

You are kindly invited to the public defense to obtain the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

of Ms. Tjitske de Groot

Which will take place **online** on the 30th of October at 4PM

Please use this link to join via a Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85019405757?pwd=dnNCTzIKaGU0RnU3TUJGMlNkWHUvdz09>

Meeting ID: 850 1940 5757

Passcode: 3JL0yA

**HOW TO BREAK THE MYTHS SURROUNDING ALBINISM?
GAINING INSIGHT INTO ALBINISM-RELATED STIGMA
REDUCTION INTERVENTIONS IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES
AND FORMAL EDUCATION IN TANZANIA**

JURY

INTERN:

Prof. dr. Dominique Verté (Chair) (VUB)
Prof. dr. Tom Vanwing (VUB)
Dr. Bieke Abelshausen (VUB)

PROMOTOR(S)

Prof. dr. Pieter Meurs (VUB)
Prof. dr. Wolfgang Jacquet (VUB)

EXTERN:

Prof. dr. Geert Vanhove (Universiteit Gent, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)
Prof. dr. Charlotte Baker (University of Lancaster)

SUMMARY

People with albinism in Tanzania are fiercely stigmatized. Whereas research on stigma reduction intervention in relation to other health-related stigma is available, little attention has been paid in research to the effectiveness of interventions related to albinism. Therefore, the aim of my doctoral dissertation is to gain insight into stigma reduction interventions in local communities and the formal education system in Tanzania. The thesis research began with adapting and validating quantitative stigma measurement tools for adolescents and adults, to be able to measure stigmatizing attitudes towards people with albinism. Additionally, I explored the possibilities of a qualitative method to do research on peoples' attitudes towards people with albinism: the visual vignette method. Thereafter, the effectiveness of several types of stigma reduction strategies and interventions was tested. In former research on health-related stigma the education and contact strategy had proven to be effective, and in the current thesis I wanted to gain more insight into the applicability of these strategies in albinism related stigma reduction interventions in Tanzania. Therefore, these strategies were used in the stigma reduction interventions that were explored in this thesis: theatre, radio and filmed interventions. Additionally, I focused on the influence of entertainment in the tested interventions. At the end of the thesis it is being discussed how people with albinism feel about presenting on their own condition. People with albinism can play an important part in stigma reduction interventions, which can not only improve the intervention but can also positively influence the so-called spokesperson. With this research I want to make a contribution to the field of health-related stigma and stigma reduction interventions. Through my research I want to provide recommendations for stigma reduction interventions to governmental and non-governmental organisations, such as what strategies and intervention types to use for stigma reduction interventions, points of attention and I want to emphasize the importance of proper development and evaluation of stigma-reduction interventions. This research showed that stigma and stigma reduction are not a straightforward process. The education, contact and entertainment strategies that have proven to be effective in reducing stigma in relation to other health-related stigma on a community level, are also applicable on albinism-related stigma in Tanzania.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Tjitske de Groot is a BSc in Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology and a MSc in Educational Sciences. She was awarded a VLADOC scholarship by VLIR-UOS to complete her PhD research focussing in stigma reduction interventions related to albinism in Tanzania. Her research focuses on stigma, stigma reduction and the role of education in social inclusion.