

Discrimination in Eindhoven

Antidiscriminatiebureau RADAR

Patterns, perceptions
and differences
between communities

Summary



vóór gelijke behandeling tegen
discriminatie



Background of Research

The municipality of Eindhoven initiated Eindhoven Inclusief to ensure that everyone in the city can participate fully. Although diversity is regarded as a strength, discrimination remains a serious issue. RADAR therefore investigated how residents experience discrimination, with particular attention to groups that encounter it more frequently.

Research Approach

The research consisted of a literature and policy review, in which national and local data, existing policy frameworks and scientific insights were analysed to support the study. This was followed by a citywide survey, resulting in 4,715 valid responses. Finally, in-depth focus groups were held with different communities, where residents shared their experiences and discussed possible solutions.

The research specifically focused on four communities that, both nationally and at the European level, are disproportionately affected by exclusion: the Islamic, (South-)East Asian, Afro-Dutch and Jewish communities. In addition—and in line with an inclusive approach—the Dutch-Dutch community (residents without a migration background and without overlap with the other target groups) was also included. This group is often less explicitly represented in similar studies, even though a citywide approach requires insight into perspectives across the entire population.

Main Conclusion

The citywide survey shows that 24% of Eindhoven residents reported experiencing direct discrimination in the past year. Although discrimination occurs across the city, the way it is experienced varies significantly between communities. These differences are statistically significant and reveal structural patterns.

Findings by Community

Islamic Community

Around 70% of Islamic residents in Eindhoven experience discrimination, primarily related to their religious identity and visible expressions such as wearing a headscarf. These issues are especially prominent in work and education, where residents describe barriers in job applications, career opportunities and school recommendations. A perceived lack of representation in administrative and political positions reinforces these experiences.

Afro-Dutch Community

Within the Afro-Dutch community in Eindhoven, 53% experience discrimination. Residents report recurring experiences of undervaluation and racist treatment across multiple domains. This ongoing pattern affects trust, opportunities and participation in society.

(South-)East Asian Community

41% of (South-)East Asian residents experience discrimination, often through subtle but persistent microaggressions in daily life. Because reporting mechanisms are not widely known and language or information barriers persist, incidents are rarely reported. As a result, problems remain invisible and residents feel less heard.

Jewish Community

Among Jewish residents, 61% report experiencing discrimination. Safety is a central theme: indirect and symbolic forms of antisemitism—such as online expressions or incidents in the residential environment—visibly influence behaviour. Many people adjust their routines or avoid openly expressing their identity, particularly out of concern for their children.

Dutch-Dutch Community

In this group, 13% experience discrimination, primarily based on age, gender and sexual orientation. A notable theme is exclusion related to language: residents who do not speak English sometimes feel less naturally included in an increasingly internationalised city. This perspective helps to illuminate broader tensions and inclusion challenges in the urban environment.

What Needs to Be Done?

Overarching Recommendations (for the entire city of Eindhoven)

RADAR advises the municipality to collaborate structurally with different communities. This requires establishing advisory groups and regular co-creation sessions to ensure continuous, rather than incidental, engagement. It is also essential that discrimination reporting structures are accessible, recognisable and multilingual. Reporting points should be easy to find and use, with active follow-up to strengthen trust. The municipality may consider introducing a single central reporting desk or an app.

Inclusion must be structurally embedded across all relevant domains, including education, the labour market, the public space and municipal services. Special attention is needed for intersectionality, particularly where religion and ethnicity reinforce each other in experiences of exclusion. The municipality is further advised to launch citywide awareness campaigns aimed at combatting Islamophobia, antisemitism, anti-Black racism and anti-Asian racism.

Finally, the municipality should implement structural monitoring through periodic surveys and dialogue sessions, similar to the current research approach. Annual publication of data and trends is recommended to support transparency and ongoing policy development.

Theme-Specific Recommendations

Education

The municipality should integrate structural diversity education, including topics such as migration history, religion and colonial history. Schools should invite more diverse role models for guest

lessons, and teachers must be trained to recognise and address microaggressions and bullying. There must be room for religious holidays and flexibility where appropriate. The reporting mechanism for internship discrimination also needs to be strengthened.

Work

The municipality is encouraged to lead by example, employing diverse teams and eliminating bias in recruitment processes. A regional employers’ network can support inclusive HR practices. Promoting anonymous job applications, mentorship programmes and diverse leadership can help counter workplace inequality. Additionally, reporting procedures for labour discrimination must be made more transparent and accessible.

Housing

The municipality should actively address discrimination in rental housing through monitoring, mystery-shopping and enforcement. Housing associations should adopt more transparent allocation processes. At the neighbourhood level, the municipality must invest in social cohesion through community activities and social work. Racist symbols or graffiti must be removed quickly and visibly.

Public Space and Safety

A targeted approach is needed for hotspots such as Stratumseind and the central station area. Increased supervision, stronger cooperation with hospitality businesses and additional training for security personnel will support inclusion and safety. Awareness campaigns against microaggressions—such as “Don’t look away”—can help stimulate social responsibility. Reporting options must be visible and accessible, for example through QR-codes. Organising inclusive events and promoting positive representation also contribute to safer public spaces.

Culture and Representation

The cultural policy should structurally include diverse cultures, supported by appropriate subsidy programmes. The municipality can collaborate with major employers such as ASML and Philips to develop cultural initiatives. Events should always be designed in co-creation with the communities involved to avoid tokenism. Increasing the visibility of stories and portraits of diverse Eindhoven residents in public communication is also crucial.

Citizen Participation and Public Services

The municipality should implement a consistent bilingual communication policy (Dutch and English). Information about services, neighbourhood teams and support structures must be accessible and easy to understand. Participatory processes require clear follow-up so residents can see how their input is used. Communication should be distributed via channels that communities actually use, such as supermarkets, churches, mosques and expat networks.

Community-Specific Priorities

Different priorities emerged for each community.

Community	Main priorities
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Islamic:	Religious holidays, discrimination in education and work, tackling Islamophobia, increasing representation.
Afro-Dutch:	Housing discrimination, representation in employment, addressing microaggressions, improving social safety.
South-East Asian:	Microaggressions in public space and education, greater visibility, multilingual services.
Jewish:	Safety, active response to antisemitic expressions (online & physical), rapid removal of symbols/graffiti.
Dutch-Dutch:	Age and gender discrimination, concerns about social cohesion, need for clear social norms.

Towards a Decisive Eindhoven

RADAR's research makes clear that discrimination and exclusion in Eindhoven are not isolated incidents but a structural issue. Although the nature and intensity differ per community and domain (work, housing, education), the impact is universal: it leads to behavioural adaptation, withdrawal and reduced participation in society.

The municipality's main challenge is not to create new policy, but to make focused choices and translate existing insights into concrete, actionable measures. To break the normalisation of exclusion and rebuild trust, RADAR recommends the following priorities:

- **Acknowledge communities and strengthen engagement:** All groups emphasize the importance of being taken seriously as partners in dialogue. Co-creation, representation and consistent feedback are seen as essential conditions for building trust.
- **Strengthen social safety:** Actively promote safe living environments by responding quickly and visibly to signals of exclusion.
- **Use education as a preventive lever:** Collaborate structurally with educational institutions. Ensure that education professionals are not only aware of the problem, but are also equipped with the skills needed to effectively address and prevent exclusion.
- **Communicate clear norms:** Communicate clear boundaries. Demonstrate as a city that discrimination will not be tolerated and that reports lead to visible follow-up actions.
- **Move from awareness to action:** Shift the focus from merely acknowledging the problem to providing practical, actionable perspectives for everyone involved in the city.