



TRANSFORMING AGENCY, ACCESS, AND POWER

## TAAP: Global Snapshots: **RELIGIOUS IDENTITIES**

### A Supplemental Resource to the TAAP Toolkit and Guide for Inclusive Development

The TAAP Initiative is an evolving and collaborative learning initiative, launched in 2015, in support of promoting and integrating gender and social inclusion at organizational and programmatic levels. The TAAP initiative includes the TAAP approach (analytical framework, five TAAP principles and integrates a universal approach to inclusion throughout a project cycle), TAAP Toolkit and Guide for Inclusive Development, TAAP Tuesdays newsletter, partnerships, thought leadership and learning agenda. The TAAP approach consists of an analytical framework which applies six domains of analysis and an intersectional lens to a project setting; five guiding principles, and a process for integrating inclusion throughout a project cycle.

**TAAP's Global Snapshots** are a set of briefs about the global situation for the identity groups that are significant to the power dynamics of all societies: LGBTI persons; Older Persons; Persons with Disabilities; Racial, Ethnic and Indigenous Identities; Religious Identities; Women and Girls; and Youth. Each snapshot provides selected boosters (already-favorable factors of conditions upon which inclusion work can build) and barriers (hindrances to a person or identity group's growth and development, dignity, safety, well-being) from the global landscape. The TAAP Toolkit and Guide for Inclusive Development uses the **Create a Local Snapshot** activity, which guides practitioners through a process of identifying and presenting relevant findings of boosters and barriers from the Social Inclusion Analysis. The local snapshot can be used for project planning and as a chronicle of progress regarding the social inclusion situation in the context. The Toolkit partners welcome additional and updated feedback for each snapshot. Please submit data and feedback to [inclusion@worldlearning.org](mailto:inclusion@worldlearning.org).

## GLOBAL SNAPSHOT: RELIGIOUS IDENTITIES

### The Global Situation:

- Three-quarters of the world's human population of seven billion live under strong government regulations on religion, or among serious "social hostilities" involving faith issues.<sup>i</sup>
- 30 of the world's countries (15%) belong to a unique group of nations that call for their heads of state to have a particular religious affiliation.<sup>ii</sup>
- In 2012, religious hostilities increased in every major region of the world.<sup>iii</sup>
- 82 countries, including Austria, Belarus, China, and Russia, require people from minority religions to register with the state.<sup>iv</sup>
- 73 countries limit places of worship from being erected, and 65 restrict public observance of religion.<sup>v</sup>
- In a 4 year study on religious discrimination, Christians were the most-discriminated against group, experiencing harassment by the government and society in 168 countries.<sup>vi</sup>
- According to a 2014 Georgetown study, laws and practices that exclude religion are related to higher levels of corruption. Nine of the 10 most corrupt countries have high or very high governmental restrictions on religious liberty.<sup>vii</sup>
- Studies find positive relationships between countries with religious freedom and their economic growth.<sup>viii</sup>

### Global Boosters

The United Nations recognized the importance of freedom of religion or belief in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Universal Declaration), Article 18 of which states "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion."

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. (1992)<sup>ix</sup>

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. (1966)<sup>x</sup>

A **Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief** is an independent expert appointed by the UN Human Rights Council.<sup>xi</sup>

### Global Barriers

**Negative stereotypes:** Harmful beliefs about minority religious groups are prevalent in many cultures and can prevent community cohesion and dialogue. For example, certain religions perceived as being misogynistic or anti-state.

**Low literacy levels:** One report revealed that among people who are illiterate, a vast majority belong to ethnic, religious or racial minority groups.<sup>xii</sup>

**Poor health:** Due to economic and social inequalities, minority groups are more likely to become exposed to health issues such as infectious disease.<sup>xiii</sup>

	<b>Limits on religious freedom are increasing:</b> Government restrictions on religion and social hostilities involving religion increased from 34% of countries in 2014 to 40% of countries in 2015. <sup>xiv</sup>
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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/sep/20/religious-intolerance-on-rise-worldwide>

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/07/22/in-30-countries-heads-of-state-must-belong-to-a-certain-religion/>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/sep/20/religious-intolerance-on-rise-worldwide>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2015-08-31/equal-opportunity-oppression>

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<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.dosomething.org/facts/11-facts-about-religious-discrimination>

<sup>vii</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2014/12/the-link-between-economic-and-religious-freedoms/>

<sup>viii</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2014/12/the-link-between-economic-and-religious-freedoms/>

<sup>ix</sup> The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992).

<sup>x</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>

<sup>xi</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/FreedomReligion/Pages/FreedomReligionIndex.aspx>

<sup>xii</sup> <https://borgenproject.org/discrimination-affects-global-poverty/>

<sup>xiii</sup> <https://borgenproject.org/discrimination-affects-global-poverty/>

<sup>xiv</sup> <http://www.pewforum.org/2017/04/11/global-restrictions-on-religion-rise-modestly-in-2015-reversing-downward-trend/>