

CHECKLISTS

for Racism-Critical Public
Relations Work in the Field
of Developmental Policy

IMPRINT

Publisher



Berliner Entwicklungspolitischer Ratschlag e.V. (BER)

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The Berliner Entwicklungspolitischer Ratschlag (BER) is a network of more than 110 development policy groups and the political voice of people who advocate for social justice in Berlin. BER offers a platform for exchange and for the professionalization of development policy work. The network lobbies Berlin's state politicians for a future-oriented, sustainable Berlin in a globalized world and for a strong civil society.

Berlin, December 2021



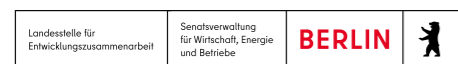
This checklist was first compiled in 2010 by the BER Antiracism Working Group. It was revised in 2021 in cooperation with the Bildungsbüro Hamburg (www.bildungsbuero-hamburg.de). In 2023, the revised version was translated into English by Mary Whalen and edited by Jeannine Kantara. We thank EPIZ Berlin for the initiative.

Editors responsible in accordance with German press law: Alexander Schudy and Sylvia Werther

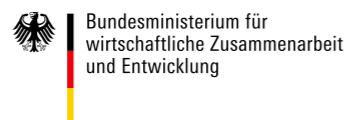
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EDITORS' PREFACE

Always change a running system

It took some time for us to comprehend what grassroots migrant organizations and groups of **Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPoC)** have been trying to convey to us – sometimes loudly, sometimes pensively, sometimes furiously: The problem is called racism. As NGO employees and activists, we are operating in a development policy scene that is predominantly shaped and influenced by white people, and therefore part of the problem. Development policy is, among other things, the continuation of Western influence on countries of the Global South after the end of colonialism. The coloniality of development policy is mirrored in the hegemony of the Global North regarding countries and project partners in the Global South, or of **white-positioned individuals towards Black activists** in the field of development policy in Germany. Much of the racism which is internalized and reproduced in development policy and civic education on relevant topics is based on these ideas of power. Such racism can be found in educational materials and workshop content, but also in the way NGOs of the majority society cooperate with grassroots migrant organizations.

As a development policy network, BER critically explores the concept of “development” and the continuation of colonial practices. In our opinion, anti-racist engagement, striving for global equality, and confronting racism belong together. If they are not addressed collectively, development policy will stagnate at the idea of “developing others”. Hence BER is collaborating with civil society and the city-state of Berlin on a vision of Berlin as a One World City, a sustainable city in a just world. BER is implementing an innovative vision of state development policy: moving away from the development of others toward changing our city.

BER publishes information about racism in development policy, conducts anti-racism and empowerment training, and together with other individuals and organizations in the alliance Decolonize Berlin advocates for a decolonial Berlin. These checklists are an additional contribution to our vision of Berlin as a **One World City**. We express our deepest thanks to the Bildungsbüro Hamburg, Madeline Danquah, Daniel K. Manwire, and Anke Schwarzer for sharing their knowledge, time, and expertise in the process of revising these checklists.

Sylvia Werther and Alexander Schudy (BER)

BIPoC – Black, Indigenous, People of Color

The term BIPoC encompasses the self-designation of various groups, for example those affected by anti-Black or anti-Asian racism. On the one hand, BIPoC share the experience of having been socialized in the context of racism with its history of enslavement, colonialism, and resistance – on the other, they share the collective experience of structural racism.

“Black” and “white”

“Black” is not to be understood as a biologicistic designation, it indicates a political and social construction. Following the Black Power movement, the designation “Black” became a symbol for resistance against racism and refers to the construction of skin color as a marker of difference. The capitalization points to a strategy of self-empowerment.

The term white is also a social construct, but is written in lower case to distinguish it from the self-empowerment that is implied in the capitalization of Black. White is written in italics to emphasize its construed character which – based on racist concepts – is used as a marker for people or conditions that are exercising power or setting norms. White can also be interpreted as a critically positioned self-designation, to draw attention to the usually unnamed but privileged position of white people.

Further reading (German only)

www.eineweltstadt.berlin/wie-wir-arbeiten/rassismuskritik

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

A duty, above all, for white people

We consider the elimination of racism to be first and foremost the duty and responsibility of *white* people, since racism is a form of violence developed and practiced by *white* people. A common feature of racism, however, is the privilege of *white* people not having to deal with it. For this reason, we particularly encourage organizations and activists with a *white* cultural imprint to seek a self-critical engagement with racism. In addition, we would like to motivate them to confront other development policy NGOs and activists with a *white* cultural imprint, when they identify racist images or slogans in their public relations work.

This checklist has been drawn up by the Berliner Entwicklungspolitische Ratschlag (BER) to serve as an inspiration for racism-critical approaches to development policy work and a tool to prevent racist depictions in images and texts. The checklist was first compiled in 2010 by the BER Antiracism Working Group, and revised in cooperation with the Bildungsbüro Hamburg in 2021. People with and without personal experience of racism have contributed to this publication.

More than just ticking off boxes: The limitations of checklists

Confronting racism is a long-term and ongoing process. Crossing off checklists can neither combat nor overcome racism. They cannot replace an informed and critical examination of racism and *white* socialization. Merely avoiding the use of non-racist language will not suffice. To reduce racism, it is necessary to critically reflect upon and change structures and practices in our workplaces, as well as in our cooperation with partners from the Global South, migrant self-organizations, and BIPOC groups. In this sense, the checklist at hand should serve as guidance, especially for co-workers of development policy NGOs, most of whom have been socialized in predominantly *white* settings, and have not personally experienced racism, but who are willing to take responsibility for reducing racist images and racist terminologies in public relations work related to development policy.

From causing unintentional harm through the careless use of language to hate speech in social media comments: in public relations work, broader social categories such as gender, race, class, body, age, and sexual orientation are significant. In addition to confronting racism in its many forms, public relations work needs to address anti-Semitism and other forms of discrimination and violence. These aspects should not be considered in isolation, but rather be reflected in their interdependence. Even though we have focused this checklist on the issue of racism, it is important to take an **intersectional** view of project and public relations work.

Further reading

www.portal-intersektionalitaet.de

INTRODUCTION

Racism and constructs of white supremacy

Racism is deeply engraved into society, its institutions, and individuals. To effectively tackle it, a variety of strategies is necessary. Acknowledging the existence of racism is a first step – namely not just as a problem of individuals, but as a formative and structuring element within society. No social sphere is free from racism. Hence so-called development policy is also permeated by the global imbalances of power and resources. These imbalances have their roots in the European **colonization** of territories in the Americas, Asia, and Africa. Centuries of exploitation and dehumanization and the resistance against them have not just left their mark in formerly occupied regions in the Global South, but also changed the colonizing societies – and they continue to define our relationships to this day: between rich and poor states, between NGOs in the Global South and the Global North, between Black and *white* activists and colleagues.

Critical reflection on colonial relations of violence and their implications in the present is an important step towards eradicating racism. The social scientist **Stuart Hall** has pointed out that the gradual emergence of the identity of the West as progressive, civilized, and democratic was paralleled by the construction of the non-Western other, who was labelled as being backward, barbarian, and undemocratic. The division and hierarchization of humanity into different constructed “races” as well as the disenfranchisement of Black and indigenous people, while simultaneously privileging white Europeans, was an essential element of colonialism. Colonialism was further legitimized through discourses about the alleged backwardness of the societies that were being robbed, deprived of power, and exploited. This colonial dichotomy of the world categorized some societies as allegedly unable to manage their own affairs, while it gave others the obligation to come to their rescue as “trustees”. To fulfil this mission, these “trustees” were “allowed” to use violent methods to advance what was perceived as civilization – especially if those under threat defended themselves against their colonization, either by attacking colonial institutions, refusal to work, by writing poetry or hiring lawyers in the Third Reich, with sabotage, empowerment, and military resistance.

Europe is not a role model

Post-colonial thinkers from the Global South have long been criticizing the concept of “underdevelopment”. While some criticize the faulty implementation of development policy, others reject it completely, and still others demand that **development cooperation** be improved and decolonized. The key words are ownership, partnership, South-South cooperation, transparency, and changes in global economic structures. At the same time, the image of “Europe as a role model” is beginning to totter. The enormous problems of countries of the Global North have been evident for decades: their way of living is imperial. It imposes great burdens on the public and the Global South, for example by shifting the consequences of the human-made climate catastrophe to future generations and other regions of the world.

Colonialism/Decolonization/Post-colonialism

Colonialism is a historically evolved global system of racist violence, exploitation, and inequality under European hegemony. The prefix “post-” does not describe the end of colonialism, it empathizes colonialism’s continuing influence on the present – in the formerly colonized territories as well as in the societies of the colonizers. Decolonization is the process of dismantling the manifold colonial legacies.

Further Reading

Hall, Stuart (1992): The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power, in Essential Essays, Volume 2, Identity and Diaspora. Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9781478002710-009>.

Further Reading (German only)

Schöneberg, Julia und Ziai, Aram (Hg.) (2021): Dekolonisierung der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit und Postdevelopment Alternativen. AkteurInnen, Institutionen, Praxis. Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag.

Does Europe serve as a role model for good development? Even though a considerable number of people would reject such claim by now, many decision-makers are still convinced of Europe's model character. The unequal division of labour remains unchanged and the narrative of development deficits – a setting where the problems are located in the Global South and the knowledge and technology to solve them can only be found in the Global North – still persists.

Development policy actors as allies?

It is the intention of development policy initiatives to counteract the unequal distribution of wealth and power between the Global North and the Global South. They establish health projects in cooperation with solidarity initiatives. They advocate against agricultural subsidies from Europe being used to destroy farming in countries in the Global South, organize workshops on the issue of “cocoa and price policies”, or offer tours to inform about colonial traces in the city. They fought for the transformation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) that are equally binding to the countries of the Global North. Some groups are working to establish global education approaches that are multi-perspective and unmask power relations, others respect diversity in their recruitment policies, or organize exchange programs.

Nevertheless, many initiatives have a strong *white* influence, and they are players in the global asymmetry of power. They dominate the relations with their partners in the Global South by controlling financial resources, defining key issues, and conceptualizing projects. Exposing these imbalances and developing counter-strategies is more efficient than proclaiming cooperation “on an equal basis” with partners from the Global South on an organization's website. In practice, there are often fixed routines: One side wants to help, the others become beneficiaries. One side evaluates, the other is evaluated. One side can travel without restrictions, the other only acts as a host – or is denied visas. One side is responsible for public relations work, the other side poses for pictures.

The White Savior complex / Dealing with White Saviorism

The colonial phenomenon of whites feeling inspired and qualified to help BIPOC – regardless of their competence, the sustainability of their activities, or the (un-)desirability of their help, is still quite prevalent. Working without a professional qualification in trauma pedagogy in an *orphanage* in Bolivia, for three months – seriously? A high-school graduate from Bielefeld teaching English at a public school in Ghana?

The author **Teju Cole** coined the term *White Savior Industrial Complex* to describe this phenomenon. The term refers to the assumption of (*white*) people that based merely on their origin and education in a country of the Global North, they are qualified to teach or rescue other people. Cole emphasizes that helping is not always helpful. Above all, he uses the term to point out the self-serving reasons of *white* saviors for wanting to help – namely satisfying their own emotional needs, gaining recognition, and finally, perhaps unintentionally, validating their own privileges and superiority.

“The *white* savior supports brutal policies in the morning, founds charities in the afternoon, and receives awards in the evening” – this is how Coles describes be-

haviour that does not acknowledge structural power asymmetries and colonial legacies. What he is referring to is not a reflected practice of solidarity or an effort to change structural problems, but rather meaningless activities of limited effectiveness that are primarily suited to serve a person or group's self-glorification.

Focusing on white strategies

Here's a special recommendation for *white* organizations and persons: The closer you work with partners in the Global South or BIPOC organizations, the more likely it is that they will point out incidents of racism. Listen! Listen without interrupting! Don't attempt to distract, don't change the subject, even if you feel uncomfortable – don't try to derail, as the author and trainer **Tupoka Ogette** puts it. Don't shed any *white tears* (Hari Kunzru and others), i.e. don't complain about supposedly unjust criticism, because you only meant well. And pay attention to your *white* fragility – silence, defensiveness, anger, shame, and guilt. No one in international cooperation or global education wants to be racist, but it will take generations to develop actual ways of *power sharing* and a culture of understanding. Decolonization means taking responsibility for one's own actions in a world shaped by racism.

The power of language and images

Centuries of colonization have not only led to a world that is characterized by great inequality. They have also created racist knowledge systems along with a *language* that uses racist markers and appellations of “foreignness” for colonized people and their descendants. Even today, we are dealing with the ambivalence of, on the one hand, wanting to get rid of these power asymmetries in our language, and on the other, frequently needing to invoke them in the form of reluctant self-descriptions and analytic categories, for example when we speak of “formerly colonized regions” or use abbreviations for racist designations such as the N-word. At the least, the thoughtful use of language illuminates the fact that these issues have been created by human beings, and therefore suggests the changeability of discourses.

The public relations work of development policy initiatives also reproduces stereotypes about BIPOC, living conditions in formerly colonized countries, and people with a personal migration history. Whether on *posters soliciting donations*, in Instagram stories, or on postcards: Development policy initiatives often portray people from the Global South as objects and recipients of help; white people, in contrast, are depicted as acting subjects. People from countries of the Global South frequently present agricultural products such as bananas or cocoa fruits with a friendly smile. They are rarely portrayed as political activists or specialists. With Black children waving expectantly at the camera, smiling, or taking a sip of water, they are reduced to their basic needs, instrumentalized, and sexualized. More often than not photographers fail to ask the children or their parents for permission to use their images in Instagram posts.

With their public relations work, development policy organizations also bear responsibility for the ideas and images that are promoted and reaffirmed with regard to the continents of Africa, Asia, and the Americas, or worldwide poverty. In many cases, they reproduce inequality instead of counteracting it. Who has ever heard of a charity run for Europe? Or of experts from Indonesia, teaching villagers from Lower Saxony about sustainable storage practices?

Further Reading and Listening (German only)

Ogette, Tupoka (2017): Exit RACISM. Rassismuskritisch denken lernen. Münster: Unrast Verlag

Und auf Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/album/6LLI2tvQel0dJiTLQpTAUE>



Further Reading (German only)

Arndt, Susan & Ouatey-Alazard, Nadja (Hg.) (2021): Wie Rassismus aus Wörtern spricht. (K) Erben des Kolonialismus im Wissensarchiv deutsche Sprache: ein kritisches Nachschlagewerk. Münster: Unrast Verlag.



Further Reading (German only)

Timo Kiesel und Carolin Philipp (2011): White Charity. Schwarzsein und Weißsein auf Spendenplakaten.

www.whitecharity.de/de/film



Further Reading (German only)

glokal e.V. (2013): Mit kolonialen Grüßen. Berichte und Erzählungen von Auslandsaufenthalten rassismuskritisch betrachtet: <https://www.glokal.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/BroschuereMitkolonialenGruessen2013.pdf>

Further Reading

Cole, Teju (21.03.2012): The White-Savior Industrial Complex. If we are going to interfere in the lives of others, a little due diligence is a minimum requirement. In: The Atlantic, Washington D.C. www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/03/the-white-savior-industrial-complex/254843/?single_page=true

CHECKLISTS

Further reading (also available in French and Spanish)

agl-Dokumente Nr. 22 (2020): Reflecting partnerships – a questionnaire for associations active in international partnerships with partner organizations in the so-called Global South
https://agl-einewelt.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/agl_Dokumente_22_Fragenkatalog.pdf

<https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/>

No “blackwashing” – No racism-critical “window dressing”!

From programs, posters, and SharePics to web banners for donation portals, hashtags, pictograms in buildings, right up to tweets, and Insta-stories – the following guidelines apply to all forms of public relations work: Public relations (PR) or marketing approaches should never be used to gloss over problematic projects, asymmetric **partnerships**, or paternalistic approaches, or – even worse – praise them as being racism-critical or decolonial.

It is not about merely putting a new make-up onto public relationship materials. If an organization is seeking to implement a sponsoring project for children in Cambodia with a well-reflected collection of photographs, such project is not going to transform into a model example of development policy or a decolonialization program. A well-reflected choice of photographs will not transform a sponsoring project in Cambodia into a model example of development policy or a decolonization program. The prerequisite for change is the motivation to address racism continually on a long-term basis, to be open to new learning experiences, and to unlearn old patterns of thinking. Your racism-critical journey can also be documented within your organization’s public relations work – and there’s no need to pat yourself on the back for doing so.

The criticism of racism as a standard

Racism-critical public relations work is not a “*nice to have*”, but an element of our commitment – a necessary standard that nobody needs to be grateful for. It can prevent racist images from being presented on the Internet, protect people from

the Global North and South from racial harm, or prevent the reinforcement of conceptions of racist dominance. Anti-racism is neither a simple finger exercise nor is it suitable for trendy performative activism, and certainly nothing you can take a break from now and then.

Of images and projections – What is (in-)visible?

Who is your target group? What images do you have in mind? Who is explicitly or implicitly addressed in the title – and who is left out? **Who is “us”?** Who represents, and who is represented in images and texts? Who is left out? Who can learn from your seminars, and who cannot? Are slogans used that serve the *White Savior Complex* (Teju Cole)? When are attributes and categories of difference being addressed? And when not?

Providing multilingual and barrier-free information

Readers, Europeans, or Germans are often imaged to be homogeneously white and standardized and addressed accordingly. However, we have been living in an immigration society for a long time now, a society where BIPoC donors as well as Black activists and colleagues with physical challenges organize crowdfunding. Many project partners in the Global South use social media and websites. They also search for information per hashtag, but not all of them speak German. It may therefore be useful to provide information in several languages, or articles in Simple Language or in form of pictograms. Are information channels as barrier-free as possible? **And is the medium suitable for your content?**

Further listening (German only)

Joung, Frank: Podcast Halbe Katoffl
www.halbekatoffl.de
 Vanessa Vu, Linh Tran und Minh Thu Tran: Podcast Rice and Shine
www.riceandshine-podcast.de

Further reading (German only)

Discussion about anti-racist toilet paper: www.taz.de/Debatte-ueber-antirassistisches-Klopapier/!5815313

MORE PUBLICATIONS OF BER (GERMAN ONLY)



STADT NEU LESEN
 Dossier zu kolonialen und rassistischen Straßennamen in Berlin (2016)



DEVELOP-MENTAL TURN
 Beiträge zu einer rassismuskritischen entwicklungspolitischen Bildungs- und Projektarbeit (2. Auflage 2022)



MAINSTREAMING DECOLONIZE!
 Koloniale Kontinuitäten in der Entwicklungspolitik (2022)



WER ANDERN EINEN BRUNNEN GRÄBT...
 Rassismuskritik//Empowerment//Globaler Kontext (2012)

<https://eineweltstadt.berlin/publikationen/>

TEXTS

Trigger warning

Triggers are sounds, smells, and images that can re-activate traumas in people who have had traumatic experiences. A trigger warning is added to photos and texts in order to warn persons who have experienced racial violence and to give them the option to avoid their reception.

Newsletters, annual reports, press releases, slogans on web banners, tweets on Twitter, photo captions, or program leaflets: Any text format can contain racist concepts and narratives – terms and definitions, perspectives, ideas – whether in its title or in the overall message of the text.

The following suggestions can help you to critically examine your texts regarding racism. These questions and your answers to them are also an indicator of the (de-) coloniality of your projects.

Trigger warning: Attention! The following examples contain racist slogans!

MINDSETS

- Do you avoid colonial mindsets, racist generalizations, or omnipotence slogans? Negative examples: “Discover Africa”, “the people in Africa”, “Make school education possible in Uganda now!”
- Do you make sure to avoid the promotion of White Savior attitudes? Negative example: “Your donation will save lives!”
- Does the wording signal cooperation instead of paternalism? Negative example: “At our project in Bolivia...”
- Does your text show respect for different ways of life and mindsets, as far as they do not violate human dignity?
- Do you make sure not to arouse pity? Negative examples: “Please, we really need your help!”; “If you don’t help now, children will die!”

COMPLEXITY

- Do you explain the origins of problems and call to attention the global dependencies and political responsibility?
- Do you present (political) courses of action in the sense of transformative structural changes and frameworks?
- Do you point out colonial continuities?
- Do you describe potentials and resources, rather than portray living conditions as being inadequate?

PEOPLE

Exoticism

Exoticism is a form of racism whereby BIPOC are described from a dominant white perspective as deviating from the white norm. “Exotic” is thereby simultaneously charged as foreign and desirable – often with sexual connotations.

- Do you portray people’s activities, as long as they do not violate human dignity, in a non-judgmental and respectful way?
- Do you show people as complex individuals, and not reduced to single aspects such as poverty or described by clichés? Negative example: “Even though the people are poor, they are happy.”
- Do people appear as acting stakeholders and as subjects rather than as mere objects and beneficiaries?
- Do you make sure not to represent experts from the Global South as “others”, “foreign” or “exotic”, or to describe them as counterexamples to Europeans or European countries?

- Do you avoid hierarchies of terms and definitions, for example: nature – culture, crafts – art, religion – spirituality?
- Do you name whiteness, when it is important? And avoid passive sentence constructions which make *white*-European actors invisible or reproduce Eurocentric perspectives? Negative examples: “Uranium is mined in Niger.”; “America was discovered in 1492.”

- Are names, places, and personal details verifiable? Can you assure that nothing (i.e., names or stories) have been made up?
- Do you respect copyrights and personal rights?
- Can you provide written consent for quotations? Has the interview or podcast been authorized?
- Do you describe accurately the goals, organizational form, and number of members and employees of the partner organization?
- Do you provide an accurate account of the situation at hand, rather than disseminating homogenization or generalization? Negative example: “Poverty is widespread in Africa.”

- Do project partners have a voice, and are they included in the process of choosing quotations? Did you establish good communication structures, even though they may be time-consuming or expensive?
- Did you discuss texts about partner organizations or individual projects with these partners prior to publication?
- Did you reflect on whether the choice of quotations from the partner organizations in the Global South is determined above all by the interests of the Northern NGO?
- Do individuals, whenever possible, have their own voice by way of quotations, interviews, or their own texts?

- Did you **carefully choose** terms and definitions, and consider the fact that language is not neutral, but an instrument of power that shapes our reality?
- Do you equally use the same expressions and explanations to depict conditions in Europe and the Global South? Or deliberately not?
- Do you respect the self-designations of those described? Did you recheck with them?
- Do you avoid (colonial-)racist expressions in your texts? Or are they at least marked as being racist, or abbreviated, such as the N-word? Negative examples: “tribes”, “chief”, “primitive people”, “black Africa”, “civilized nation”, “half-caste”.
- Do you avoid terms and definitions that – depending on the context – confirm racist stereotypes? Negative examples: “hut” instead of “house”, “dialect” instead of “language”, “jungle/bush” instead of “rainforest/primeval forest”, “our children in Nepal”.
- Do you avoid terms and definitions that imply inferiority or deficits? Negative examples: “help”, “victims”, “developing country”.

ACCURACY

MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

LANGUAGE AND TERMINOLOGY

Further Reading (German only)

Neue deutsche Medienmacher: <https://medien-diversitaet.de/> und https://neuemedienmacher.de/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/NdM_Glossar_15_Nov_2014.pdf

IMAGERY

Whether on social media channels or as advertising posters in urban spaces – images have a powerful influence. And in particular, racist and colonially influenced imagery and photo techniques continue to be present in many minds. In public relations work we use photographs to tell stories, document events, or depict multi-layered processes. What could be the impact of these pictures? Where do we draw the line between documentation and staging or manipulation? Who designs the website and the flyer, and with what perspective?

The following suggestions indicate ways to examine pictures for racist content. Your answers can also serve as an indicator for the (de-)coloniality of your projects.

Trigger warning: Caution! The following examples include racist content!

FRAMING

Watch

Jores Postema (2020): Stop Filming Us
(available on Netflix)

- Do you reflect in advance upon possible interdependencies between the photographer and those being photographed?
- Do you ask in advance for the written consent of those person(s) (including groups) in the picture? Is such consent also given for photos depicting private areas, living spaces, and sacred objects? Or for those objects which could be protected by copyright, for example works of art?
- Were those being photographed informed about the intended use of the pictures, and are they able to present themselves in the manner they choose?
- Are the people in the photos given the opportunity to see them prior to their publication, and do they have the right to object to their publication?
- Did the people in the photographs agree to the use of their image in a communication medium (print, social media), and in the case of children, did their parents or legal custodians give consent?
- Do you adhere to local legislation, the press law of your country of residence, and the EU General Data Protection Regulation?

PERSPECTIVE AND COMPOSITION

- Do you protect the human dignity of the person being photographed?
- Does the photographer take a documentary perspective? Does the image convey reality in its plurality?
- Are illness and suffering treated sensitively, respecting the privacy of those undergoing medical treatment?
- Do you refrain from aestheticizing, romanticizing, or sensationalizing poverty? Negative examples: Deliberately editing out the Coca-Cola bottle, the utility pole, and the modern t-shirt and replacing them with a sunset above a waste disposal site instead.
- Do you avoid colonial imagery traditions? Do you ensure not to take photos from an elevated position which could portray a certain hierarchy? Negative examples: *white* people standing – Black people sitting, Black people receiving objects from *white* people, *white* people explaining – Black people listening.

- Do you avoid clichés, and show complex imagery instead? Negative examples: groups of people drumming and dancing instead of working in offices; animals as a symbolization of the African continent; infantilization of people in the Global South by predominantly using images of children.
- Are individuals depicted as active agents, and not as passive victims? Do you refrain from portraying them as commanding a very limited scope of activities? Negative examples: BIPoC are shown cooking, harvesting, or holding agriculture products towards the camera.
- When picturing both partners from the Global South and North together, does the imagery mirror the relationship as a partnership (showing dialogues instead of directives)?

- Do you **select** pictures where experts from the Global South are talking or giving explanations?
- Do you make sure not to choose photographs that were taken in a violent situation (for example during the colonial period)? Or, if they are deliberately being published, are they marked as being racist? Did you issue a trigger warning? Negative examples: racist measurements of the human anatomy, scenes from “human zoos”, images of stolen human remains, postcards depicting violence.
- Do make use of equal-area projection world maps such as the Peters Projection Map?
- Do you avoid instrumentalizing BIPoC in a **token** way, for example portraying BIPoC as non-*white* protagonists, to make the overall imagery seem more diverse or “colorful”?
- Is it possible to choose depictions of freedom fighters instead of colonial criminals or artworks for the poster?
- Do you edit photos in a responsible way?
- Do you make use of photos provided by the partner organization, and do the partners in turn have access to the photos you have taken?

SELECTING AND EDITING PICTURES

Click Here

Gesellschaftsbilder.de
Photo database for pictures that do not reproduce clichés. <https://www.gesellschaftsbilder.de/>

Tokenism

Rosabeth Moss Kanter has described ways in which dominant groups tolerate some marginalized persons. However, they often isolate or instrumentalize them, and do not acknowledge them as individuals, but solely as representatives of certain groups, for example as “quota migrants from the Global South” at a panel discussion. This form of instrumentalization can also happen in photos.

- Is the relationship between the imagery and the text accurate? Was there a consultation process between the photo and text editors?
- Do you have the correct and full names of all places and people involved? If names of places have colonial origins, do you comment upon those or seek alternatives? If necessary, do you anonymize identities to protect individuals?
- Do all photos and other images have captions, and are they chosen in a way that does not falsify the photos’ messages?
- Do you name photographers and authors or artists and list image rights (i.e. Creative Commons)? Do you label historical pictures as such, and discuss their context and origin (for example colonial archives) accordingly?

INTERRELATION BETWEEN TEXTS AND IMAGES

WEB

The questions and suggestions related to text, language, and images also apply to donation portals, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok and Co. However, the pointed phrasing and the brevity of tweets and posts call for a special order of reflection! In addition, it is important to pay attention to the following particularities:

ALGORITHMS

The use of **algorithms**, tags, meta-elements and search engine optimization (SEO) can reproduce and promote racist categories or exclusions. Please be aware that automatic search results are influenced by the dominant culture, and thus cannot guarantee a representative depiction of organizations in the Global South. Machines that are trained by human beings to use racist data will automatically reproduce stereotypes. In addition, biometric procedures and digital facial and fingerprint identification are closely tied to the colonization of bodies and racial practices, historically and in the present.

MEMES

Memes or share-pics are graphics that creatively address an issue, a political act, or a social discourse, and they are rapidly propagated on the internet. Special and careful attention should be given to their potentially racist subject matter, not only because they spread quickly across the internet, but also since in this case, the combination of images and text make up the content. **Counter-memes** can be utilized if racist comments from other users are posted on your social media channels.

PHOTO FILTERS

(Beauty-)filters are used on Instagram or other platforms to adapt photos and selfies to certain beauty ideals. In doing so, racist beauty ideals are reproduced, for example by lightening Black skin and changing eye color from black to brown to adapt to white norms. Filters can also accentuate other forms of discrimination. Skin is made smoother to simulate youth, slimming filters make people appear to be thinner. Because they counteract diversity and reinforce racism, filters should not be used. If they are, their use should be made transparent.

Further Reading (German only)

Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes (Hg.), Carsten Orwat (2019): Diskriminierungsrisiken durch Verwendung von Algorithmen. https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/publikationen/Expertisen/studie_diskriminierungsrisiken_durch_verwendung_von_algorithmen.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=3

Click Here (German only)

<https://no-hate-speech.de/de/kontern/fuer-gegen-alle-hate-speech/>

FACT-CHECKING

Please check the source of your photos, links, memes, etc. prior to sending them into the digital world in order to avoid the reproduction of racist content and images. Seemingly harmless content can come from right-wing trolls, bots, or fake profiles, who find your web page when you share their content, subsequently flooding it with **racist comments**. In another case, the content information may be good and important, but unfortunately false, and/or fabricated by your political opponents. Fake news sites propagate racist and antisemitic narratives. Web pages such as **mimikama.at** get to the bottom of fake news, and make it possible to double-check news content.

COMMENTS

Are comments on blogs and other social media channels being moderated? Have you established **workflows** for the moderation of chats or for dealing with racist comments, hate posts, and hate speech? Is there a defined netiquette, and do you consistently **report** and delete comments that are in violation thereof, while blocking those commentators responsible as well as their accounts?

When users of your organization's website or your partners are confronted with hate speech, do you show **digital civic courage** towards them, and if desired, support them in pressing criminal charges against the agitators? This can be done anonymously, for example at the closest police station, or through online police reporting services. In the process, it is important to make screenshots that state the URL, date, and time of the criminal activity. The user-ID(s) of the agitators is also key evidence to support criminal prosecution.

Click here (German only)

Further tips and support <https://www.amadeu-antonio-stiftung.de/digital-zivilgesellschaft/das-koennen-sie-tun>

Click here

www.mimikama.at - (German only) <https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cjxv13v27dyt>

Click here (German only)

https://www.bka.de/DE/KontaktAufnehmen/HinweisGeben/MeldestelleHetzelInternet/meldestelle_node.html

Click here (German only)

www.ichbinhier.eu

CHECKLIST FOR RACISM-CRITICAL PUBLIC RELATIONS WORK IN THE FIELD OF DEVELOPMENT POLICY

In many cases, the public relations work of development policy organizations reproduces racist stereotypes and inequalities instead of breaking with them. People from countries of the Global South are often portrayed as objects and receivers of aid, *white* people, in contrast, as acting subjects. It is important to be aware of the responsibility that development policy NGOs and their public relations work bear for conceptions of global (in-)equality in the general public.

Critical confrontation about the issue of racism is an ongoing process. Racism cannot be fought or overcome by ticking off checklists. Keeping that in mind, this checklist was drawn up by the Berliner Entwicklungspolitischer Ratschlag (BER) as guidance, particularly for staff members of development policy NGOs, who generally have a *white* socialization and no personal experience of racism.

