrimination based on modern forms of slavery.

Slavery and its consequences crippled communities of their aspirations for social integration and led them instead to social exclusion in the societies in which they lived. Child labour, human trafficking, debt settlement, and other forms of slavery are common and constant in their communities.

In South Asia, 90% of all in modern slavery and half of all child labourers belong to CDWD. Child labour is constantly growing within the Roma community, and child marriages are high compared to other communities. These DWD communities are also considered inexpensive for ruling communities and hence are often made to work for a lower wage than usual.¹⁸

Moreover, across regions, CDWD women are particularly vulnerable, facing intersecting forms of discrimination that exacerbate their risk of falling prey to modern forms of slavery. For example, harmful practices such as deuki in Nepal and Devadasi practice in India involve offering young Dalit girls to deities to fulfil religious obligations.¹⁹

The Trokosi system, predominantly in Ghana (with over 5,000 women and 15,000 children affected), Togo, and Benin, involves the enslavement of women and girls as a form of atonement to the gods for perceived wrongdoings either by them or their families.

96.5 MILLION

The number of people in Europe exposed to the risk of poverty or social exclusion. That's about 1 in 5 (21.9%)

UNDERSTANDING CDWD INCLUSION IN SDGS

WHERE ARE CDWD IN THE *"LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND"* PROCESS ?

For CDWD women, marginalisation and extreme poverty often means that as a means of survival, they engage in informal street vending, waste collection, sex work and begging.

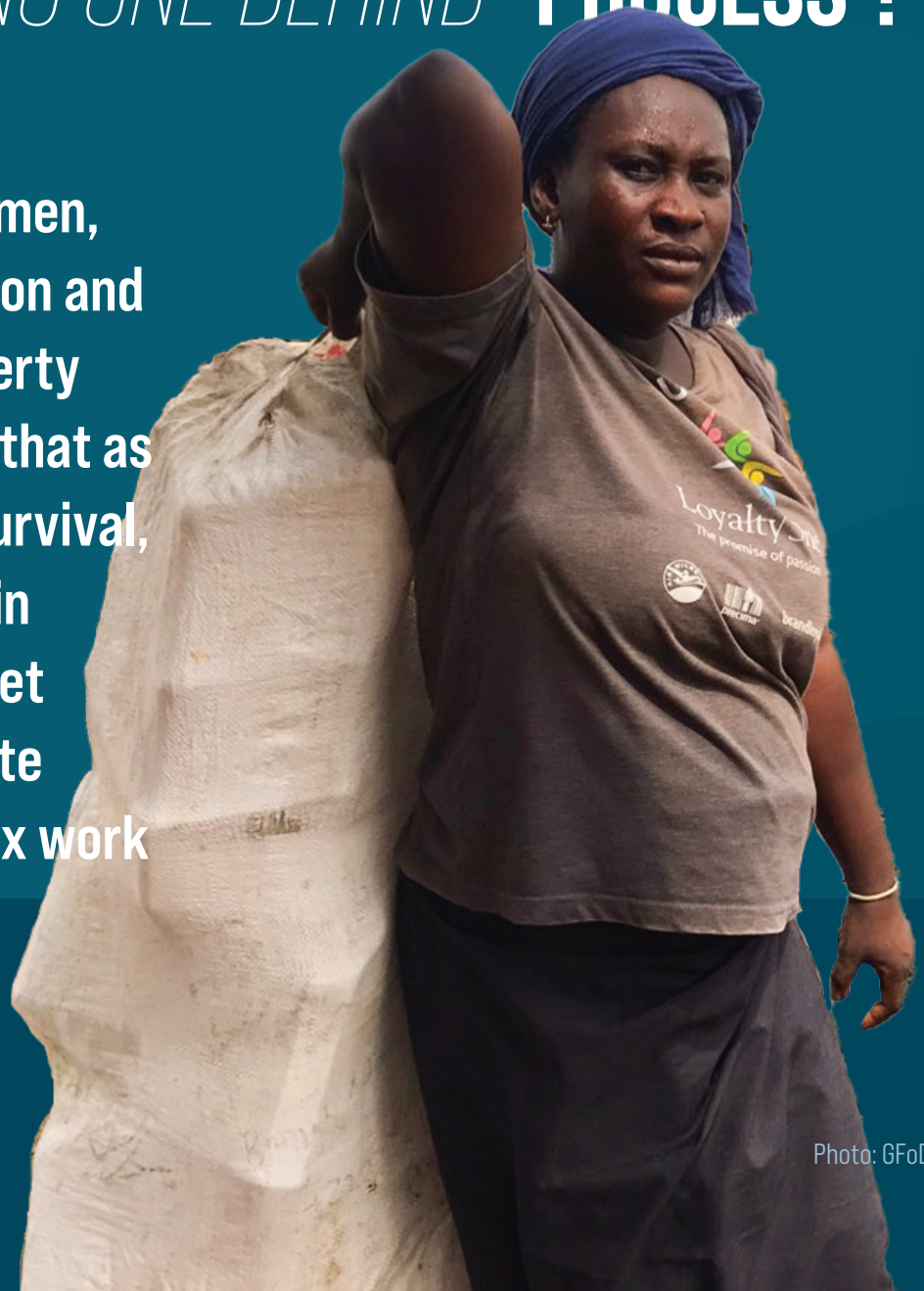


Photo: GFoD



GOAL 1: NO POVERTY

Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent are mostly likely to be in the lowest socio-economic group in all the countries where this form of discrimination is practised - scoring low across all socio-economic indicators including health, employment, education, shelter, access to clean water and sanitation and food security.

Despite assertions by the Mauritanian state government that slavery has been eradicated, one percent of the nation's population remains enslaved, predominantly from the Haratin community. However, emancipation does not equate to true freedom for many Haratin individuals. They often endure poverty and discrimination, as they lack essential identification documents, hindering their access to employment, education, and the means to support their families.²⁰

Over 48.6% of Gambia's population lives below the poverty line, with 18.8% living in severe multidimensional poverty. Given the vulnerabilities created by slavery and discrimination, it is not hard to imagine that the CDWD would comprise a significant population of those in multi-dimensional poverty. Similar is the situation of Mbororos in Cameroon. Niger is one of the poorest countries in the world, with over 16.18 million people (66.1%) living in multidimensional poverty. Without estimates for CDWD, it is not hard to imagine that most people in multidimensional poverty would comprise the CDWD.²²

The practice of manually cleaning excrement from private and public dry toilets and open drains persists in several parts of South Asia. Across much of India, consistent with centuries-old feudal and caste-based custom, women from communities that traditionally worked as "manual scavengers" still collect human waste on a daily basis, load it into cane baskets or metal troughs, and carry it away on their heads for disposal at the outskirts of the settlement.²³

According to the European Network Against Poverty 2021²⁴, the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) reported that in 2020 there were 96.5 million people in Europe and about 1 in 5 (21.9%) were exposed to the risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE). According to AROPE rates, by 2020, relative poverty – linked to insufficient income – fell from 2016 to 2018, but rose again in 2019 and 2020 (although still at a lower level than in 2016). In 2019, almost 1 in 10 workers (9%) faced in-work poverty. According to the Fundamental Rights Agency 2021 data²⁵, the monetary poverty of Roma has not changed in 2021 compared with 2016. Four out of five Roma live at risk of poverty.

In Latin America, DWD communities are composed of the descendants of enslaved Africans known as "Quilombola" in Brazil and "Palanque" in Colombia. It has been noted that around 80% of Afro-Colombians live in extreme poverty, and 74% of Afro-Colombians earn less than the minimum wage. Chocó, the department with the highest percentage of Afro-Colombians, has the lowest per capita level of government investment in health, education and infrastructure.²⁶

For CDWD women, marginalisation and extreme poverty often means that as a means of survival, they engage in informal street vending, waste collection, sex work and begging. For instance, Dalit women in India and Nepal from various excluded DWD communities are intergenerationally involved and economically dependent on sex work. Girls and women from the Badi caste group in Nepal²⁷; and those from the Nat, Perna and Bacchara communities in India²⁸ are pushed into prostitution, earning bread for the family. In other regions as well, poverty and exclusion push CDWD women, such as those from Roma communities in Europe, into prostitution. In Latin America, where commercial sexual exploitation affects children²⁹, people from the CDWD are more likely to be impacted due to their economic and social vulnerabilities.

2 ZERO HUNGER



GOAL 2: ZERO HUNGER

Food security, improving nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture are key to achieving Goal 2. Achieving these targets requires addressing the specific challenges faced by CDWD. CDWD often faces significant barriers in accessing nutritious food, agricultural resources, and livelihood opportunities due to social exclusion and discrimination. Therefore, efforts to implement SDG 2 must prioritise the inclusion and empowerment of CDWD, ensuring they have equal access to food, agricultural services, and economic opportunities.

In the African context, the experience of the Trokosi community (sexual slaves in Ghana) shows that lack of education, considering their early initiation into slavery and isolated childhood often leading to low social skills, further hampers their reintegration into the larger society. Many Trokosi are found to be malnourished, starving on a regular basis and when pregnant, they are not allowed to seek maternal care.³⁰ In Benin, the Tabilies are children from marginalised families or orphans who are students of Dhara (Quranic school). In exchange for religious education, they beg for food on the streets.

In Mauritania, Hratin and Afro-Mauritanian girls are deceived with promises of shelter and education but are trafficked into domestic servitude in urban areas. Similar is the situation in Somalia for the Somali Bantu who have been facing the wrath of the Humanitarian crisis and often facing food crisis and displacement.³¹

Studies show 56 percent Dalit are anaemic, while the national average is 53 percent in India.³²

By addressing the unique needs of CDWD within the framework of SDG 2, we can move closer to realising a world where no one is left behind in the quest for food security and sustainable agriculture. As stated by the World Bank³³, areas with larger Roma communities are more likely to battle hunger and food shortages, with a significant number of Roma communities reporting having less food during and because of COVID-19. Although many Roma families live in upper-middle and high-income countries, they still cope with levels of poverty, hunger, and deprivation on par with the poorest areas of the world.

By addressing the unique needs of CDWD within the framework of SDG 2, we can move closer to realising a world where no one is left behind in the quest for food security and sustainable agriculture.



GOAL 13: CLIMATE ACTION



AFRICA

Mauritania: Desertification has significantly impacted the vulnerabilities of children, as the children are forced to drop out of school. Desertification and a subsequent decline in soil fertility have reduced crop availability and increased malnutrition. The impact of climate change on CDWD is further elevated through the non-financing of education, which directly impacts vulnerability among children.

ASIA

Bangladesh: Dalits are vulnerable to heavy storms and floods in the region. This has resulted in the ruin of their agriculture, land, and homes. Further, they do not get access to shelter homes during disasters, leaving them vulnerable and helpless.

India: Like Bangladesh, Dalits in India are vulnerable to climate change and disasters. Primarily agricultural labourers, Dalits must withstand sudden climate impacts, like unusual rains, extreme droughts, and floods. If the crops are ruined, they are not paid their wages and even face violence from the dominant caste farmers. During disasters, there is systemic discrimination against Dalits. They are the last ones to get relief and thus provided with the leftovers.

Nepal: Dalits in Nepal are highly vulnerable to climate change, as they are forced to live in high-risk areas on the peripheries of villages and cities, and when an environmental disaster occurs, they do not have access to relief packages.

EUROPE

Roma are vulnerable to climate change due to inadequate housing. Romas in Pata Rat in Romania, live in dangerous houses made from landfills that provide insufficient protection from climatic changes. Further, the lighting of fires to cope with harsher winters has caused the deaths of numerous children. Moreover, environmental racism creates bigger issues for Roma women since they are often care providers at home and engaged in domestic duties such as cooking, household work, and fetching drinking water. Disparities in access to tap water and sanitation become a source of gender inequalities, as in most cases they create hardship for women and girls, who are more frequently responsible for collecting water. Discrimination on Climate Justice often prevents Roma from enjoying the most basic human rights, namely the right to live in a clean environment and the right to live in a house with the necessary utilities, protecting them from the effects of climate change.³⁴

LATIN AMERICA

Brazil: The deterritorialization of large industries for their mega projects has forced the Quilombo to leave their lands. Six hundred fifty-four mega projects have targeted Quilombo land to justify economic development, resulting in mass deforestation, pollution, and denial of Quilombo land rights. Climate change disproportionately affects CDWD, exacerbating existing social, economic, and environmental vulnerabilities. Displacement due to climate change impacts CDWD, often resulting in loss of livelihoods, poverty, access to health services, access to water and clean environment which often leads to forced labour.³⁵

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



GOAL 16: PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

COVID-19 exacerbated existing inequalities and vulnerabilities, magnifying the challenges faced by CDWD. Atrocities against dalits have increased post COVID-19 pandemic in South Asia, especially in India (*45953 in 2019 to 57582 in 2022*).

In Bangladesh, there is no official or unofficial data available about the number of atrocities and violence against Dalits in Bangladesh. Accordingly, data is also unavailable in terms of convictions of non-Dalit perpetrators. However, from the published news in the different national newspapers, it is evident that the Dalits experience physical, psychological, and sexual violence as well as atrocities in Bangladesh.³⁶ For case stories, please refer to Bangladesh Country Report 2023 published by Global Forum of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent.

Dalit in Pakistan and Nepal have also been facing similar issues and are often subjected to violence and are being denied fundamental right to access to Justice. Dalits do not trust the police and the justice system in general, and the limited government level data and statistics available (Only 30-43 cases per year registered under CBDU Act in police records)³⁷ confirm their distrust is well-founded, including for Dalit women confronting caste-based violence. The challenge often comes from the first stage of justice, the filing of complaints and biases in the mind of investigation teams. The police or investigation teams are usually from the dominant community who sympathise with their own; thus, the complaint is often not filed.

Roma are often faced with investigators who refuse to investigate hate crimes and prosecutors who refuse to prosecute cases for breaches of constitutional rights. In 2022, the UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues Fernand de Varennes highlighted that some countries in Europe and the Americas have legally recognised the Roma Holocaust.

Yet, the unaddressed history of the violence against the Roma is repeated even today in different ways: increase in prejudice, hate speech, and hate crimes during the COVID-19 pandemic, displaced Roma refugees from Ukraine not being afforded the same treatment as non-Roma refugees upon their arrival at the borders of countries of refuge, and during their integration. Similar experiences have also been shared by Roma and Dom persons from the Middle East who fled the war in Syria.³⁸

In the presence of inequalities, discrimination, and marginalisation, communities exhibit lower resilience to external shocks resulting from climate change impacts. This heightened precariousness amplifies the vulnerability of all forms of discrimination faced by CDWD.

About 17 percent of Roma surveyed experienced at least one form of hate-motivated harassment in the last 12 months. Besides this, discrimination occurs on a day-to-day basis between individuals. The most prominent areas where discrimination towards Roma can be seen are education, housing, employment and health. Discrimination can also be seen in the justice system.

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The situation of the CDWD, women in particular, raises concerns as their dire situation, marked by exploitation, discrimination, and marginalisation, reveals the significant gap existing currently between the SDG's indicators and the ground realities.

For instance, the religion originated in Togo and Benin among the Ewe people (ethnic group) as a war ritual in the 1600s where the warriors offered women to the war gods in exchange for victory and a safe homecoming illustrates a good example. Some estimates show that more than 3,300 Trokosis have been freed, while over 5,000 remain enslaved in Ghana alone. Other estimates show that there are about 30,000 women and girls who are enslaved as Trokosi throughout West Africa.[i] Women and children constitute a large proportion of the victims in Sub-Saharan Africa, enduring exploitation in sectors like agriculture, domestic work, forced prostitution, child soldiers, and in forced marriages.³⁹

Similarly, a large number of CDWD women in South Asia are pushed into forced marriages for marital relations and progeny through bride trafficking⁴⁰; while Roma women in Slovakia are victims of human trafficking, forced marriages, child prostitution or become involuntary prostitutes either in Slovakia or abroad.⁴¹



Photo: Simona Torotcoi

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



ODA can fund community-led projects that empower CDWD, fostering self-sufficiency and resilience within these communities and support educational programs tailored to CDWD, ensuring access to quality education and vocational training, which are essential for breaking the cycle of discrimination and marginalisation.

GOAL 17: PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

The commitment by developed countries to achieve the target of allocating 0.7% of their Gross National Income (GNI) to Official Development Assistance (ODA) remains crucial for addressing the needs of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD).

This financial support is vital for developing targeted programs that combat poverty, enhance education, and improve living conditions for CDWD, ensuring their inclusion and empowerment within global development initiatives. ODA can fund community-led projects that empower CDWD, fostering self-sufficiency and resilience within these communities and support educational programs tailored to CDWD, ensuring access to quality education and vocational training, which are essential for breaking the cycle of discrimination and marginalisation.

Targeted funding can also help the CDWD across various regions, to come out of poverty.

The commitment by developed countries to allocate 0.7% of their Gross National Income (GNI) to Official Development Assistance (ODA) is crucial for Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD).

This financial support can significantly impact CDWD by funding initiatives that address systemic inequalities and socio-economic barriers. Such initiatives included below.

Photo: GFoD



RECOMMENDATIONS

SDG 1: NO POVERTY & SDG 2: ZERO HUNGER

1. Formally recognise and acknowledge the existence of Discrimination based on Work and Descent at the national, regional and global level and ensure the commitments made through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to end poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions is inclusive of the rights and concerns of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent.
2. The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) monitoring the SDGs must ensure that Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD) are included in all relevant targets. This is especially crucial for targets related to ending poverty, ending hunger, climate action, and ensuring peace, justice, and accountability measures at all levels and in all countries where CDWD are existing.
3. Ensure Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent are involved in the design and decision-making of budgeting and finance schemes so that the allocation of resources is targeted, accessible and designed to address the unique forms of discrimination experienced by these communities including social exclusion, segregation, violence, marginalisation and modern slavery.
4. Develop specific indicators and metrics in the targets of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to fill the significant gaps that leave Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent out of the United Nations' vision for a sustainable and equitable future.
5. Implement gender-responsive budgeting to address the specific development needs of women and girls from Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent who face unique and intersecting forms of discrimination and violence due to multiple forms of marginalisation and exclusion associated with caste, class, gender and others, based on their region and country.
6. Ensure reforms to the international financial architecture and international and domestic policy efforts to expand financing for the SDGs and climate action, are adapted to include the rights and concerns of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent.

RECOMMENDATIONS

SDG 13: CLIMATE ACTION

- 7.** Ensure participation of CDWD in the design and implementation of the Climate Justice: Loss and Damage Fund so that communities can build resilience and are resourced to protect themselves against the impact of climate change.
- 8.** All States should recognize and take measures to address the special problem of increased discrimination based on work and descent in situations of humanitarian crises, such as internal conflicts, wars, or natural disasters.
- 9.** Governments and international organisations should develop measures to tackle exclusion and discrimination in all development and disaster recovery programmes, such as social equity audits and caste analysis frameworks. Appropriate ‘affected community inclusion tools’ should be developed and applied effectively in the planning and monitoring of programmes. Agencies should provide training on discrimination based on work and descent to their staff and should take responsibility for monitoring and countering untouchability practices. Members of the affected communities should be fully involved in decision-making on and the planning and evaluation of programmes, and agents involved should actively seek to employ members of affected communities in the recovery or development operations.
- 10.** States should investigate all alleged cases in which members of affected communities have been denied assistance or benefits equal to that received by other people, or cases in which they have been discriminated against during the relief, rehabilitation and development processes, and compensate or retroactively grant such benefits to the victims of affected communities.
- 11.** Accelerate implementation of SDGs and address the drivers of violence and conflict to protect Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent living in areas of armed conflict and exposed to the violence of armed groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS

SDG 16: PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS & SDG 17: PARTNERSHIP FOR THE GOALS

- 12.** Strengthen legal framework and enhance data collection and monitoring in order to ensure enforcement and implementation of anti discrimination laws to protect the rights of CDWD.
- 13.** Foster Inclusive Institutions and encourage the inclusion of CDWD in the decision-making process at all levels of governance and administration.
- 14.** Ensure reforms of the international financial architecture and international and domestic policy efforts to expand financing for the SDGs and climate action, are adapted to include the rights and concerns of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent.
- 15.** Establish a unique space at the global level through a United Nations Expert Working Group for Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent so they can strengthen their interface with the UN system and participation in decision-making regarding their human rights.
- 16.** Ensure a stronger commitment of Overseas Development Assistance from the Global North to developing countries specifically in countries where CDWD is prevalent.

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Global Forum of Communities Discriminated on
Work and Descent (GFoD)

Discrimination based on Work and Descent (DWD) is the UN terminology used for communities who are traditionally and intergenerationally discriminated based on their identity, social-hierarchical positions, the work associated with their positions, and their lineage and descendants.



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