Dear Members and Educators around the world:

Greetings and I hope you are all well and keeping safe as COVID-19 continues to inflict much pain and suffering worldwide. A few months ago, WCCI invited members and friends around the world to share their experiences and challenges of how the pandemic has affected educational system and program, as well as their educational strategies in response to those challenges. Their reflections and a list of resources were published in a Special COVID-19 Issue of the WCCI Newsletter.

However, during the COVID-19 crisis, another social event that has caused much conflict and reverberated around the world was the killing on May 26th, 2020 of an unarmed black man, George Floyd, in the United States by a police officer now charged with murder. The death of George Floyd has sparked massive protests led by...
movements such as #Black Lives Matter who see it as another exemplar of the long-standing problem of systemic racism and racial injustice in the USA. Since the protests began and grew across numerous cities of North America, solidarity actions have also spread worldwide in regions from Europe to Africa, Latin America and Asia.

In many countries, similar criticisms of systemic racism have been also been voiced, where the victims are peoples of color and also other marginalized cultural identities, and LBGTQs. The global pandemic has also sparked hate crimes against Asians in especially North America and Europe. The impact of the #BlackLives Matter cause is now not only seen in campaigns to transform the nature of police enforcement, which has often become heavily militarized in many societies, but also in social, economic and cultural institutions from sports, media and entertainment to business, employment, schooling and educational systems. Reforms to abolish racist biases, policies and practices have been proposed and sometimes implemented though not without obstacles and challenges from some political leaders and citizens who argue that “systemic racism does not exist”. One reaction to the campaign against systematic racism has argued that the slogan #All Lives Matter should replace #BlackLives matter. However, this phrase, even if well intentioned to stress human “unity”, diminishes the impact of disproportionate racist discrimination and violence on Black people. #BLM means Black lives matter “too” and not “only” Black lives matter.

Clearly, a peaceful, just and sustainable world also needs to promote cultural diversity and non-discrimination of all forms, including racism, xenophobia and the terrible acts of ethnocide and genocide. This is also an integral dimension of WCCI’s vision and mission, and many educators in the WCCI community have been promoting these ideals and goals in their curricula, pedagogies and other educational programs. The fields of intercultural education, multicultural education and increasingly anti-racist education have therefore been “special interests” among WCCI members. Their curricular and research work have been promoted in their local and national activities, WCCI’s international conferences and the WCCI Journal.

It is therefore relevant and timely in the light of the ongoing campaigns against systemic racism for this Special Issue of the WCCI Newsletter to focus on the theme of EDUCATING FOR INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING AND ANTI-RACISM.

We thank WCCI members, friends and educators worldwide who took this opportunity to share their ideas, experiences and strategies in promoting cultural diversity and anti-racism in their curricula, pedagogies and institutional policies. WCCI is pleased to publish another Special Issue of our Newsletter that brings educators from around the world in a fruitful and hopeful dialogue.

Regards in peace and solidarity,
Toh Swee-Hin (S.H.Toh)
President, WCCI (2019-2020)
Professor Emeritus, University of Alberta Laureate, UNESCO Prize for Peace Education (2000)

Recommended Reading
Available: https://en.unesco.org/themes/intercultural-dialogue/competencies
MESSAGE FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

Emerita (Emmy) Garon, Vice President, Golden Values School, Philippines

As stated in our WCCI Constitution, as educators in the world community, we have the responsibility to ensure that education contributes to the promotion of equity, peace and the universal realization of human rights. We must fulfill our role of being peace ambassadors; teaching our students values of non-violence, compassion, empathy and the subtle connections that unite us as humans.

Breaking the barriers of race is not easy as we have seen from the events of 2020. The pandemic brought about in some of the harshest conditions the issues of race and discrimination. From the killing of George Floyd in the US, the maltreatment of the Rohingya refugees, to the unjust detainment of the Uyghurs in Chinese re-education camps, we have seen a wave of abuse towards minorities and the rise of exceedingly blatant racism.

In support of the UNESCO manual, “A Conceptual and Operational Framework on Intercultural Competencies” to address these important issues, we must begin to challenge the status quo in our own countries and classrooms. Are we nurturing an environment that will create more space to support the dialogue and movement that needs to follow such discussions? Now more than ever, this is crucial in uniting our global community.

We must be anti-racist;
We must educate against racism;
We must be committed to eradicating racism within others, ourselves and the society which we are part of.

Let us have serious conversations immediately thru our Newsletter!

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARIAT

Welcome: WCCI new Executive Director, Dr. Sonja Lopez Arnak.

The Board is pleased to welcome her as the new Executive Director as nominated by Dr. Tracy Heller, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, of Alliant International University.

Dr. Arnak is a dedicated member of WCCI and participated in several world conferences including the WCCI 18th Biennial World Conference held in Rome, Italy, in 2018. She participated in an active role in the conference. During the Rome conference she was impressed by the quality of the program offered by WCCI and the collegiality of participants which she said that you cannot find that kind of person-to-person kind of relationship with other organizations. Her international experience perfectly fit the WCCI vision and mission. She was happy that her position in the university will continue her involvement in international education.

According to Andy Vaughn, President of Alliant International University, in the 50th Anniversary of WCCI said “A mission and vision rooted in social and economic justice, human rights, intercultural and international understanding and sustainable futures. All vital initiatives to WCCI align the University and this remarkable gathering of the world’s greatest educational leaders.”

She looks forward to ample opportunities for a vision of building an impressive international involvement of Alliant with the wider world of international exchanges and contacts. This way she hopes that WCCI will continue to grow in its vision and mission.

WCCI is looking forward to working closely with the university to integrate and merge into a strong front on international relation programs. The vision and mission of both Alliant and WCCI.

Carole I. Caparros. MEd
WCCI Secretariat
California School of Education (CSOE)
Alliant International University
San Diego, California
WELCOME TO THIS SPECIAL EDITION OF THE WCCI NEWSLETTER!

Dr. Joyce Pittman, USA Drexel University

Historically, in the USA the month of February is celebrated as Black History Month. According to TIME Magazine, Black History Month started as Black History week by an American historian and educator Carter Godwin Woodson (1875 - 1950). According to Julian Zorthian (January 2016).

“In 1926, Woodson and the ASALH launched a “Negro History Week” to bring attention to his mission and help school systems coordinate their focus on the topic. Woodson chose the second week in February, as it encompassed both Frederick Douglass’ birthday on February 14 and Abraham Lincoln’s birthday on).”
Read more at: https://time.com/4197928/history-black-history-month/

Developing and improving peaceful relations with other cultures and races will require we respect and honor those laws, practices and traditions that help us value their contributions and presence in the world. This is a primary mission and vision of Black History Month and other cultural celebrations by different groups around the world.

Intercultural and racial relations are facing an unprecedented crisis in worldwide as we face a resurgence of problems surrounding racism and intercultural disconnects with each other as human beings, which did not happen without years of warning. What we did not predict is that given the advances in recognizing growing diversity in education, research, science, technology and human development that we would see such cruelty in our society. This situation is causing many persons to fear what will come next during this uncertain time of intercultural and racial unrest, especially in the United States of America. However, America is not alone in experiencing this problem.

As stated in the first special edition COVID-19 newsletter, there remains appreciation, optimism and excitement about our past success in solving world problems including racial discrimination strides toward a more peaceful and just society. WCCI’s record of success is centered very much on its success in bridging humanistic differences around the globe!

Please take your time to explore the stories and reports in this special edition newsletter. In this issue you find heartfelt and research supported messages from President, Vice President, Executive Director, SIG leaders, members, new members and others who join us in this fight to preserve and support ongoing efforts to promote intercultural understanding and anti-racism practices and policies especially in education. We will continue WCCI’s on-line presence, journal and newsletter publishing to advocate ways to connect us to global stories, friends and colleagues around the world to address this crisis with peaceful solutions.

We are honored to share resources, strategies, and success stories of our worldwide contributors!

Recently, we came away from our VIRTUAL 50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION of the WORLD COUNCIL FOR CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION (WCCI) more energized as we gathered to reflect on the historical results of efforts to support global education in advancing economic, social and environmental justice in curriculum and instruction for a more peaceful world society.

WCCI citizens are willing to actively engage advocate for policy changes for the attainment of an inclusive, just and peaceful world. This is an ongoing issue that we must all engage dialogue and inspire our neighbors and institutions to support efforts that advocate for human, social and environmental justice for all.

The goal of the editorial team is to stimulate your thinking and encourage you to contribute your voices using our communication platforms to share in critical conversations, governance and share messages that lift up our voices in the WCCI journal, newsletter, Websites and the world!

Please continue to work with your regional groups, chapters and WCCI Sigs to discover through sharing—new ways to grow and support this critical subject “Intercultural Understanding and Anti-racism even during this time of pandemic disruption. In this issue you will find: President’s Message, Secretariat Message, Intercultural Understanding and Anti-Racism Reports, Action Plans, Suggested Resources and other Announcements. Also, feel free to send comments on the articles to share your thoughts or email the authors to ask questions. We appreciate your support!

Joyce Pittman, PhD, Editor
Email: Joyce.pittman@gmail.com
RACISM AND THE IDENTITY OF BLACKNESS IN AMERICA
Emmanuel Sogah and Genevieve Balance Kupang

This paper attempts to provide a deconstructive, anti-racial, and mindset-shifting education for appropriate anthropological understanding of human identity, dignity, and ethnicity. It describes clearly and movingly an African’s experience of systemic racism in America and makes the argument against the racialization of people of African descent (PAD) as “black” — a globally adopted and imposed color-labelled identity of Africans in general.

Giving a historical background of European explorers’ first encounter with the Afris on the African continent in the late 1500s, the paper poignantly highlights the explorers’ color-labeling description of, and racial "prejudication" against, Africans as inferior humans, leading to their subsequent kidnapping and enslavement, which drew the Catholic Church’s mediocre efforts against slavery.

The paper also cited the racial lynching by American “white supremacists” in the past, even after slavery was long abolished, and the current trend of murder of African Americans, at the root of US law-enforcement, which recent occurrence sparked an unparalleled surge of global protests and a symphony of activist movements against racism and racial killings around the globe.

The paper concludes with the negative psychological effect of racism; especially, the racialization and social subjugation of people of African descent and other ethnic minorities around the globe.

An African’s Initial Experience of Racism in America

As the subtitle suggests, this article is an account of a personal experience of overt, ‘in-your-face’ racial and intra-subcultural prejudice and discrimination in the United States of America. By “intra-subcultural prejudice and discrimination,” I mean the open prejudice and discrimination that native African immigrants experience within the subculture of People of African Ancestry; that is American-born People of African Ancestry (APAAs or ‘African Americans’) against Native Africans in America (NAA or African Immigrants in the US). I will explain this later in this write up.

In the first few weeks of my arrival in the United States in 1994 for graduate school, I had ‘African Americans’ in official capacities. For the first time in my life, I found myself faced with an uncouth requirement of having to re-identify myself as "black" as I had to fill out forms for necessities like getting a student ID card, applying for a social security card, and work authorization from the immigration.

I also needed to fill out a form to change my UK driver’s license to a US Driver’s license. In the section for race/ethnicity, there were the listed categories as follows: □ White; □ Black; □ Native Indian; □ Pacific Islander; □ Hispanic/Latino; □ Asian; □ Biracial/Other_____. Naturally, seeing that none of the categories listed applied to me, I checked the option for "other" and then wrote ‘African.’ After filling out the form, I presented it to the lady at the counter. She was an African American. She took the form from me, glanced at it momentarily and then crossed out my selected option of "other" and checked the category for ‘Black.’ I asked in protest: Ma’am, why did you cross out what I checked? I am African. I am not “black.” She gave me a smirking look of disgust and said: What do you mean you aren’t black? You’re as black as my black ass.” I was shocked but said nothing. This situation caused me hours of wait time, and at least 2 days of going back and forth, as she put my form under the pile of other forms and had me wait for hours as she processed the forms of others who were after me in the queue. I just shook my head and asked myself, why should I have to identify myself by color? Finally, after 3 days, I got my driver’s license.

At the school of Theology in Washington, DC, I was the only African in the class of “all-white” Americans. Many of my classmates shunned me, but a few were friendly, although curious about me being an African and studying in an American graduate school, with a scholarly aptitude and fluency in English.

And, no, I had never lived in a jungle. I lived in and grew up in a concrete brick house in a township that bustles with family homes, religion, education, commercial infrastructure, including local industries, government offices, churches, business and social centers, transportation, and telecommunication.

At the end of the first semester, one of the professors invited me to lunch at a restaurant not too far from campus. As we ate, I noticed she was watching me enthusiastically as I ate. So, I looked up and asked: You’re not eating? She stared at me for second and asked: Can I ask you an ignorant question? Please, I said. Do you eat in a setting like this in Africa? I mean with a dining table, chairs, plates and dishes with forks, knives, and spoons like
This (pointing to the table setting)? Yes, we do. Although in most homes, families sit around a smaller table and eat together from the same dish with their hands. But some others eat in a westernized setting exactly like this. I brought this up because it shows how most Americans and many other westerners have been brainwashed about Africa. Such that even young African scholars like myself were denied our rightful course grades, simply because it is believed that an African is not intelligent enough to score an ‘A’ in a graduate course work. Yet, I have, to the contrary, proven this myth against Africans, wrong. I was one of the tops of my class, a class-group leader who lectured and explained things to my “white” course-mates in some of our courses during coursework assignments and term papers so that they get ‘A’s and ‘A’s-‘s, and I get a ‘B+.

My ‘Church History’ professor in graduate school stated to the hearing of my "white" American classmates, two of whom were also my housemates, that there was no way he would give a Nigger from Africa an ‘A’ in his course. He did not believe that I was that intelligent to make an ‘A’ grade in his course. Again, I proved him wrong, and when he persisted in his racist mentality, I complained to the academic dean (a very fine Catholic priest and canon lawyer) called me in his office and genuinely apologized for the ‘unfair’ grade that the professor gave me. The following week, the dean called me back and told me that he had spoken to the professor to take a closer look at my work. So, when I got my grade report at the end of that semester, I saw on my transcripts that he had changed the B+ to an ‘A.’

Growing up in Africa and partly in England, besides the “apartheid” in South Africa we always learned about the events demonstrated against in Ghana; I, personally, had neither experienced such overt institutional racism nor have I ever had to identify myself as "black" because of my skin complexion until I came to America. Now, I am not saying that there is no racism in the United Kingdom or other western countries at all. I am only saying that I never experienced in the United Kingdom the institutional racism and subcultural prejudice I experienced in the US. And I never understood the need for the institutional racial categories in America, until I delved into the years of slavery and brutality that our African ancestors went through in this country.

As a native African, even after having worked hard, put myself through graduate school, earning two graduate degrees with a doctorate, obtained US citizenship, and even served sometime in the US Army Chaplain Corps, I found myself constantly having to prove my competence at the workplace and as a human person with a head on my shoulder, with deep faith in God, with intelligence, moral aptitude, and conscientious living. I always had to be extra careful every time I go out of the home.

I have had to relocate from a State, where I served as Youth Minister in an "all-white" Catholic Church, to Washington, DC, because the neighbors in a suburb in that state did not like the fact that a ‘black’ man was living in their "all white" neighborhood. And then some of the parents of the youth at the parish complained to the Pastor that they were not happy about a ‘Niger’ being the youth minister of their church, ministering to their children. And then about a few months after that, suddenly, I noticed every evening, from then on, a police car parked across the street from where I lived.

When you have to live always feeling like you’re being watched or that you do not belong in a place; when you are treated less human by those who think of themselves as the only real "human beings" or superior humans, and who control and deny opportunities for livelihood to others considered less human in a country that prides itself on so-called “human rights,” then one has to wonder whether or not that country is true to itself, as this is all very dehumanizing. So here am I doing mission work in Asia, and no longer living in the United States of America.

I am Not Black; I am African

I have insisted, from the very moment of being subjected to “racial categorization” in the US and continue to insist that I am not ‘black.’ I am African. I say this not as a matter of identity choice, but of who I am as a human being. You see most people, with the so-labelled “black” mentality, just lump all people of African ancestry together as one and the same— “blacks.” However, this mentality—no matter how globally accepted it is—is inherently WRONG and anthropologically unjustified. What many do not know is that there is a sharp anthropological difference in the cultural identity between Native African Immigrants in the United States and the American-born People of African Ancestry; that is, the descendants of the African slaves in America, who are basely labelled “Black Americans.” The fact is, we native Africans do not identify ourselves as “blacks” any more than Koreans or Japanese or Chinese identify themselves as “yellows.” I will explain this further.
In West African cultural anthropology, color is significantly used to primarily identify “things,” not persons. It is also used to communicate or express sentiments or make unspoken statements. For instance, the color ‘black’ signifies mourning, sorrow, sadness, a sense of deprivation, or unwanted situations that are contrary to cultural norms of life. The color ‘red’ signifies danger, a sense of loss, threatening situations, etc. White signifies motherhood, new birth, longevity, victory or triumph over a hardship, purity, and the sacred. Color is NEVER used to identify human beings. We Africans, like people of other traditional cultures, like Koreans, Japanese, Malays, Latinos, Native Indians, Aborigines, and so on, are very proud of our native heritage, and that is how we identify ourselves. Yes, we identify ourselves by our family heritage, clan, tribe, ethnicity, or nationality or by continent. Thus, the failure of non-Africans to understand and recognize this fact about the cultural identity of Africans undermines the African and his or her cultural heritage.

In West Africa, the Yoruba and the Igbo people of Nigeria refer to Europeans and other westerners as “Oyinbo,” and “Oyibo,” respectively; meaning a ‘foreigner,’ and the Hausas of both Ghana and Nigeria refer to them as “Bature” [bar-too-ray], meaning, ‘one from overseas,’ respectively. Similarly, the Gâs and Akans of Ghana, refer to them as “Blorfonyo” and “Obronî;” respectively, also meaning, ‘one from beyond the oceans.’ There is no concept of racial identification of the human person by ‘skin color’ within the West African cultural context.

In her well-researched and highly lauded book Dreams of Africa in Alabama: The Slave Ship ‘Clotilda’ And the Story of The Last Africans Brought to America, Sylviane Anna Diouf, an ardent African historian, beautifully lays out in details the ordeal of the last group of Africans kidnapped and smuggled by ship into the US as slaves in the mid-1860s, even after slavery was abolished. She sheds light on their entire experience from being kidnapped, to their being settled secretly on plantations and steamboats, and to being finally freed after almost five years of slave labor. She also portrays the staunchness with which this ‘Clotilda’ community of Africans strove to preserve their identity as Africans—not “blacks”—and even built a township called “African Town” near the City of Mobile in the State of Alabama, after their attempts to return to Africa failed (Diouf, 2007, pp ii-ix).

The sad fact that many scholars and writers on racial issues fail to realize is that the “black” identity imposed on people of African Ancestry or “African Americans” was a racially coined identity by the description of native Africans by the European explorers in the mid 15th century, and which later became a market label that the slave merchants, the Portuguese, and the Spaniards, pasted on African slaves and marketed them on the slave market as: “blacks for sale.”

In an 1866-essay, “On The Physical and Mental Characteristics of The Negro,” John Crawfurd, an English writer, lawyer, and explorer, writes about the application of the term “Negro” to native Africans: The word ‘Negro’ is obviously a corruption of the Latin adjective for "black," and in its present sense was probably first employed by the Portuguese to designate the race of man, to them new, which they found on the western coast of Africa in the prosecution of their discoveries in the fifteenth century. To the people of Europe, both of antiquity and the middle ages, the Negro was as little known as the Hindu or the Chinese; but he was immemorially known to the Egyptians, the Jews, the Arabs, and the Persians [From the Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London, Vol. 4 (1866), p. 212].

Crawfurd also asserts the Portuguese encounter with, and their uncouth description of, native Africans was that Africans were “peculiar... human beings with the hair of the head and other parts of the body always black, and more or less of the texture of wool, with a black skin of various shades.”

It is clear then that native Africans were never identified as “Negros” (“blacks”), until the European explorers went to Africa. For, thousands of years prior to the Portuguese exploration of Africa, the continent had empires and kingdoms, with a method of governance unsurpassed in the history of civilization. Africans were then known by their ethnicity; the Afris, Cathagenians, Ifes, Kemets, Kongos, Kushites, Maghares, Malinkes, Mandinkas,
Nubians, Oyos, Soninkes, Sudanese, Zimbabs, etc. In fact, the African continent got its name from the Afris, thus Africa. These ancient natives of the continent of Africa were never referred to as ‘blacks.’ As such, based on the above explication and the prior quotation, it should be clear that Africans were never identified as “black” or “negro” until the European economic exploration of the African continent by Portugal’s Prince Henry and his team of Spaniard and Portuguese navigators in the mid-15th century.

When someone describes the way they see you, that description does not become your identity or constitute who you are. And yet, the description of Africans as “negros” (“blacks”) by the European explorers later translated into a ‘market label’ for African slaves in the ‘deep south’ of the United States: “blacks for sale.” And, as recorded in “The Human Factor of History: Dred Scott and Roger B. Taney” by the Smithsonian Institute’s National Museum of African American History and Culture, “blacks were believed to be nothing more than commodities.” With the introduction by the Spaniard slave traders of African slaves as a market commodity in the US, and labelling them as “negros,” the Constitution of the then Southern Confederate States adopted the “negro” label in its stipulation in Article II, Section 9, (4), that: “No bill of attainder . . . or law denying or impairing the right of property in negro slaves shall be passed.”

Similarly, in an 1857 US-Supreme-Court decision, Dred Scott V. Sandford, that pertained to the fate of an African slave, Dred Scott, who had lived in the free state of Illinois and the free territory of Wisconsin before moving back to the slave state of Missouri, Scott had appealed to the Supreme Court in hopes of being granted his freedom, having lived in free states as a free man, married with children. The presiding Chief Justice, Roger B. Taney, ruled that “persons of the African race were not and could not be citizens of the United States, because “it is too clear for dispute, that the enslaved African race were not intended to be included in the Declaration of Independence which states that, "all men are created equal" (https://www.pbs.org/).

The Chief Justice also believed that “the negro had no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit. He was bought and sold and treated as an ordinary article of merchandise and traffic, whenever profit could be made by it.”

At about the same time, the Roman Pontiff of the Catholic Church issued a decree against any form of slavery, under the pain of excommunication from Catholic Church. The Spaniards and the Portuguese slave traders who were staunch Catholics, for fear of excommunication, had to ensure that they did not carry the “catholic guilt” of selling other human beings, and incurring excommunication as decreed in the current and previous Papal Bulls of Popes Paul III (Sublimis Deus, 1537), Gregory XIV (Cum Sicuti, 1591), Urban VIII (Commissum Nobis, 1639) and Benedict XIV (Immensa Pastorum, 1741), all issued to the universal Church against slavery.

In fact, in his Papal Bull, Pope Paul III reprimand the Portuguese and Spaniard slave traders that his papal predecessors gave them the blessing of exploring the continent of Africa and to report back to the Pope, solely for the possibility of preaching the Word there. Instead, having explored the continent of Africa and encountered the natives, and the immense possibilities there, they engaged in a dehumanizing slave trading. The Pope then states: “They have deprived the natives of their livelihood . . . and subjected [them] to perpetual slavery, sold them to other persons and committed other various illicit and evil deeds against them . . . We order and command all and each of the faithful . . . that, within the space of fifteen days of the publication of these letters in the place where they live, that they restore to their earlier liberty all and each person of either sex . . . who have been made subject to slavery. These people are to be totally and perpetually free and are to be let go without the exaction or reception of any money…” (Panzer, 1996, p. 8).

Moreover, Panzer (1996, pp.79-81, 101) posited that Pope Gregory XIV, in 1839, also wrote to the Bishops of Latin America and the United States and condemned the slave trading activities of the Catholic Spaniards: “And they reduce them to slavery, treating them with afflictions they
would scarcely use with brute animals. . . We, by our Apostolic Authority, decree, declare, warn, and strongly exhort in the Lord faithful Christians of every condition by these present letters that no one in the future dare bother unjustly the Indians, Africans, and all other peoples, or despoil of their possessions—even though they are outside the faith, they are not to be reduced to slavery...

By this time, Spanish law, based on these Papal Bulls and Catholic Social Teachings, forbade perpetual enslavement or brutal/fatal treatment of fellow humans. Thus, if these African slaves were labelled as non-humans, a market commodity, or even animals, then there would be no infringement of the law. It is also interesting that the confederate constitution did not accord the slaves the dignity and stature of being fully human. Therefore, it was important to convince themselves that the “negros” were not fully humans.

Accordingly, the advertisement commonly used by the Spaniard slave traders for the sale of African slaves in the American slave market in the ‘deep south’ of the New World (US) was “Ventas de Negros” (blacks for sale)

In fact, in some cases, the African slaves were market-labelled as animals. This is clearly indicated in some of their sale advertisements, chronicled in the “La Trata de Negros: El Negocio de la Venta de Esclavos en América” a Spanish online journal of history and biographies. The one particular advertisement entitled “Parte Economía” is shown in the picture below with the “For Sale” caption that read: “Ventas de Animales” (Animals for Sale), depicting both an African slave and a horse, and listed as the “animals” for sale (Claudio, 2015).

Although slavery was formally abolished in the United States by an Act of Congress passed on January 31, 1865 and ratified on December 6, 1865 as the 13th amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America, the slavery generation of traders and owners passed on to their future generations the socio-economic perception of Africans as slaves—purchased and owned as property that provided the needed labor for agricultural and industrial wealth—and therefore inferior beings. (The U.S. National Archives & Records Admin.).

The succeeding generations that inherited this perception, continuously reaffirmed that toward even the free descendants of the African slaves from generation to generation. Even after the abolition of slavery and emancipation in the late 1860s, up until the 1950s, the European Americans or the so-called “white” Americans opposed the abolition of slavery and emancipation through violence and counter establishment of white supremacy movements, forced segregation in the public areas and facilities, and lynching practices, which the federal government ignored for so long. Yet, African American leaders, like Dr. Martin Luther King continued to fight, using the political arena as legislators, state officials, and initiators of civil and political action against white supremacy and racial injustice. So, now, even after nearly 160 years since slavery had been abolished, that market label “black” has remained the national and subcultural identity of the descendants of the freed slaves, an identity they have claimed for themselves and carried on to future generations to this day.

The Negative Psychological Effect of Racism

There is no doubt that the slave trade and ownership, disintegration of family units with fatherless households of freed slaves, forced segregation, and subsequent lynching practices that spun a period of more than 400 years has had a near irreversible psychological, anthropological, sociological, and pseudo-cultural impact on the African continent and her western-born descendants. This is what we see today in the American social fabric, largely evident in the governmental and corporate institutional structures. People of African Ancestry are treated as inferior beings, in fact, with very little dignity. The grave psychological consequences of slavery and racism has formed and continues to inform the lives, perception, cultural outlook of life, family and relational output, social productivity, and unhealthy pseudo-subcultural identity and way of life of American-born descendants of the African slaves.

Clearly indicative of this problem, is what the world witnessed in the wake of the May-26-2020 murder of George Floyd, an unarmed American of African Ancestry,
by a law enforcement officer. Prior to his death and being unable to breathe, Floyd continuously pleaded for breath, with panting and crying: “I can’t breathe . . . please, I can’t breathe,” and calling out to his deceased mother. Yet, the white police officer persisted in holding George Floyd down by the neck, under his knees until the latter helplessly breathed his last and became lifeless.

The rage that followed the Floyd incidence revealed a flipped dimension of counter-racism perpetrated by vandalism and arson that cost the loss of more lives, businesses, and government and private property. And the irony of the racial character of America in this 21st century is that it is deeply embedded in the nation’s institutional structure that facilitates racial brutality against people of African descent in America. A reverse response to this has led to a movement called “Black Lives Matter” in the hopes of effecting change that would bring forth respect, dignity, equity, and equality for, to, and of, all Americans, regardless of how they look.

In conclusion, I would like to post charge of responsible humanity to all of us, to look deep inside of us, to see what it is that makes us human, the essence of who we are, rather focusing on a person’s skin complexion or even the accent of speech. I will echo the late honorable Dr. Martin Luther King’s famous dream statement that constitutes the bedrock of genuine and humane social and national values:

It is my prayerful hope that . . . “one day all humanity shall live in a world where no one will be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.”

References:


REFLECTIONS ON THE RACIAL DIVIDE PANDEMIC
By
Matin Royeen, PhD

The Pain of Rage-A Cry for Help

In mid-1970s, while working at the student affairs division of a major university in Ohio, I started coordinating a 2-hour course on racial awareness for the staff as part of their in-service training in the residence halls system. This idea emerged from my observation of the White’s staff inability to deal with cultural/race related issues between roommates and students living in suites. It was a great learning experience for me to observe the anger and rage of black faculty speakers and defense-mechanism of white students related to racism in the United States. I was born in Afghanistan, and for somebody who did not grow up in the US, it was difficult to fully comprehend the depth of emotions involving race relations in this country.

Since 1970s, I believe we have made some progress in race relations as a result of continuation of previously enacted laws of 1960s and increased multicultural education and interaction among diverse segments of society, But fundamental problems remain. Unfortunately, we are still stuck in the doldrums of race relations and do not know how to untangle the deeply ingrained knots that have suffocated the life of African Americans and have held the collective conscience of our great nation hostage for a long time. We must break open this cage and free ourselves from the tentacles of an insidious enemy with existential threats to the wellbeing of such a superpower in the world.

Periodically, incidents of police brutality involving African Americans catch our attention and evokes a great deal of public outrage, and grief and despair among African Americans who are re-experiencing this kind of trauma with no end in sight. Protests and marches take place, politicians and civil rights leaders speak and the media coverage becomes a constant display and replay of the unfolding event/s surrounding racism in the United States. After a while, life goes back to normal and the ugly incident becomes another shameful page in the dark chapter of race relations without any meaningful transformation.

Unfortunately, each violent incident involving police brutality against African Americans is a symptom of the underlying causes of fundamental societal problems that we have failed to address as a nation. The death of George Floyd is no exception. When it comes to race, our nation is at war. In order to bring peace, we need to address violence as means of social justice from within and without.

Scholars have identified three dimensions that define peace. First, absence of direct violence deals with use of guns, military warfare and terrorism. Fortunately, our nation is relatively safe from this threat. Second, absence of indirect (structural) violence reflects systemic economic inequality that breeds poverty and miscarriage of justice. The third dimension, the absence of cultural violence includes racism, ethnic strife, religious divides and clashes of values in a divided society. Our nation has been able to uphold the fundamental pillar of democracy in the form of law and order and the freedoms afforded to people in order to express sentiments in public forums. Sadly, we have not been able to deal with structural and cultural violence that are still haunting us. It is time for our great country to remove this burden by working together in the spirit of fairness and justice for all. Let us examine briefly some of the major problems facing the African Americans throughout the country:

1. Economics: This is one of the major problems.

   - Poverty: The national poverty in 2018 was 11.8 percent. African Americans had the highest poverty rate of 20.8 percent. The percentage rate of poverty for Whites was 8.3, Asians was 10.1 and Hispanics was 17.6.
   - Income: The median household income in 2018 was $63,179.00 dollars in the US. The African Americans had the lowest $41,361.00; Whites $70,642.00, Asians, $87,194.00, Hispanics $51,450.00 dollars.
   - Home ownership in 2019 was 65.3 percent. Whites, 73.7 percent, Asian Americans 59.1 percent, Hispanics 48.0 percent and African Americans 44.0 percent.
   - 28 percent of African Americans have at least experienced one of the three hardships; overcrowded housing, hunger or the risk of hunger and lack of needed medical care.
   - Unemployment: The National rate of unemployment in October of 2019 was 3.6 percent. This figure for Whites was 3.2 percent, Asians 2.9 percent, Hispanics, 4.1 percent, African Americans 5.4 percent.
   - Unemployment in May of 2020 was 13.3 percent. During this month, unemployment for Whites decreased by 2 percentage while it slightly rose for African Americans,

2. Education: According to American Council on Education in 2017: The African Americans had the following degrees in 2019. High school diploma 33.0
percent Associate 10.3 percent, Bachelor’s 15.3 percent, Masters 7.1 percent, Doctoral 1.1 percent and Professional degrees 0.7 percent.

Whites: High school 28.3 percent, Associate 11.2 percent, Bachelor’s 23.7 percent, Master’s 10.5 percent, Doctoral 2.0 percent and Professional 1.8 percent.

It is interesting to note that higher education at bachelor’s and beyond is lower within the African Americans in comparison to Whites.

3. **Health:** Several health disparities need to be addressed.
   - Heart disease, diabetes, stroke are seen in relatively young African Americans.
   - High blood pressure, cancer, peripheral artery disease and sickle cell disease.
   - Perceived discrimination, medical distrust, race discordance and poor communication
   - Average family spends 20 percent of income on health insurance. The high cost of coverage has kept the number of uninsured and underinsured high for African Americans.
   - High infant mortality, children are ten times more likely to die by gun violence than white children.
   - Lack of adequate hospitals and health facilities in their communities. They rely more on community health and emergency room or outpatient care.
   - Lack of primary care and mental health providers.

4. **Justice and Crime:** The perpetrator of most crimes and the victims are the same race.
   - Extensive racial and ethnic discrimination by police and the judicial system.
   - In 2017, African Americans had 33 percent of the sentenced prison population, Whites had 30 percent and Hispanics had 23 percent.
   - African American imprisonment is six times of the imprisonment of White and twice of the Hispanics.

5. **A Prescription for Poverty:** Unfortunately, 62 percent of African American children under 18, live with a single parent (mostly mother) household, compared to 26 percent for White children. This has a drastic negative impact on economics, education and health.

**Recommendations:** I hope that George Floyd’s tragic death by police will serve as a tipping point for fundamental **reform** in the judicial system, **reparation** for the underprivileged segments of population across race and ethnicity and **restoration** of the human dignity for a better quality of life in this great country of the United States. It is important that we do not demonize all law enforcement officials who often risk their lives in order to maintain law and order in our communities. As a result of tremendous daily stressors in their jobs, they can easily become traumatized by their experiences too. In order to bring systemic changes, it takes a collective commitment of the federal, state and local governments with participation of different entities on macro, mezzo and micro levels. The Continuum of partnership is imperative for success of quality of life for the targeted people.

**The Macro Continuum (National Level):**
1. The United States Congress must introduce reforms in the judicial system.
2. The United States Congress must pass a massive bill, allocating a very substantial package of assistance to address poverty, housing and community development, health and psycho-social services, education and family planning and engagement.
3. The United States Congress must work very closely with governors in planning and implementation of these programs. Some criteria for dissemination of funds to each state should be developed, based on needs and the demographics.

**The Mezzo Continuum (Community-State Level):**
1. Each governor forms **Commissions** on **Economic Mobility and Employment, Education, Housing and Community Development, Health, Psycho-social Services and Family Planning and Engagement.**
2. Each governor works closely with mayors and local governments for planning and implementation.

**The Micro Continuum (Individualized Services):**
Individualized programs in each area is extremely important for education and awareness. Psychosocial services and family planning and engagement should be one of the most important components of intervention.

The following organizations should be intimately involved as part of these commissions:
- Colleges and Universities
- Lending institutions
- Housing authorities
- Professional Sports Organizations and players
The Significance of Recreational and Community Sport Activities for youth will have a tremendous positive impact. The professional organization with their athletes and the college and university athletes in conjunction with community policing can have a profound impact in transforming violence and crime to positive community engagement by creating continuous sport leagues throughout the year.

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RACISM AND BLACK LIVES MATTER

The irony of the racial character of America is that it has become part of the nation’s institutional structure. As such we now have a movement called “Black Lives Matter.” This affirms and perpetuates racism.

Following the successive murdering of young African Americans in the US, by law enforcement officers, and even civilians who claim self-defense, a counter-racist movement called “Black Lives Matter” was formed by a group of African Americans. Inasmuch as I understand the need and purpose of this movement, I strongly believe that the fact that Americans of African Ancestry in the United States of America identify themselves as “black” is problematic.

In 2003, I gave a course seminar at Howard University School of Divinity in Washington, DC, as part of a doctoral project. In that seminar, I pointed out the fact that, the first step in dealing with racism against Americans of African Ancestry is to reject the identity “black,” simply because that identity was a label placated on the African slaves, considered inferior humans, and in some cases, comparable to animals. So why in the world would today’s Americans of African Ancestry, embrace such inhumane market label of their ancestor slaves, 400 hundred years ago, and identify themselves as a people, a subculture, with the same market label that was given their ancestors by slave traders? This is something that had baffled me since I embarked on the quest to find out when, how, and why Africans and their western-born counterparts are identified as “black.” This led me to the discovery of the market-label that was used for the sale of African slaves, about 400 years ago.

It is on this ground that I contend that the name “Black Lives Matter” defeats the purpose of addressing the issues of racism. I say this because, first, we are all human beings and there is only one race, the human race. The Word of God tells us in the Book of Job that there is only one race, the human race: “And he said to the human race, “The fear of the Lord—that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding” (Job 28:28). Thus, those who fear the Lord truly understand that there is only one race—the human race, and, in that case, would not condone or tolerate racism. Indeed, and, in that sense, “All Lives Matter,” but when others are, often, dealt indifference, hostility, and brutality, then the case has to be made that those lives matter too. All that said, however, I do NOT in any way excuse or condone the large-scale vandalism, looting, plunder, and arson unleashed in different parts of the United States, following the nonetheless brutal murder of George Floyd, an American of African Ancestry.


Although racism is not tagged on people of African Ancestry alone—as Asians have also suffered in America on racial grounds—racial subjugation is more pronounced against Africans. Even Asians, today, look down on Africans as ‘inferior.’ Not surprisingly, nearly half of the economy of the African continent is currently controlled by China, which has managed to lure many leaders of African countries into its economic traps that have plunged half of the continent into indebtedness to China.

France, for instance, controls the economy of 14 French-speaking African countries. As a pact in return for political independence, these countries are forced to deposit at least 50% of their foreign earnings in the French Central Bank, totaling more than $500 billion dollars currently being held at the central bank, and of which these Franco-phone African countries have no access (https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/22/world/africa/africa-cfa-franc-currency.html: Accessed, Dec 10, 2020). Not only
that, France also has taken over the strategic raw materials of these countries; established military bases in them, French citizens have free passage to them, but citizens of these Francophone countries required to obtain high-fee visas to enter France. France also controls the training of the Francophone-African police and army, and imposed French business monopoly of enterprises in key areas such as water supply, electricity, telecommunication, ports, transportation, fuel, energy, among others. For the French, Africans are inferior human beings, who are incapable of governing themselves and managing their own natural resources. Thus, France will oversee their governing administration at extremely high economic and political costs.

Until Western Countries can consult their own consciences to uphold the real dignity and value of every human being, racism will persist, so long as it serves their socio-economic interests. ▲

UNESCO – Leading the world’s fight against racism for 70 years

70th_anniv_racism01.jpg

The first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.” Since its creation 70 years ago, UNESCO has tirelessly worked to defend and promote this fundamental idea.

In 1949, UNESCO launched a major global program to combat racism, established in collaboration with leading intellectuals including Claude Lévi-Strauss, Alva Myrdal, Alfred Métraux and Michel Leiris. The Declaration proclaimed that theories about racial superiority were both scientifically and morally barren. It led to a series of similar statements on racism, including the landmark Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice (1978), which argued for implementing a number of policies in order to combat racism and inequalities.

Over the years, UNESCO has drawn on the full force of its mandate to combat all forms of racism. As early as 1966, UNESCO recognized Apartheid as a “crime against humanity”. Nelson Mandela – a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador and winner of our Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize – embodied the universal aspiration for freedom that stands at the heart of UNESCO’s mission.

UNESCO has implemented human rights education in school curricula globally, thus transmitting the history of the darkest pages of the past – in particular slavery, the slave trade, the Holocaust and other genocides. In 1994, the Slave Route Project was launched to promote the development of scientific research about the transatlantic slave trade, and to deepen the world’s understanding of the ideological foundations of racism.

Following the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, UNESCO adopted, in 2003, a new Integrated Strategy to Combat Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. A shining example of this Strategy is the International Coalition of Cities against Racism, a network of cities interested in sharing experiences to improve their policies to fight racism, discrimination, xenophobia and exclusion. UNESCO has also partnered with leading sports clubs such as FC Barcelona, FC Malaga and Juventus FC to fight against racism and discrimination.

UNESCO unites all its fields of expertise in the struggle against racial discrimination. Education provides one important way of combating stereotypes and fighting racial prejudice. It is imperative that schools teach respect for others, and appreciation for the rich variety of our world’s cultures, by fostering knowledge and understanding as the basis for greater interaction and dialogue.

“The equal dignity and rights of every individual must remain the starting point for all action, and the measure of its success. This requires dialogue on the basis of respect. It calls for understanding the wealth that lies in diversity. It means that all voices must be heard and all
individuals included,” said UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova.

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Please do visit the UNESCO site to find more links to UNESCO’s historical statements on racism.

EDUCATION FOR INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING AND COMPETENCE – LEARNING PATHWAYS FOR A GLOBAL WORLD

“I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible.” — Mahatma Gandhi

In this era of globalization, the economic, political and technological advancements, its socio-cultural and environmental ramifications and necessary pertinence for creating a just and sustainable world, has one common denominator to all i.e, the value of respect: respect for self, others, and for all life on earth. Respect for diversity is now well accepted as a global value therefore both local and global values and culture can easily exist in harmony collectively. In order to learn to live together peacefully and constructively with other cultures with a sense of community, we must first learn to understand and respect each other’s culture and beliefs and treat each other equitably and inclusively. Education for intercultural understanding stems from this, promoting a holistic value based approach, fostering inclusion and multicultural awareness in learners.

The report by UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity asserts that “Cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as Biodiversity is for nature “. As local species of flora and fauna support biodiversity index at large, similarly strengthening of local cultural heritage and identity promotes diversity and multiculturalism globally. An individual who has explored his own culture, understands and appreciates its contributions, possesses a positive cultural identity and self-esteem, enabling him to be receptive and appreciative of other’s culture. Speaking from the perspective of a culturally diverse country like ours, which allows young people not only grow up with rich diversity of social customs and norms, festivals, languages, religions and traditions intrinsic to the community, but are also exposed to overlapping cultural multiple identities at regional & international levels in the increasingly multicultural world.

Thus, the demand of the hour is to bring in Global Education which talks about intercultural dialogue, encouraging intercultural understanding amongst learners, enabling generation now and next to develop knowledge, skills, values and attitudes imperative for their successful navigation in the global world. The new national education policy(NEP) of our country also envisions creating truly global citizens well connected to their roots as well as reach out to new heights beyond national boundaries.NEP has imbibed in word and spirit the core philosophy of ancient Indian system of education of pursuing knowledge with the sole objective of utilising it for the welfare of humanity: “Let all be happy, let all be healthy; let all see good around and let none suffer pain of any kind.” There couldn’t be a better comprehension of the essential unity of human beings as one family where in a global family, differences and diversities are accepted and respected. India ’s message of ‘Vasudhaiv Kutumbakum’- the world is one family, from Maha Upanishad is a guiding post in today’s global world, inspiring millions to come together and work unity and peace.

At ASN for veritable intercultural understanding, the pedagogical approaches and integrated curriculum infused with clear objectives for learning across boundaries involving local and global cultures. We focus on knowledge acquisition, developing a deeper understanding of diverse cultures, appreciation for own values and others’ and participation in activities and projects within ‘ Head, Heart and Hands’ framework. Striving to bring a balance between National identity and Global mass culture, the school has Global citizenship and cultural consciousness as two of the School’s four core values which are well reflected in its culture, practices and initiatives. For fostering positive intercultural behaviours in learners for three characteristics - empathy, respect and responsibility, in our opinion, are critical to the development of Intercultural Understanding through school curriculum. National Integration, Communal

Harmony and Internationalism are well represented in the Curricular and Co-Curricular calendar comprising of Celebration of national and religious festivals, Important International Days like Human Rights day, Korean Friendship Day, Nelson Mandela Day etc., Cultural Exchange Programmes with International Partner schools from Korea, Germany, Japan, Singapore, Special
assemblies, Exhibitions, MUNSummits, Action Research Projects promoting cross-cultural learning through various other multidimensional activities. Furthermore, we design introspective and creative action plans bringing out the best of international dimension in the social, cultural and environmental themes undertaken for all the classes in the school where students make cultural connect with countries like France, UK, New Poppua Guinea, Kenya, South Africa, Australia Turkey, Spain; experiencing about their festival, customs, artforms languages and literature and diverse cuisines through innovative learning activities and projects.

The school endeavours to promote Art, Culture and Languages within and across the border by hosting many programs for art, music, dance, theatre etc. from different cultures across the globe. To name a few, we conducted the following programs; MIDORI, an international Japanese Percussion Band, Flute exposition by renowned Flutist Exponent Maestro Arcadio Barachi from Florence, Italy, Samulnori, percussion instruments playing by Korean artists, Storytelling session, dramatization of Korean Folk tales and Kathak Lecture Demonstration under the aegis of SPIC MACY by renowned Kathak dancer Su. Mahua Shankar. The school offers study of Sanskrit, Hindi, English, Korean, French, and German languages enabling learners to not only inculcate language skills but also understand its importance in the cultural identity of a nation.

We believe that collaborative and social awareness programmes instilling the values of tolerance, communal harmony and fostering unity-in-diversity at national and global levels are excellent learning pathways. School works in close association with National Foundation for Communal Harmony in celebration of communal Harmony week every year through a myriad of in-house and inter school activities. On one hand important organizations at national level like Chinmaya mission, Indus Quality Foundation, National Museum of Natural History facilitate various hands on activities for our learners to connect them with their heritage, philosophy and beliefs whilst on another hand, our association with Korean Cultural Centre, Japan Foundation Society, Max Mueller-Goethe University, United Nations Information Centre for India and Bhutan provide our learners experiential learning opportunities, connecting them to international community, culture, and global issues, preparing them to face the world challenges as global citizens. School was proud and privileged to host First Lady of Republic of South Korea, H.E Ms. Kim Jung Sook during her official visit to India, reaffirming and celebrating our decade long association with Korean Culture Centre.

As a widely acknowledged fact that Teachers are most important intermediary to deliver any curriculum, so it is pertinent that they are equally prepared, competent, experienced, and familiar with intercultural education so as to create culturally responsive and inclusive classrooms. Our School from time to time organizes various workshops and training modules to equip them with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to adapt appropriately to culturally diverse classrooms and sustain educational practices that honour and reflect intercultural perspectives. To cite the remarkable ones are the Introductory Workshop for Teachers on the concept of Functional Applied Behaviors by Fernando Armendariz, Director, FABAS and an interactive workshop with students and teachers by Dr. S.H. Toh, Prof. Emirates University of Alberta on Education for Global Citizenship and Peace.

To sum up we can say that Intercultural understanding is imperative for living with others in the diverse global world enabling young people as responsible local and global citizens to recognise and understand commonalities and differences of diverse cultures, create connections with others and cultivate mutual respect through education as it is the transformative tool to bring about positive behaviours and create empathetic, culturally responsive and responsible denizens of the world.

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UNESCO is the lead agency for the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022) within the UN system, born from UN General Assembly Resolution 67/104, adopted in December 2012. In line with UNESCO’s mandate to build peace in the mind of men and women, it constitutes a follow-up to both the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010) and the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2010).

The global challenges that have dominated recent years have underlined the strategic significance of the Decade: the growth of violent extremism, the mounting migration and displacement crisis, and the rise of divisive political populism have underscored the imperative of expanding, consolidating and intensifying dialogue among peoples with different cultural backgrounds and beliefs.

In 2013, recognizing the importance of enhancing the skills, attitudes and behaviors of individuals for reaching the ambitions of the Decade, UNESCO developed a Conceptual and Operational Framework on Intercultural Competencies, providing a comprehensive overview of the importance of developing the capacities to manage growing cultural diversity, and clarifying key related concepts and their operational interlinkages. The Manual for Developing Intercultural Competencies was therefore designed to translate this framework into tangible action, and to propose a global, accessible methodology to help sensitize diverse audiences to intercultural competencies, including respect for difference, cultural curiosity, empathy and reflexivity.

The Manual is available in English, French, Arabic and Spanish.

The Author

Darla K. Deardorff is a research scholar at Duke University, author of 8 books and over 50 articles and book chapters, founder of ICC Global, affiliated faculty at numerous institutions around the world, and frequently invited speaker and consultant.

With our deepest sympathy to the family of Jemimah Ndudi Mbakwem who passed away on February 1, 2021.

Jemimah was an active member of WCCI since 2013. We will miss her in the future conferences.

May she Rest in Peace!

From the WCCI Family
THE CHALLENGE OF ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION IN INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION ENVIRONMENTS AND EQUITY

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Covid-19, Assessment, Evaluation, Quality learning, Online and Distance learning

Introduction

Out of the 195 countries and 61 territories in the world, about 213 in total have registered cases of COVID-19. At the time of writing this, there are 6,603,329 cases in the world, with the highest numbers from the Americas, Europe and Asia. Drastic measures have been taken and nations have gone into lock downs, and shutdowns that have brought many economic sectors to a still. Some nations are working towards relieving these measures and others are still keeping things as they are in efforts to further contain the virus (Cohut, 2020). Perhaps there are advantages to this crisis, one of which is the development and use of online and distance education globally. However, global adoption is very low, example; the United States is the leading country in online education in the world, yet only 15% of its undergraduate population study online as of December 2019 (Education: From disruption to recovery, 2020). Thus, clearly before the pandemic, there was very low usage of online education and there was uncertainty as to a dependence on online education (James Wiley & NRCCUA, 2020).

Nigeria’s Education Ministry on the 23rd of March, 2020 in efforts to exercise control over the spread of the pandemic declared a temporary closure of all schools in the nation. This decision caused an eruption of questions bordering on the technology that can handle these 46million students that are no more in the classrooms, the structure of the lesson delivery, how all the students can have equal access to study materials and tools, and parents resources to secure their children’s education even in these times. Distance learning and open educational applications like video lessons, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), and broadcast through radio and television are some of the measures UNESCO suggested to cushion the effect of the pandemic on education. These recommendations are plausible on paper, however, to actually realize results practically, other conditions: power supply, internet service, digital literacy of both teachers and parents and guardians must be met. Nigeria does not provide an enabling environment to support students from different social classes to participate in some of the recommended measures thus some states adopted the school lessons on radio and television (Oyekanmi & Odutola, 2020). In this period, the equality gap in the nation has expanded, some are learning effectively, others are struggling to gain access to learning and other learners in remote places have no access to any of the recommended strategies for learning.

Online and Distance Learning (ODL) is ‘any course, at any Higher Education academic level, delivered to students at a distance from the host institution, which has a significant component delivered to students online’ (White et al., 2010). The inadequacy of infrastructural facilities to support ODL is the reason behind the perceived challenge in the growth of e-learning in sub-saharan Africa (Nairobi, Kenya, 2007; (Tagoe, 2012). There is also a challenge of poor salaries and working conditions and of course corruption (Kotoua et al., 2015), this plagues both the online and classroom education. In a nation where ICT presence and integration in learning have not taken a solid stance the option of online learning will not be very easy to implement. The lower levels of education like the primary and secondary schools have already begun holding classes online on platforms like Whatsapp using videos, audio recordings, pictures and notes. However, this initiative was greatly hampered because of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike which began before the government lockdown, staff were unsatisfied with their working conditions and salary structures. The lockdown put the staff in a more difficult situation, in the first month some were unpaid, others were paid only a fragment of their normal salary and theirs and their family’s survival became a real struggle. The uncertainty of a three squared meal would not even permit the chance of planning an online education for their children.

Assessment and Evaluation of Online Learning

In education, the term assessment refers to the wide variety of methods or tools that educators use to evaluate, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition, or educational needs of students (Great Schools Partnership, 2013). Evaluation operationally is making judgments on these assessment results. Assessment can be
both formative and summative but in a general perspective it can be seen as formative and evaluation can be seen as summative. Assessment and evaluation of students have been particularly a challenge and the results of assessment are not as reliable to the teachers as it would be in the classroom environment. Some complaints include that it takes literally longer to teach and explain concepts to students and most students do not have the gadgets and devices that can allow them to connect to these online education. Thus, it cripples the whole purpose of learning and moving at the same pace. Though, this might be good in some respects as students can learn at their own pace, it also breeds a challenge when that learning is not exactly inclusive, because in this system some students are left out of learning while others are still learning.

The 21st century learners grow up with the latest advancements in technology and as such readily accept learning of any kind as long as it is online and technologically driven. This learning as they perceive best suits them as it allows them to decide the pace and style of their learning (Van der Werf & Sabatier, 2009). There is the challenge of delivery of content either in a structured or self-regulated way (Broadbent & Poon, 2015), then feedback, some attitudes of students can easily be spotted in a classroom and the teacher might choose to explain again the concepts, however, in the online situation this is not attainable because teachers can not perceive the students level of cognition and can only help if the students reach out. Gilet-Swan (2017) noted this was a serious challenge to both the students and facilitators. Swan (2001) and Arend (2007) observed online students and courses respectively with the types of assessments administered, they noted exams, journals, group discussion, writing of papers, other written assignments, projects, quizzes and tests, and group work. Discussion was the widely adopted assessment strategy in most of their sample, before written assignments and quizzes. In another study, Gaytan and McEwen (2007) found out from facilitators of online programmes that projects, portfolios, self-assessments, peer evaluations, peer evaluations with feedback, timed tests and quizzes and asynchronous discussion were the most effective assessment strategies. Their study recommended a use of various strategies to create meaning from feedback of the students. These studies were conducted in places were ICT and e-learning have gained dominance in their academic sector and online learning works hand-in-hand with the face to face classroom structure.

**Challenges of Nigeria’s online education**

The United States, India, China, South Korea, United Kingdom, Malaysia are the leading countries in terms of online education in the world (Monitor, 2013); (Dos Santos, 2019). These nations have improved on most of the challenges that has limited Nigeria. Some of these challenges are:

1. **Power**
   
   Power is a big limitation to ICT integration (Raphael & Mtebe, 2017). Online education will require stable power or at least sufficient power. In Nigeria, there is a power issue which does not allow for a smooth running of the nation. This issue is characterized by the government’s inconsistent and misguided power reform policies; inefficiency in power generation, transmission, distribution and consumption (Ohajianya et al., 2014). Some Nigerians do not get enough power to even charge their phones and other devices and as such running a course online might prove very challenging.

2. **Untrained Personnel**

   There are very few Nigerians with the needed expertise in online education compared to the number of people that require this service. The aspect of lesson delivery, design of course content, and assessments will require trained personnel.

3. **Infrastructural facilities and Funding**

   In Nigeria, 40.1 percent of the total population were classified as poor. Thus, about 82.9 million Nigerians are poor by national standards (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). With this figure it is difficult to see Nigeria rising to become an online education powerhouse. For the past years from 2009 to 2018, the Nigerian Budget on Education has not been as much as the United Nations benchmark of 26%, the figure dances between 4.83% and at best 9.94% (Vanguard, 2018). This poor funding presents poorer results as the classroom system is not even properly managed, leaving little or no hope for the online platforms. The internet drives online education and the Bandwidth is the quantity of information that can be sent or received at a specific point on a computer network, high bandwidth means faster speeds of transmission. Thus, a video or audio or instructional resource with a high quality will require very efficient communications technologies to transmit. Although Nigeria is the 7th largest user of the internet worldwide (Adesoji & Olisah, 2019), this service is mostly in the urban areas other than the rural areas, thus showing our Achilles heel in this race. This coupled with the high price of internet service in the nation from the various service providers makes it a very difficult task to have up to 90% penetration.

Other challenges are

1. The lack educational models, this makes study materials burdensome and not easy to understand Martey (2004).
2. The lack of appropriate quality assurance and as such double standards resulting in poor quality of education product from online education Martey (2004).
3. Inadequate government support (Mahlangu, 2018).
4. Attitude of facilitators to control the quality of online learning (Usun, 2004).
5. Another issue is students’ psychological state during online classes, like anxiety, feeling of alienation (Pozdnyakova & Pozdnyakov, 2017).
6. There is also a challenge of inadequate interaction practices especially on international students when an account is made for different cultures and societal influences (Tan, 2017).

Conclusion

Learners today are expected to be data and digital literates, institutions of learning will have to adjust to these learners by offering courses that allow for the application of these skills or learners will not see their lessons as relevant to their world (Vásquez-Colina et al., 2017). The modern learners today learn online through videos, audios and other means. These methods allow for lessons to be learnt at the learner’s discretion and it gives room for students to interact more with their peers, placing the teacher as a facilitator (Bell et al., 2017): (Wong & Sixl-Daniell, 2017); (Vásquez-Colina et al., 2017); (Bell et al., 2017). This is a beautiful case, however the average Nigerian student in either the Primary, Secondary or University level does not have this experience. However, the nation has witnessed some growth in sectors that can cause the change of these observations in the nearest future. There is little to be said of Nigeria’s assessment of online education except for the National Open University of Nigeria which operates as an online university. Other universities have Centres for Distant and Open Learning established and are working towards pushing their learning to another level. This might be a herculean task for the Primary and Secondary levels to fully implement, across the nation different schools have employed mediums such as television and radio broadcast to teach but only little can be said about its assessment.

References and Additional Readings


Last year, people around the globe took to the streets to protest the vicious global pandemic of racism. They recognized racism for what it is. Dangerous. Abhorrent. Ugly. And everywhere. Racism is a deeply rooted global evil. It transcends generations and contaminates societies. It perpetuates inequality, oppression and marginalization. We see racism in the pervasive discrimination suffered by people of African descent. We see it in the injustices and oppression endured by indigenous peoples and other ethnic minorities. We see it in the repugnant views of white supremacists and other extremist groups. Wherever we see racism, we must condemn it without reservation, without hesitation, without qualification. This year, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination highlights the important role of youth, who have been in the forefront of the fight against racism.
Young people’s attitudes and behaviour will dictate the future shape and look of our societies. So, I appeal to young people everywhere, as well as educators and leaders, to teach the world that all people are born equal. Supremacy is an evil lie. Racism kills.

On this day, and every day, let us work together to rid the world of the pernicious evil of racism so all may live in a world of peace, dignity and opportunity.

AN ACTION RESEARCH CASE STUDY: DIGITAL EQUITY AND EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION DURING AN EMERGENT COVID-19 DIVIDE

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to share responses from current literature, a small case study about perceptions and practices of the school of education faculty toward multicultural and educational issues concerning the rapid rise in online environments during coronavirus (COVID-19) experiences and just-in-time strategies for addressing digital equity and educational inclusion in K-16 online educational settings.

Design/methodology/approach – This is a conceptual paper that emerged from an action research case study. The study included four faculty in an urban school of education. The faculty participants were asked to provide examples of educational inclusion strategies used during transitioning their courses and advising to online environments in a Research I university. Faculty included one educational leadership, one sports management, one special education and one teacher education professor. Central issues explored practices related to language, technology access, curriculum design and technological competencies and assessment. A driving question was: How do institutions, schools or educators provide learning opportunities to support digital equity and inclusive education practice to maintain and strengthen relationships and core practices of multicultural education during a time of physical distancing during COVID-19? And what are the experiences, barriers, successes?

Findings – Research-based transformative knowledge, real situations and practical resources for considering inclusive education curriculum concepts were found that are connecting educators, teachers, learners and communities during this time of crisis.

Research limitations/implications – Methodological limitations that influenced the research design include conducting research in a totally virtual environment, small sample size, lack of diversity in curriculum content and one research site. The data collection was limited to written responses from the faculty participants. This action research study took place in a time frame limited by COVID-19 conditions during a four-month period.

Practical implications – In theory and practice, this new online movement suggests learners, teachers, educators and leaders are gaining experience and knowledge about resources and strategies for using new technologies, assessments and flexible curriculum as powerful tools for building language, curriculum and social-cultural communication bonds across generations and including special needs populations. Such new and emerging strategies could be used to bridge gaps in a time of distancing to support inclusive and equitable learning environments in education to minimize the effects of an emergent COVID-19 digital divide. Social learning culture as constructed, performed and captured in patterns of cooperation among faculties
shows the world becoming more open and less restricted by borders. In conclusion, an emerging new


Racial Equity Glossary: Available here: https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary

Five Important Question to Ask in Your Networks in Response to Crisis Management

In the early days of a racial crisis there are some immediate issues that should be addressed in every crisis plan.

1. Is everyone from your company safe?
2. Have you reached out to black and brown employees (or those with family members of color) to make sure they are okay and to find out how you can be supportive?
3. Have you revisited your nondiscrimination and anti-racism policies?
4. Have you revisited your social media policy?
5. Have you communicated these policies to your employees?

After listening to the public dialogue, WCCI Special Edition Newsletters, do you now have something to add to the conversation?

Explore these resources to learn more about how to contribute to action plans for potential solutions.

1. Kehoe, J.W. (1994). Multicultural Education vs Anti-Racist Education: The Debate in Canada National Council for the Social Studies: Social Education 58(6), 1994, pp. 354-358. A debate is taking place about the comparative meaning and merits of multicultural education and anti-racist education. The concept of multicultural education has been accused of being inadequate, naive, and fallacious. It is said to fail to confront minority grievances and aspirations. The intention here is to examine some of the writing on multicultural education and anti-racist education to determine the components of each. An analysis will then be made of at least one clear difference between the two approaches-multicultural teaching versus anti-racist teaching. Go here to Read more: http://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/publications/se/5806/580605.html
2. Multicultural Training Resources This page contains resource information with diversity content. Please contact OEMA via email or call (202) 336-6029 for publications not online. Available: https://www.apa.org/pi/oema/resources/multicultural-training
3. Racial Equity Tools (2020). Racial Equity Tools is designed to support individuals and groups working to achieve racial equity. It offers tools, research, tips, curricula, and ideas for people who want to increase their understanding and to help those working for racial justice at every level – in systems, organizations, communities, and the culture at large. We curate resources that use language and analysis reflecting an understanding of systemic racism, power, and privilege and are accessible on-line and free to users. The only exceptions are the Transforming White Privilege
Discrimination on a systemic scale began with Spanish colonization over 400 years ago, or 500 years if we use the landing of Magellan in 1521 as a starting point. The Spanish colonizers regarded the colonized peoples as culturally “inferior” subjects to be “civilized” and “assimilated”. Spanish Manila segregated and ranked people reflected in gradations of skin “whiteness”, first Spaniards, next the “mestizos” from intermarriages between and among Spanish, then the Natives and the

...
The Mestizos received more access to education and were given social and political roles. The beginning of the Philippine revolutionary struggle against Spanish colonialism, however promoted a Filipino national identity that validated “brown skin-ness”. But this was later marginalized as mestizo elites gained power in the revolutionary movement.

The next phase of colonialism under the Americans further deepened racial discrimination and racism. The US soldiers who fought in the Philippine-American war brought with them the same racist attitudes from the US white population against Blacks. Although Filipinos were allowed to self-govern, the American colonial system perpetuated white supremacy, favouring mestizos who were then viewed as more civilized, trustworthy, and industrious.

By the time the Philippines became an independent nation in 1946, the seeds of racialized identity favouring “whiteness” and European Caucasian identity were already sown through education and economic integration into the Western capitalist system. The growth of the skin whitening industry and commercial advertising and consumerism in the Philippines is a clear expression that being whiter or fairer in skin colour is more ‘attractive” and “desirable”. Hence, supermarket shelves are now filled with skin whitening lotions, soaps, and other beauty products. This is another example of internalized anti-blackness in Philippine culture.

It also has impacted cultural-economic sectors like popular entertainment, modelling, and the arts. Many of the highly popular and successful celebrities in Philippine movies and music are mestizos. Controversies have arisen when “blackfacing” or “brownfacing” has been used in Filipino films or teledrama, for example, the mythological series Bagani where mestizos lead actors were made up to look bronze or browner. Although current Philippine school curricula emphasize cultural diversity and respect for all peoples, I believe more work needs to be done to fully implement such policies (for example, re-orientation of teachers and revision of textbooks). Recently, a controversy arose when one textbook lesson in Cebu City, Philippines, still highlighted the desirability of white or fairer skin and high-bridged noses.

Dark skin Filipinos like the Aetas of Negritos descent or Indo-Filipinos continue to experience racism. The children left behind by African-American soldiers’ relationships with Filipino women during the decades of US bases have suffered racial discrimination due to their skin colour and socio-cultural prejudices against prostitution. However, there seems to be an anachronism to such aversion to “blackness” in the case of “black” athletes in Philippine sports, particularly Basketball. Africans and African-American athletes are actively recruited by some Philippine universities to enhance their success in national competitions. In the Philippines, the “imported” athletes are praised for their sporting skills and do not suffer the same level as sports-based racism occurring in the US and Europe. Nevertheless, I do not believe their presence in the Philippine basketball teams significantly helps to overcome the underlying anti-black racism in Philippine society, since it still reinforces the stereotype of “Blacks” as primarily superior athletes.

Discrimination that began under colonialism also was reflected in religion or faith. Christians were seen as “superior” to “non-Christian tribes” and so the Indigenous Peoples who kept their indigenous spiritual traditions became marginalized. Today, popular attitudes still regard the Indigenous Peoples as inferior, although their traditional arts and dances are promoted as tourist attractions in commercialized celebrations like the Ati-Atihan, Sinulog, Panagbenga, Kadayawan, among others. Likewise, the Muslim Moro peoples in Mindanao, who strongly resisted colonization, were subjected to discrimination that has existed for decades. This led to the bloody wars for secession and autonomy until finally the peace agreement between the Government and the MILF in 2018 officially acknowledged Moro identity as part of Filipino society. But in the wider society, this peace agreement does not automatically erase centuries of anti-Muslim/Moro attitudes and stereotypes.

It is also essential to recognize that ethnic and racial discrimination is not only based on skin colour or religion. Other complex factors, whether political, economic or social, must also be recognized. For example, 9/11 and the global war on ‘terrorism” which fuelled Islamophobia, has accentuated ethnic and religious discrimination toward Muslims. The siege of Marawi City in 2017 by an ISIS-affiliated extremist group also contributed to further stereotyping of Muslims under the “terrorist” and ‘violent extremist” labels.

In the case of Indigenous Peoples, the dominant paradigm of economic globalization and development has resulted in
their marginalization, repression, and human rights violations. The exploitation of natural resources like mining, logging, and agribusiness has increasingly displaced IPs from their ancestral lands, their health and traditional livelihoods have been adversely affected by environmental destruction. IPs now are also caught in the crossfires of the continuing armed conflict between the Government’s military and the Marxist insurgents. Labelled as supporters of the insurgency, IP communities are subjected to illegal detentions and banning of their schools suspected as grounds for insurgency recruitment.

Of course, over time, indigenous cultural forms and practices have received recognition and now “valued” as exemplars of Filipino culture. We see this especially in the commodification of dances, music, and clothes of the Cordilleran peoples, Lumads, and Muslims. Their dances and music are performed regularly by art groups in Philippines schools, theatrical and entertainment venues, including associations of Filipinos living abroad. But when these Indigenous dances and art forms are performed, are the performers aware of the political and economic suffering, injustices and racism experienced by the IPs in their daily lives? Are the non-IP performers motivated to express solidarity and work for transformation of such unjust national development policies?

In Philippine society, we encounter ethnic stereotyping daily which increases prejudices and hurt to the stereotyped victims. Different regional ethnic groups have, for a long time, held stereotypes of each other, for example, one group is regarded as more greedy, untrustworthy, stingy, lazy, spendthrift, “womanizers”, and many more. These stereotypes have been around for a long time, but the case of Chinese-Filipinos shows how stereotyping can lead to explicit discrimination when impacted by societal crises. Thus, when the COVID-19 pandemic erupted, there also started an increased rise in racial and ethnic discrimination against Chinese-Filipinos who are stereotyped or blamed as carriers of the SARS-Cov-2 virus (since COVID-19 is claimed to have started in China). The war on drugs promoted by the present Government also had the effect of promoting the stereotype of Chinese as drug lords or pushers, since China is identified as a major source of illegal drugs. The tensions arising from the politics of the South China or West Philippine Sea have also caused more xenophobia towards “Chinese peoples”. The “blame” had been cast on the Chinese. This has deflected the responsibility of the Chinese Government and its geo-strategic policies to the Chinese people including the Chinese-Filipinos whose descendants have lived in the Philippines even before the western colonizers arrived.

Although Filipinos in the Philippines have experienced racism and racial discrimination during colonialism and nowadays, also in Canada, the US, and other countries to which they have migrated as permanent migrants or OFWs, it is necessary to acknowledge that Filipino culture and society in the Philippines has also promoted racism towards and among each other.

How can such discrimination be overcome? As an educator for peace, justice, intercultural understanding, and multiculturalism, I strongly advocate that EDUCATION, SOCIAL ACTION, AND POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION play an indispensable role in this project. Some suggestions for such critical education and empowerment for action include:

When Filipino children go to school, their lessons and textbooks and teachers must help them respect all cultures and diverse cultural identities that make up Philippine society.

School curricula and extra-curricular activities, including those of NGOs, and CSOs need to avoid reducing cultural identity to the 4Ds – dance, dress, diet, and dialect. All citizens are affected by wider social, economic, and political systems and relationships. Hence, overcoming racial and ethnic discrimination must also challenge economic and political injustices and oppression.

The Department of Education and all other educational administrative bodies have to ensure that teachers are appropriately oriented, and learning resources are revised to help children and youth recognize their internalized anti-black, anti-IP, and anti-Muslim/Moro racism.

Educational institutions need to implement clear anti-racism policies, so that all school personnel model the conduct of non-discrimination.

All adults have to unlearn the biases they have accumulated in their previous educational and social experiences, including views and attitudes socialized in their families and communities.
All Filipinos need to understand the historical seeds of racism, racial and ethnic discrimination that were planted during colonial times, still continuing today in the form of internalized anti-blackness racism.

Filipinos need to demand that the entertainment industry validate and give equal opportunity for the talents and creativity of Filipino artists who are not fair skinned or mestizos.

Media, including the now powerful social media platforms, should institutionalize anti-racist and anti-ethnic stereotyping guidelines in their content and production.

Interfaith dialogue and education should be promoted, as has been happening over the last two decades, so that all faiths and religions are equitably respected and understood. Such interfaith dialogue will promote cooperation for the well being of all Filipinos. Interfaith dialogue in Mindanao has helped to overcome the stereotype of “Islam” as propagating “terrorism” and “violent extremism”.

Anti-racist education should focus not only on overcoming discrimination based on skin colour, cultural beliefs, and practices. It also needs to challenge discrimination of ethnic, racialized, and cultural groups, such as the marginalization of IPs via development and globalization aggression.

The racist and gender-based violence experienced by OFWs should also be drawn upon as lessons for raising awareness of Filipinos about the global problem of racial discrimination.

In conclusion, all Filipinos need to show national solidarity by supporting campaigns and struggles of Filipinos and other peoples worldwide against racism and racial and ethnic discrimination such as, The Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, #BlackLivesMatter, the struggles of the Rohingyas Muslim minorities in Myanmar; and the growing Anti-Asian racism and violence accentuated by the COVID pandemic. Regardless of our cultural, racialized, or ethnic identity, we need to join hands, minds, hearts, and spirit to build a world free of racism and racial and ethnic discrimination. Today, March 21st, is an inspirational moment to motivate us to fulfill this vision and mission.

Virginia Cawagas is an Adjunct Professor, Dept. of Educational Policy Studies, University of Alberta. She has been a teacher and principal in Philippine schools and formerly Executive Secretary of the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippine. Her fields of tertiary teaching, research and advocacy include peace education, values education, multicultural education, curriculum development and social studies textbooks. A life member of WCCI, she has also served as Editor of the WCCI Journal (WCCI Forum; International Journal for Curriculum & Instruction). ▲
MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF RACISM

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Education is the most powerful weapon, which you can use to change the world, said Nelson Mandela. Yet, we continue to witness social & systemic injustices from all corners of the world creeping within our classrooms. As an educator and mental health professional, speaking for myself and others in the field, we can only continue to encourage you to take care of yourself so that you are able to advocate for those with less of a voice than you and I.

We are hearing more about stress, resilience, trauma, and mental health than how to live in a world that further inflicts hardships and barriers that disallows growth and opportunities often for those with less of a voice due to a multitude of misfortunes. Men, women, and children of all ages, races, nationalities, and backgrounds are living a life of uncertainties and fear. How can we be more culturally sensitive and responsive to others needs without the extra effort of seeking to understand and then to respect each other’s differences?

In the midst of this worldwide pandemic uniting and joining forces is the key to our existence. The hatred and events that we live through each and every day across this world are unnecessary and fueled out of anger and often greed. Students are entering institutions of learning and are encountering prejudice and discriminatory practices by educators and or by their peers, Columbia University’s Derald Wing Sue defines these as microaggressions (Finley, 2019). Offering strength and compassion is a start, and acknowledging microaggressions exists.

Dillard (2020) said, “as a first step, educators must examine how whiteness operates—and is weaponized—in schools. Microaggressions are, often cleverly stated, often unintentional forms of discriminatory statements or comments. Rather than an overt declaration of racism or sexism, a microaggression often takes the shape of an ad-lib comment, an unintentionally uncomfortable joke, or a pointed insult. Keeping in mind that race-based microaggressions in particular can happen anywhere at any period of time, as demonstrated as we are in view of nightly news ... a white person in fear of their life due to an African American. Police is called to rescue the non-white, and it quickly escalates from there often resulting to the end of a person of color life or overaggressive behavior of a police officer that reportedly feared for their life. This attitude and mentality has to change.

Parents who are raising children (particularly boys) of color are living like they are reliving historical days of post-slavery. As educators and mental health professionals call for reeducation, people of color must learn to confront race-based microaggressions during these perilous times. However, according to Lee & Hicken (2016), those affected by microaggressions begin to attempt “to navigate racialized social spaces” to avoid negativism while more time is spent on “vigilance” in hopes of being treated with respect as a coping mechanism. Furthermore, associated with vigilance is poor
physical and mental health such as negative worldviews, depression, increased risky behaviors with illicit drugs and binging on alcohol, feeling of anxiousness and traumatization.

Taking action in a constructive manner can further reduce the instances when faced with negative racial or biased comments. To handle the situation, one must be nonjudgmental and come from an intriguing inquiry perspective. Active listening must be practiced and repeat in a paraphrase to clarify what you heard. Next, explore their thought process or what they hope to accomplish with such comments. Explain the problematic statement(s). Use the “I” statement to express your feelings and request a restatement or apology (Souza, 2018).

In closing, there is a call for reeducation. Calls for helping the speaker to understand what was or is being said that is offensive. Nadal (2014), states “microaggressions are commonplace verbal, behavioral, or environmental actions that communicate hostility toward oppressed or targeted groups” understanding that these forms of communication can be intentionally or unintentionally. Microaggressions take on many forms such as microassaults, insults, and validations. Microassaults are overt and intentional negative comments. Microinsults are unintentionally yet they are offensive, and then there are micro validations in which there is a denial about the realities related to the level of differences amongst groups of people-more so, the privileged. However, as race-based microaggressions take place, reeducation about such offensive behavior is critical to our nation.

“Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced.”
— JAMES BALDWIN

References


Please Remember May is Mental Health Awareness Month.

Since 1949, Mental Health America and our affiliates across the country have observed May is Mental Health Month by reaching out to millions of people through the media, local events, and screenings. We invite other organizations to join us in spreading the word that mental health is something everyone should care about by using the May is Mental Health Month toolkit materials and conducting awareness activities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the mental health of people of all ages. Now, more than ever, it is critical to reduce the stigma around mental health struggles, because that stigma often prevents individuals from seeking help.

Visit here to learn more from this excerpt: https://www.mhanational.org/mental-health-month
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