

### Discussion Guide: Missing

One of important hot-button issues of today is the problem of abortion. Discussion of the issues often leads to discomfort and divisiveness. Nevertheless, since it is one of the most important human rights issues of today, it is important to engage in critical thinking and civilized dialogue about it.

After introducing the students to the topic of the discussion, ask the questions below.

1. In the beginning of the video, a demographer from the Indian Institute of Technology says that ironically, “the womb is today one of the most unsafe places for the girl child.”<sup>79</sup>
  - Do you think the same could be said for unborn children in general, considering that about 73 million abortions occur worldwide each year?<sup>80</sup>
  - Does this meet the demands of justice? Explain.
  - How can we make the womb a safer place both for the girl child and for children in general?
  
2. Dr. Mitu Khurana hoped that her daughters would be embraced by her husband’s family. Instead, they were not accepted and her mother-in-law tried to kill one of her daughters.
  - Do you think that thinking about girls as unwanted influences the attitudes people take toward them?
  - Is this attitude respectful of human dignity?
  - How would you apply this reasoning to speaking about “unwanted children” in general?
  
3. Since prenatal screening tests became available in 2000, almost all children with Down Syndrome in Iceland are aborted. On average, only two children with Down Syndrome end up being born each year in Iceland, and this is mostly because the prenatal screening tests are only 85% accurate.<sup>81</sup>
  - Do you think children with Down Syndrome and disabilities in general are seen as less valuable than other children?
  - Are they also viewed as an unwanted burden by their parents or the society?
  - Does this attitude respect their dignity?

<sup>79</sup> CNA Insider: Killed In The Womb For Being Girls: India’s Missing Daughters, 2019, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8WHQ9Lp310> (last visited Dec 2, 2022).

<sup>80</sup> Guttmacher: Unintended Pregnancy and Abortion Worldwide, March 2022, available at <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-worldwide> (last visited Dec 1, 2022).

<sup>81</sup> Juliana Quinones, Arijeta Lajka: “What kind of society do you want to live in?": Inside the country where Down syndrome is disappearing. in: CBS News, available at <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/down-syndrome-iceland/> (last visited Dec 1, 2022).

4. In the US, children from black and Hispanic racial background are predominantly being aborted. For example; "In 2016, as in previous years, more African American babies were aborted than were born alive in New York City."<sup>82</sup>. For this reason, some black Americans have argued that abortion is being used as means of racial sex-selection.
  - Do you think that in some cases the lives of children from non-white racial background can be seen by society as less valuable?
  - Is this respectful of their dignity?
  - How can the dignity of children from different races be protected before birth?
  
5. We have seen that today, some societies are placing conditions on children for their birth based on sex, race, economic background, disability, and other characteristics.
  - Is it just to put sex, race, economic background or disability as a condition for the birth of a child?
  - What should be the important principle of justice in this respect?
  - Are human dignity and rights dependent on sex, race, disability, level of poverty or other characteristics? If not, on what are they based?

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<sup>82</sup> Tessa Longbons: Abortion Reporting: New York City, Charlotte Lozier Institute, December 2018, available at <https://lozierinstitute.org/abortion-reporting-new-york-city-2016/> (last visited Dec 2, 2022).