



# Racism and Education



Reading the word and the world  
Changing the text and the context



Education Rights for  
Learners, Parents  
and Educators

book  
13



*"On Saturday, 9 August 2008, a conference took place at Oval North High School in Mitchell's Plain where the children of Cape Town and children's organisations united against xenophobia and racism. [500 children attended.] Everyone was well prepared and willing to participate and there were many things that took place like poetry, drama, music, and also there were messages of support that were read by the MCs in different languages.*



*Everyone felt free to talk and share their views, and they talked about how South Africans could beat, attack, steal from their sisters and brothers while we are one blood. "Where can we go if we are doing this to each other" asked one delegate. There was testimony by a young girl affected by these xenophobic attacks and everyone was proud of this little girl."*

Ayanda Tomose (16 years) - from the National newsletter of the Children's Movement photos on cover and this page courtesy of the Children's Movement. Contact details at the end of the booklet.

## Racism and Education

Neville Alexander & Salim Vally

layout & design by  
[nicolas.red@gmail.com](mailto:nicolas.red@gmail.com)

We have attempted to ensure that the information in this booklet is accurate up to the time of publication, November 2010. Policies, laws and regulations change. Please contact the CERT or PPEN for regular updates. Find their contact details on the back inside cover.

Non-profit organisations are welcome to make copies of the booklet. Please acknowledge the Education Rights Project. Suggestions for improvements are appreciated.

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# Cert

**Centre for  
Education  
Rights and  
Transformation**



The struggle for public quality  
education continues!

## How to contact us:

**The Centre for Education Rights and Transformation (CERT)**  
Cottage 8, Research Village, Bunting Road Campus  
University of Johannesburg, Auckland Park, 2006

Tel: +27 11 559 1148

Fax: +27 11 559 1128

e-mail: [esekgobela@uj.ac.za](mailto:esekgobela@uj.ac.za)

Visit our website: <http://www.uj.ac.za/EN/Faculties/edu/Centresandinstitutes/CERT/>

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These booklets are dedicated to the millions of young people who are brutalised by the socio-economic and socio-cultural cruelties of life. Unfortunately, young people are also brutalised by those who are meant to provide healing in our country, at home and in school.

These booklets are also dedicated to those educators in formal and informal institutions, and organic intellectuals in social movements and unions, who see their own knowledge as a gift of trust from the people, who see the learning process as a mutual experience, who encourage the building of selfdiscipline and hard work through their own example, and whose greatest happiness comes from seeing those with whom they have been exploring and changing the world around them, go on to share the process with others.

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# Introduction

In South Africa after apartheid, we have a very important task. South African society including the education system was based on discrimination for a long time. It is therefore not surprising that the attitudes and practices of the past continue and sometimes develop in new ways. Our laws today do away with all apartheid legislation in education, there are now new values informing teaching and learning and a curriculum which intends to promote non-racism and non-sexism. Still, discrimination continues to exist. Apartheid laws, including those in education, were the scaffolding or temporary support while the structure of inequality was being built. Since 1994, the scaffolding has been removed but the structure of inequality which gives rise to discrimination remains.

Our country was well known for racism among the nations of the world during the apartheid period. Today because racist ideas and practices are spreading rapidly across the world as a result of migration, people in all countries look toward South Africa for hopeful signals that it is possible to eradicate racial prejudice, race thinking and racism. This is one of many reasons why we have to look carefully at our education system, what we are teaching our young people and the examples we are setting for them to follow.

Discrimination of any kind is against the legacy of our liberation struggle and the human rights ethos on which our Constitution is based. If we don't speak out and act against discrimination it will eventually come back to haunt us, as we have seen recently in the violent attacks on so-called foreign nationals from other African countries and against gay and lesbian persons, especially in the townships. The xenophobic disaster of May 2008 is a reminder to all of us that prejudice and discrimination against others can be mobilised easily. Education and advocacy campaigns as well as government protection in terms of the law and the Constitution are essential if we are to reduce, and even eliminate, the dangers of the collapse of democratic South Africa. Discrimination thrives in an environment where people are materially and physically insecure. The fight against discrimination is also a fight against poverty, unemployment and inequality.

# The Legacy of Racism in South African Education

A long time before apartheid was formally established in 1948, from the first school for slaves in 1658 and through the colonial period, education was designed to fit black people into subordinate positions. Black people were given the lowest positions in the racially-structured economic system which some called apartheid capitalism or racial capitalism.

In the 1950s Verwoerd introduced the notorious 'Bantu Education' system which removed schooling for Africans from missionary control. 'Bantu education' was brought under the control of a state committed to white supremacy and the pursuit of these racist policies through education. Expansion of primary, secondary and higher education for 'Africans' in the 1960s and 1970s occurred in the context of the development of Bantustan policy, in artificial and economically unviable 'homelands' . There was unequal spending on education for children administered under 'white', 'Indian', 'coloured', 'African' and various Bantustan education departments. Schools were fragmented into 19 different education departments and funding varied on the basis of which 'population group' the apartheid regime thought you belonged to.

The expansion of poor quality education in the context of political and economic oppression also resulted in the growth of massive resistance amongst youth. Resistance in education to the goals, control and quality of education was a feature throughout the 70s and 80s. In most 'African', 'coloured' and 'Indian' schools, that is, black schools, apartheid education meant minimal levels of resources, inadequately trained and few staff, poor quality learning materials, shortages of classrooms, and the absence of laboratories and libraries. Besides these inequalities, schools also attempted to imposed unquestioning conformity, rote learning, autocratic teaching and authoritarian management styles, and a curriculum filled with racism and sexism. A curriculum filled with racism and sexism was also found in white schools under a system called 'Christian National Education.'

Given this history and present forms of discrimination there is a clear need for training, programmes, resources and support for anti-discrimination in our schools. Unfortunately, despite the new laws, numerous conferences, committees, glossy publications and government directorates, the impact

on schools is limited. In this booklet we make some practical suggestions and how this can be changed. We also understand that the wider societal context of inequality generates discrimination and what happens outside the school gates impacts on the school, playground and classroom. Still we believe that the education system has the potential to challenge discrimination in ways that may have a lasting impact on students and the communities in which they live. While this booklet focuses on racism, there are clear connections between 'race', gender and social class in our country, more so than in others. The close linkages between 'race' and class are clear in post-apartheid South Africa. For example, in townships today, some residents refer to a wealthy black person as "Umlungu" meaning white person. In this way demonstrating concretely that racism is connected to capitalism.

This letter to the *Cape Times* by Yejoo Kim, published on 3 November 2010, touches on many issues raised in this booklet and shows concretely not only what the personal effects of discrimination and racism are but also how all these different forms of discrimination are interconnected.

## Rainbow ruins

I HAVE been studying in South Africa for almost two years. I have been enjoying my life here and it is such a wonderful experience.

However, there is one thing that really annoys me: whenever I walk in the street you call me Chinese, and often add Ching-Chong-Ching, the meaning of which I do not know.

However, I can sense that this does not indicate any respect for the Chinese, rather disdain or mockery.

Sometimes I can see you are so delighted that you succeed in catching my attention.

It seems as if you finally find pleasure

in your boring life.

First of all, I am from South Korea, not China, and you cannot label me as you please.

May be you'll say I should understand because Asians all look similar.

Rather just ask me: "Where are you from?" You look intelligent enough to ask that very simple question.

Also, just suppose that I call you a Zulu or a Xhosa even if you are not one.

It seems you just cannot help pointing out obvious differences.

Firstly, while I have learnt that the best way to deal with your behaviour is just to keep walking, it happens much too often to simply ignore.

I have noticed that you do not refer to all Asian men as Chinese. Because you would not treat me with such disdain if I were a man, I put it down to sexual harassment and discrimination.

I may be physically weaker than you, and I do not look as if I understand English well enough to defend myself.

The conclusion I draw from all this is that your rainbow either does not have the same colours as mine, or it consists of only one or two colours, or is even distorted.

YEJOO KIM  
STELLENBOSCH



# What does the law say?

Today, because of the unacceptable nature of racism and other forms of discrimination, mainly because of the Nazi atrocities of World War II, most countries in the world have constitutions that outlaw various forms of discrimination. Most countries have signed United Nations and other international declarations that outlaw these discriminatory practices. Shortly after 1994, South Africa agreed to the **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination** and other related international treaties. We are also bound by declarations such as UNESCO's **Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice**. The latter states in part that, "Racism includes racist ideologies, prejudiced attitudes, discriminatory behaviour, structural arrangements and institutional practices resulting in racial inequality..."



Articles 1(a) and 1(b) of our Constitution states that the Republic of South Africa is founded on, among others, the following values:

- (a) Human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms.
- (b) Non-racialism and non-sexism.

These principles are reinforced in Chapter 2 of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the whole of which is relevant to our subject. We should take special note of Article 9(3), which declares that [the] state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.

Article 29(1) declares that “Everyone has the right (a) to a basic education, including adult basic education [...]”

These clauses, read together with other relevant clauses of the Constitution, especially of the Bill of Rights, provide a solid platform for citizenship and anti-discrimination education in post-apartheid South Africa. Subsequent legislation has, however, not always taken these clauses into account.

*Dear Teachers:*

*I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no person should witness. Gas chambers built by learned engineers. Children poisoned by educated physicians. Infants killed by trained nurses. Women and babies shot and burned by high school and college graduates.*

*So I am suspicious of education. My request is: help your students become more human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, or educated Eichmanns. Reading, writing, and arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more human.*

Haim G. Ginott (1922-1973: survivor of the European Holocaust and educator).

# Are there different 'races'?



'Race' is not a valid biological entity. This means that any claim that the human species can be sub-divided into so-called 'races' is simply untrue- it has no foundation in fact. There have been many such attempts in the past but they have all been false. The most notorious examples in the modern world are the racist theories of the Nazis and those that were persistently promoted by certain intellectuals during the apartheid period in South Africa. Unlike plants and animals, human beings can never be kept segregated (or separate from one another) for long enough for such sub-species (races) to develop and to be established. Even in the remote past, this never – or perhaps only seldom – occurred. Today, given the ongoing revolutions in the mode of transport and migration 'race' has no basis in human biology.

The social reality of race cannot, however, be doubted. Most people in the world continue to believe that racial groups exist, even though scientists have for many decades proved that the notion of biological 'race' is wrong. The fact is that because people believe that such 'races' exist, the idea of race is uncritically accepted as reality by many. Consequently, people's behaviour, based on the belief in race, makes it possible for racist politicians and other powerful people to mobilize their followers on the basis of the supposed existence of 'races'. Whole industries, social and cultural practices, such as job reservation, separate institutions, prejudiced notions of 'beauty' and, in the final analysis, genocidal movements, such as the Nazis (in pre-World War II Germany) and the Interahamwe (in Rwanda between 1959 and 1994) come to be seen as 'normal'.

# Stereotypes

If we pose the question: how does 'stereotyping' happen? We will quickly find that the answer is not a simple one. Fundamentally, any marker of physical difference or appearance, e.g., gender, colour, stature, religion, nationality, language or dialect, disability, even local region of origin, can be, and usually is, used by people to create stereotypes of "the Other". Depending on mere appearance can be very misleading. The sun appears to revolve around the earth but we know scientifically that this is not the case. Classifying is the most natural thing in the world. Human beings are constantly categorizing everything in terms of certain common characteristics of the items concerned. This is the only way they can make sense out of the 'chaos' of their surroundings.

The countless common nouns - such as dogs, cats, beans, peas, cell phones, men, women, etc., - in our languages are the products of this practice. Stereotyping, however, is more than merely classifying or categorising. It is an act of construction or, often, of invention. Some people in powerful positions, such as political and economic leaders, cultural icons (writers, singers, dancers, journalists) sometimes invent or firmly establish popular stereotypes if they sense that it is to their benefit.

Behind every stereotype, there lurks usually some vested interest. For instance, when social conflict becomes intensified because of some crisis such as increasing unemployment and job losses, these stereotypes are used to stigmatise 'others' or 'foreigners' and to turn them into scapegoats, that is, to blame them for the misfortunes of the group concerned.

*"You look like an [American] Indian" or "You smell like a black," say some mothers in countries with a large Indian or black presence when their children don't want to take a bath. Yet the chroniclers of the Conquest noted the Spaniard's astonishment at the frequency with which Indians bathed. It was Indians, and later African slaves, who had the courtesy to pass their hygienic habits on to other Americans from Canada to Chile"*

Eduardo Galeano-Upside Down

## Racism explained to my daughter- A Book by Tahar Ben Jelloun

When Ben Jelloun, a journalist and author of Moroccan descent who lives in France took his ten-year-old daughter to a street protest against anti-immigration laws in Paris, she asked question after question: "What is racism? What is an immigrant? What is discrimination?" Out of their frank discussion comes this book. It is a book that every learner and educator should read. It has been republished by PRAESA (contact details at the end of this booklet) in English, isiXhosa, Siswati and Afrikaans, with the permission of the author and his daughter.

At one point Mérième tells her Dad: 'But Daddy, people talk about the white race, the black race, or the yellow race. We hear that at school. The teacher told us the other day that Abdou's race was black. He's from Mali'. To which her father responds with utmost clarity: 'If your teacher really said that, she was wrong. I hate to tell you this, because I know you like her, but she's wrong and I think she doesn't even know it. Human races don't exist. There is a human species in which there are men and women, people of colour, tall people and short people, with different strengths and weaknesses. And there are several animal races. The word 'race' shouldn't be used to distinguish differences among humans. The word 'race' has no scientific basis. People use it to exaggerate differences in physical appearance. But we shouldn't use physical differences - skin colour, height, facial features - to divide humanity hierarchically, that is, to claim that some people are better than others. In other words, no one has the right to think, or to make others think, that because his skin is white he is 'better' than a person of colour. I suggest you stop using the word 'race'. It's been so exploited by bad people that it's better to replace it with the word 'humanity'. The human species is composed of various groups, but all men and women on this planet have the same colour blood in their veins, whether their skin is pink, white, black, brown, yellow, or anything else.'



# What are the origins of racism?



Many argue that racism arose out of the seizure and plunder of territories in the Americas, Africa and Asia; slavery; colonialism and the European rulers need to justify this abuse of peoples and their land. While slavery existed in Africa, Asia, Europe and South America for centuries most historians regard the Atlantic slave trade as different from previous forms of slavery. Previously, those taken into slavery had been of all ethnic groups and colours. On the other hand, slaves for the Atlantic trade were all from Africa and all had to serve white masters. Although a few Africans and Arabs were partners in this trade of human beings, it was the demands of white men that prompted it. Many believe that racism developed as a justification for this: people could tell themselves it was okay, because the victims were subhuman. The economic motives for the slave trade were clear: slaves were needed for a purpose-to work. The denial of rights and the harshness of treatment was motivated simply by the drive for maximum profit at minimum cost.

“During the colonial epoch, the British forced Africans to sing :

*Rule Britannia, Britannia rules the waves*

*Britons never never never shall be slaves*

The British themselves starting singing the tune in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, at the height of using Africans as slaves. What would have been Britain's level of development had millions of them been put to work as slaves outside of their homelands over a period of four centuries? Furthermore, assuming that those wonderful fellows could never never never have been slaves, one could speculate further on the probable effects on their development had continental Europe been enslaved”.

Walter Rodney (assassinated in Guyana,1980) *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*

Racism arises from the desire to maintain social and individual inequality derived from the privatisation and control of the resources that human beings need to survive and to develop. Every society has a unique history and in order to find out how social inequality evolved in any given social space, we have to study the history of the country carefully. Racism and sexism as well as other ideologies that are used to exploit and control whole peoples and groups of people, are always related to the acquisition of wealth and material, as well as intellectual resources by a small minority of people in a given society.

In our own history, different forms of forced labour, including chattel slavery, serfdom, labour tenancy, indentured labour and migrant labour were used by the colonial powers. For example, Holland and Britain, and, later, the developing capitalist class dispossessed and subjugated the indigenous people and those who were forcibly transported to South Africa from Asia and other African countries. Today, South Africa is the most unequal society in the entire world, i.e., the gap between the richest and the poorest people of our country is wider than anywhere else. More important is the fact that, in spite of the changeover to a liberal democratic system, the same ideas continue, even if more subtle and less open, to justify the inequality.



A reputable study undertaken on behalf of the **World Conference Against Racism** by the International Council on Human Rights Policy (ICHRP) in 2001, based on a wide variety of case studies of racism, explains the causal linkages between such social (structural) inequalities and the ideas in people's heads as follows:

[...] (It) is helpful — indeed essential — to recognise the systemic nature of discrimination and stigma. ... In all the societies studied, racial discrimination reinforced economic marginalisation and vice versa. Members of victimised groups came to be exploited and marginalised economically and, at the same or at separate times, they came to be considered inferior. From the perspective of dominant groups, their inferiority 'justified' their exploitation and their consequent impoverishment 'demonstrated' their inferiority. The two processes confirm one another... The assumption that one group was 'naturally' poor because it was inferior became established intergenerationally — and differences of opportunity (access to health, education, employment, and so on) became systemic. In the absence of a countervailing force for reform, the victimised group cannot easily escape its poverty or the stigma that reinforces it, and time merely deepens the divide between the dominant and dominated group. To complicate matters further, often enough some members of the victimised group internalise (and thereby confirm by their behaviour) some of the assumptions that underpin their treatment by the dominant group.

**The most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed.**





# Can victims of racism or other forms of discrimination become racists?

The answer to this question is YES. Some years ago, a well known Ugandan scholar, Mahmood Mamdani, published a book on the Rwandan genocide which has the telling title: *When Victims Become Killers*. The sad truth is that all people are capable of becoming racist and that, unless education, commitment to human rights and other favourable circumstances create a wall against all these forms of prejudice, any individual can be mobilised into racist and other negative social and political movements. The examples are many. We need only think of the Afrikaners in South Africa after the Anglo-Boer War, where thousands of white and black people were killed by British imperialist forces, the Nazis in Germany after World War I, the Israeli Zionists after 1948 who discriminate against Palestinians and have developed their own form of apartheid, and so forth. It is part of the human condition that anyone can become racist.

In 1997, an expensive new car with official number plates traveled at a normal speed down a Sao Paulo avenue. Three men rode inside. At a corner they were stopped by a policeman who made them get out and stand against the car, hands in the air, for over an hour while he asked them again and again where they had stolen the car.

The three men were black. One of them, Edivaldo Brito, was the head of the Sao Paulo Justice Department. For Brito this was nothing new. In less than a year it had already happened five times.

The policeman who stopped them was also black.

Eduardo Galeano, *Upside Down*

People are not born racist and prejudice is learned. For this reason, it is important to know that we can fight against racism and racial prejudice as well as against all forms of discrimination. We must also be aware that sometimes conflicts are called 'racial' or even 'tribal' when there may be other underlying economic issues which sometimes work together with racism.

# What can we do to counter and fight against racism and other forms of discrimination?

In answer to this question, posed by Mérième, Jelloun replies as follows:

*“First, you have to learn respect. Respect is essential. People don’t ask that you love them but that you respect their human dignity. Respect means being considerate. It’s knowing how to listen. Foreigners don’t expect love and friendship, but they require respect. Love and friendship can develop afterwards, when you get to know and appreciate someone. But in the beginning, nothing should be predetermined. In other words, you shouldn’t have any prejudices. Racism develops out of preconceived notions about peoples and their cultures. All generalizations are stupid and lead us astray. That’s why you should never say things like: ‘Arabs are this way or that way’; ‘The French are like this or that’. Racists generalize based on an individual case. If an Arab robs them, they conclude that all Arabs are thieves. Respecting others means caring about justice”* Tahar Ben Jelloun reminds us that *“the fight against racism begins with language. [...] We have to speak up, never allowing a racist remark to pass. [...]. And by not acting or reacting, we allow racism to become common and respectable. There are [...] associations and movements that fight against all forms of racism.”*

It is clear that this answer or prescription can apply to all forms of prejudice and discrimination, whether based on colour, class, gender, disability, geographical origin, language or any other marker of difference. On the other hand, it is clearly not enough. For, we have to tackle the structural inequalities that keep the soil fertile for racist ideology or any other prejudiced views about people. This political struggle against the fundamental causes of racism has to go on at the same time as we conduct educational programmes and anti-racism campaigns in our schools, residential areas and in all other social institutions. Otherwise very little will change, as we can see clearly in post-apartheid South Africa.

This is why we have to reject affirmative action policies and practices that are based on the same (or any other) racial categories as were used by white supremacist governments under segregation and apartheid to divide and rule the majority of South Africans. Affirmative action is justifiable but it does not have to be based on racial categories. There are many alternatives that can be used to address the disadvantages that are the result of the racist policies of the past and that continue to exploit, oppress and marginalise the vast majority of the people of our country. By using racial categories as a short hand (or proxy) for disadvantage, we entrench race thinking, racial prejudice and bigotry and, in the final analysis, sow the seeds of our own destruction. For, there can be no doubt, if we follow the history of the Rwandan genocide, that such policies can very easily lead to acts of genocide that will ruin our country forever. Furthermore they can destroy the future of the very youth for whose benefit we engaged in the struggle for national liberation and for whose future we continue to struggle against all forms of exploitation, oppression, marginalisation and discrimination.



# The Rainbow Nation or the Groot Gariep?

These are the words Jelloun uses in the concluding paragraphs of his conversation with Mérième:

*“When you go back to school, look at all the students. Notice how different they are, how wonderful this diversity is. These students may all come from very different worlds. The mix is good for everyone. Every face is unique, a miracle. No two faces are identical. Every face symbolizes a life and every life deserves respect. No one has the right to humiliate another human being. Everyone has the right to dignity. By respecting others, we honour life in all its beauty, magic, diversity and unpredictability. Respecting others allows us to respect ourselves”.*

The South African Human Rights Commission’s report on **Racism, ‘Racial Segregation’ and Desegregation in South African Public Secondary Schools** concluded its report with a similar sentiment:



This study has forcefully shown the absence of a common South African identity amongst the majority of school goers in this country. While the metaphor of the 'Rainbow Nation' is used to foster unity it unfortunately, in an unintended way, fosters the debilitating sense of belonging to discreet groups and puts the spotlight on different 'races', 'nations', and 'cultures'. Instead of this, the metaphor of the Groot Gariep to symbolise South African society as constituted by the flowing of different tributaries into the main stream of a broader river is much more useful. The tributaries are cultural practices and beliefs originating from different parts of the world at different points: something peculiar to South African history.

The influences from Africa, Europe, Asia and modern America (in that order) can be discerned in every aspect of the lives of South Africans. These influences have impacted on our religions, languages, music, dancing, sport and even dietary preferences. While some influences might be stronger than others, we need to recognise that in this integrative dynamic there is no dominant mainstream that should assimilate and submerge other influences. The essential point is to use this dynamic to build integration and a sense of nationhood without denying cherished practices and beliefs and without undermining diversity. It should be understood that the mainstream of a common South African culture and nation is in the process of being formed through the convergence of all present and future tributaries.



# Ways of dealing with discrimination in and through education

Some schools in South Africa who attempt to move away from the apartheid past use a 'tolerance' or a narrow multicultural approach. This perspective teaches 'tolerance' and harmony and sees racism largely as a result of ignorance. It has a focus on prejudice and attitudes. These schools promote 'cultural' diversity in particular ways. For instance, on special days such as Heritage Day, these schools encourage Black learners to perform a 'Zulu dance' and 'Indian' learners to bring samoosas and wear 'traditional clothing' such as 'saris'.

Those who believe in an anti-racist or transformation approach criticise the multicultural approach as a narrow understanding of culture and seeing culture as something that does not change. Anti-racists argue that racism is more than prejudice or attitudes. They believe that challenging racism requires changing behaviour and interpersonal relations, but also dismantling institutionalised practices of racism and changing the curriculum. They believe that the existence of racism must be acknowledged and challenged actively.

Anti-racists understand that eliminating racism requires changing power relationships in the economic, political and cultural institutions of a society and creating new conditions for interpersonal interactions. The anti-racism perspective calls for, not only confronting and opposing overt attitudes and prejudice (e.g. 'Blacks are stupid' but also insists on opposing subtle racism, stereotypes and patronising attitudes (e.g. 'I like you. You are different to other coloureds'). Anti-racist education attempts to equip teachers and learners with the analytical tools to examine critically the origins of racist ideas and practices and to understand the implications of 'racial' identity and actions in the promotion of the struggle against discrimination.

## Tolerance vs. Transformation: Different approaches

### Tolerance

- Racial problems and conflicts exist because of prejudice. Prejudice is an individual problem. Some individuals are more inclined to be strongly prejudiced because of their personality type or their particular growing up and life experiences.
- Prejudice appears when there is contact and interaction among people who are racially and culturally different from each other.
- Prejudices, which results from lack of knowledge about each other and from stereotypes that seem 'natural', is a way to make sense out of unfamiliar and complex situations when there is little knowledge

### Transformation

- Racial problems and conflicts are rooted in racism, a systemic problem that functions at both institutional and interpersonal levels.
- Racism is created as a method for one society or group of people in a society to rule and control another society or groups of people within a society. Often the real reason for this is greed, and its consequences are economic, political and cultural benefits to the group that holds the power and exploitation and physical, emotional, and spiritual degradation of those who are the targets of the racism.
- All individuals born into a society that practices institutional racism get lessons in how to participate in its many forms. Families, schools, and the media play major roles in this socialisation process, and teach all of us to participate – actively by being direct perpetrators and passively by quiet acceptance of benefits, and acquiescence (agreement) to racism directed to or against one's own group, or even another racial group.

## Assumptions about what needs to change

### Tolerance

- Changing individual attitudes and behaviours leads to the elimination of prejudice and discrimination.
- People learn to be non-prejudiced through gaining more facts and information about different cultures and through increased interaction with people different from themselves.

### Transformation

- Individual changes in attitudes and behaviour are necessary, but not sufficient to eliminate racism. Knowledge, respect, and appreciation of different cultures are necessary, but also not sufficient.
- Eliminating racism requires restructuring power relationships in the economic, political, and cultural institutions of the society, and creating new conditions for interpersonal interactions. Examining the dynamics of oppression and power and how individuals participate in these dynamics are essential.
- Individuals can learn to be anti-racist activists, developing the skills to work with others to create systemic, institutional changes. Conversely, institutional change will result in greater opportunities to foster the development of more people who strongly support diversity and social, economic and political justice.



## Assumptions about who needs anti-discrimination education

### Tolerance

- Children from groups that are the targets of racial prejudice need anti-discrimination education to build up their 'low self-esteem'.
- Children in mixed/integrated settings need anti-discrimination education to learn about each other.
- Children in all-black or all-white settings do not usually need anti-discrimination education because problems of prejudice do not arise.

### Transformation

- Everyone needs anti-discrimination education in all educational settings.
- The issues and tasks will vary for children depending on their racial and cultural background as well as their family and life experiences.
- Teachers and parents, as well as children, need to engage in anti-discrimination education.
- Even in all-black or all-white settings there can be discrimination for example, discrimination against black students from other countries in an all-black classroom or Shangaan-speaking learners in a largely Zulu-speaking class or against women or disable learners in a mixed classroom.

## Working with Parents

### Tolerance

- Teachers occasionally ask parents to share special cultural activities, such as cook a holiday food, dress in traditional clothing, show pictures of their country of origin.
- Teachers may read about or ask for information about the most visible aspects of each family's cultures, such as foods, music, and favourite objects, but usually do not learn about the underlying aspects, like beliefs and rules about teacher-child interaction and preferred learning styles. Nor, even if known, are these incorporated into daily classroom life.

### Transformation

- Parents and family caregivers collaborate in curriculum development, implementation and evaluation.
- Teachers use a variety of strategies that actively and regularly involve parents, including provisions for languages other than English.
- Parents'/family caregivers' knowledge about their home culture is essential information for adapting the curriculum to each child's needs.
- Parents regularly share their daily life experiences at home and work, as well as special holiday events. Parents who are activists in any aspect of social justice work also share these experiences.

## Goals

### Tolerance

- Teaching about 'different' cultures, that is cultures of racial and ethnic groups.
- Advocating for appreciation, enjoyment, and tolerance of other cultures.

### Transformation

- Fostering the development of people of all ages to be activists in the face of injustice directed at them or others.
- Constructing a knowledgeable and confident self-identity.
- Developing empathetic, comfortable, and knowledgeable ways of interacting with people from a range of cultures and backgrounds.
- Learning to be critical thinkers about various forms of discrimination.
- Working with others to create concrete changes at the institutional and interpersonal levels.
- Instilling the idea that anti-discrimination education is a process, rather than an end in itself, and is a life-time journey.

## Teacher Preparation

### Tolerance

- Training content typically consists of information about various cultures and a compilation of multicultural activities to use with children.
- Methods tend to emphasise providing information through readings and 'spokespeople' from various ethnic groups.
- Training does not require teachers to uncover or change their own biases and discomforts, or to learn about the dynamics and manifestations of institutional racism.
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### Transformation

- Teacher training challenges students to uncover, face, and change their own biases, discomforts and misinformation; and identify and alter educational practices that collude with racism and other institutionalised discrimination and prejudice.
- Training also enables students to understand their own cultural identity and behaviours, and develop culturally sensitive and relevant ways to interact with people.
- Diversity and equity issues are integrated into all aspects of the teacher-training curriculum.
- Training methods rely on experiential and co-operative peer learning, as well as on information giving and gathering

## Anti-Discrimination in Schools



Over a decade ago, a South African Human Rights report made a number of recommendations to address the legacy of apartheid in schools. Many of these ideas have not been implemented. The report also listed many resources-videos, posters, books, teaching guides and music-that could be used by schools. Two important recommendations were:

### **- The need for an anti-discrimination policy in each school.**

In the same way that schools are obliged to develop a code of conduct, an admissions policy and a mission statement, so must they develop an anti-discrimination policy. The South African Schools Act may need to be amended to ensure that the development of such a policy is the responsibility of, and adhered to by school governing bodies. This is one way of prompting school communities to begin examining their practices. It has been found that the process of constructing a school policy in itself raises important issues about school management and ethos in ways that proved to be value to the overall functioning and learning of students. Such a policy must be developed by constituents of the school community. While it should adhere to the national policy, it should also be relevant to the local school context. The Basic Education Department must support this process and disseminate guidelines to all governing bodies to facilitate the development of such a policy. Schools are already overburdened with tasks so support is essential and developing this policy in schools will take time. Teachers unions, student organisations, school governing bodies and other organisations must be meaningfully consulted.

The guidelines and the policy should address all activities of the school. These include learning, teaching, organisation, management and extra-curricular activities. Ideally, it should encompass:

- staff development: new practices, perspectives, skills and expectations;
- curriculum development: new subject matter, topics, materials, as well as new practical classroom methods and approaches, including the design of lessons to address racism and issues of language;
- organisational and management issues;
- the relationship between the school and the community;
- developing support, mentoring, counseling and advisory services;
- holding regular workshops to address discrimination;
- proactively increasing the involvement of parents in school governing bodies and the school's activities by creating a more conducive environment and examining inhibiting factors;
- addressing the issue of language by, for example, encouraging the development of conversational and communication skills in the language spoken by most people in the province in which the school is situated;
- developing sports codes which cater for all groups; and

The report also argued for a code of good practice and a compulsory course on human rights to be established in schools. Each school will finally determine its policy in the light of its own circumstances. However, certain elements are common to all. There will be:

1. A clear, unambiguous statement of opposition to any form of discrimination.
2. A clear indication of what is not acceptable and the procedures, including sanctions, to deal with any transgressions.
3. An explanation of the way in which the school intends to develop practices which both tackle discrimination and create educational opportunities which make for a cohesive society and a local school community in which diversity can flourish.
4. An outline of the measures by which developments will be monitored and evaluated.

One way of assisting this process is by providing a kit of learning resources including literature and audiovisual material, as well as a list of non-governmental organisations that could provide training, advice and additional resources. This kit should be readily accessible to schools. It must be stressed that these kits should serve as a resource and an aid. They should be used by teachers to develop their own programmes relevant to the context they find themselves in. Many teachers are eager to experiment but struggle to lay their hands on relevant resources.

### **- Pre-service Education and Training (PRESET) for Teachers and In-service Education and Training (INSET).**

Teachers are the most important agents in ensuring the development of anti-discrimination in schools. Crucially teachers must be inspired, motivated, supported and provided with adequate resources. Presently the education of future teachers in our universities do not, except in a few cases, adequately embrace anti-discrimination both in the formal courses offered and in instilling a sense of importance for this. Insufficient attention too has been given to INSET (that is, when students have become teachers and need to be provided with constant training and development). Teacher unions, through their media, meetings and conferences also have a vital role to play. Several human rights organizations and non-governmental organizations have developed many creative programmes and should be encouraged to assist.

# Useful Resources

All of the books and articles mentioned in this booklet are listed below and can be obtained from the CERT offices. We have also included other relevant texts and guides.

Ayers, W., Hunt, JA, Quinn, T. (eds).1998. Teaching For Social Justice, Teachers College Press: New York.

Ben Jelloun, T. 2005. Racism Explained To My Daughter, PRAESA: Cape Town.

Early Learning Resource Unit. 1997. Shifting Paradigms: Using an anti-bias strategy to challenge oppression and assist transformation in the South African context. Cape Town: Early Learning Resource Unit.

Eyber, C., Dyer, D. and Versfeld, A. 1997. Resisting Racism – A Teacher’s Guide to Equality in Education. Cape Town: TLRC and Idasa.

Galeano, E. 2000. Upside Down: A Primer for the Looking-Glass World, Picador: New York.

Gill, D and Levidow, L (eds). 1987. Anti-Racist Science Teaching. Free Association Books: London.

International Council on Human Rights Policy, 2001. Racism: Economic Roots of Discrimination. Unpublished Report.

Kallaway, P (ed). 2002. The History of Education Under Apartheid, Pearson: Pinelands.

Lee, E., Menkart, D. and Okazawaley, M. 1998. Beyond Heroes and Holidays. Washington: Network of Educators on the Americas.

Lee, E. 1995. Taking Multicultural, Anti-racist Education Seriously. In Rethinking Schools: An Agenda for Change. New York: New Press.



Mamdani, M. 2001. *When Victims Become Killers. Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda.* Cape Town: David Philip.

Naidoo, B. 1992. *Through Whose Eyes? Exploring Racism: Reader, Text and Context,* Trentham Books: Oakhill.

Nkomo, Mokubung (ed). 1990. *Pedagogics of Domination: Toward A Democratic Education in South Africa,* Africa World Press: Asmara.

Rodney, W. 1972. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa,* Bogle'L'Ouverture Publications: London, Tanzania Publishing House: Dar es Salaam.

Sekete, P, Shilubane, M, Moila, B. 2001. *Deracialisation and Migration of Learners in South African Schools: Challenges and Implications,* HSRC: Pretoria.

Smit, W. and Hennessy, K. 1995. *Taking South African Education out of the Ghetto – An Urban-Planning Perspective.* Cape Town: Buchu Books and UCT Press.

Soudien, C. 1998. "Our school is not coloured" – Struggling with Identity at City Central, Cape Town, South Africa. In *Going for the Gap.* Kenwyn: Juta.

Vally, S and Dalamba, Y. 1998. *Racism, 'Racial Integration' and Desegregation in South African Public Secondary Schools,* SAHRC: Johannesburg.

# Useful Contacts for resources, complaints, training and research

## **Centre for the Advancement of Non-Racialism and Democracy**

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

Phone: 082 881 8015

E-Mail: [allan.zinn@nmmu.ac.za](mailto:allan.zinn@nmmu.ac.za)

## **Department of Basic Education**

Directorate: Race and Values

Phone: 012 312 5080

E-mail: [values@doe.gov.za](mailto:values@doe.gov.za)

Website: [www.education.gov.za](http://www.education.gov.za)

## **Ditshwanelo Caras Trust**

Phone: 011 476 2226

E-Mail: [caras@mail.ngo.za](mailto:caras@mail.ngo.za)

Website: [www.caras.org.za](http://www.caras.org.za)

## **Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa**

University of Cape Town

Private Bag

Rondebosch

7701

Phone: 021 650 4013

E-Mail: [edu-praes@uct.ac.za](mailto:edu-praes@uct.ac.za)

Website: [www.praesa.org.za](http://www.praesa.org.za)

## **South African Human Rights Commission**

Gauteng (Head Office)

29 Princess of Wales Terrace

Corner of York and St Andrews Streets

Houghton

Phone: 011 484 8300

Fax: 011 484 7149

E-mail: [info@sahrc.org.za](mailto:info@sahrc.org.za)

Website: [www.sahrc.org.za](http://www.sahrc.org.za)

## **The Children's Movement**

Children's Resource Centre (CRC)

3 Milner Road

Rondebosch

Cape Town

Phone: 021 686 6898

Fax: 021 686 6901

E-mail: [crcchild@telkomsa.net](mailto:crcchild@telkomsa.net)

Website: [www.childrensmovement.org.za](http://www.childrensmovement.org.za)

## **Umtapo Centre**

P.O. Box 2792

Durban

4001

Phone: 031 309 3350

E-mail: [info@umtapo.co.za](mailto:info@umtapo.co.za)

Website: [www.umtapo.co.za](http://www.umtapo.co.za)

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