TRAINING TOOLS

Grounding Anti-Racism in Human Rights

From Reflection to Action in International Cooperation

Montréal • October 22–23, 2026

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For more information and resources

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Human Rights Exploration Activity

PART A) Pair Discussion (15min)

Instructions

We are going to explore together what human rights are.

Please read the following statements individually (5 min).
Then, discuss the questions below in pairs (10 min).

Guiding Questions

- What changes when something is framed as a *need* versus a *right*?
- Why do you think it is important to talk about rights?

Statements

Working conditions

- People need safe and fair working conditions.
- People have the right to just, safe, and dignified working conditions.

Indigenous peoples

- Indigenous peoples need access to land and cultural protection.
- Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination, land, culture, and free, prior, and informed consent.

Housing

- People need shelter.
- People have the right to adequate housing.

Black people

- Black people need equal opportunities and safety.

- Black people have the right to live free from systemic racism, discrimination, and unequal treatment.

Environment

- People need a healthy environment to live well.
- People have the right to a healthy, safe, and sustainable environment.

2SLGBTQI+ safety

- 2SLGBTQI+ people need safe spaces.
- 2SLGBTQI+ people have the right to live free from discrimination and violence.

Food

- People need food.
- People have the right to adequate food.

Women's participation

- Women need to be included in decision-making.
- Women have the right to equal participation and freedom from discrimination.

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Scenario 1

A volunteer from the Global North joins a short-term advocacy project in a Global South country. They arrive enthusiastic about "bringing expertise". They lead several capacity-building activities, participate in and facilitate different policy dialogues, and provide their perspectives on human rights issues and potential solutions. Local social movements and organizers who have been working on these issues for years are consulted minimally and are rarely recognized or presented as experts.

After returning home, the volunteer participates in conferences and panels highlighting the project and "the impact they helped create," while local advocates and communities receive limited visibility, funding, or recognition for their ongoing work and leadership.

Guiding Question

What is your assessment of this scenario and its associated challenges?

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Scenario 2

An international cooperation organization publicly promotes diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism through trainings, policies, and increased racial diversity among staff. However, leadership, decision-making structures, organizational culture, and strategic priorities remain largely unchanged. Racialized staff frequently carry invisible labour related to EDI work, while experiences of racism and exclusion internally are rarely addressed openly.

One day, Laurie, a Black woman working as a project officer in the organization, raised concerns about racial discrimination and exclusion within the team. After speaking up, some colleagues describe her as "aggressive," "difficult," or "confrontational." Conversations quickly shift toward the discomfort, intentions, and feelings of white colleagues rather than the concerns being raised. Leadership emphasizes the importance of maintaining a "positive atmosphere," but the issues themselves are not meaningfully addressed. Eventually, Laurie decides to leave the organization.

Guiding Question

What is your assessment of this scenario and its associated challenges?

STAGE 1
RACE-EXCLUSIVE
We encourage racism

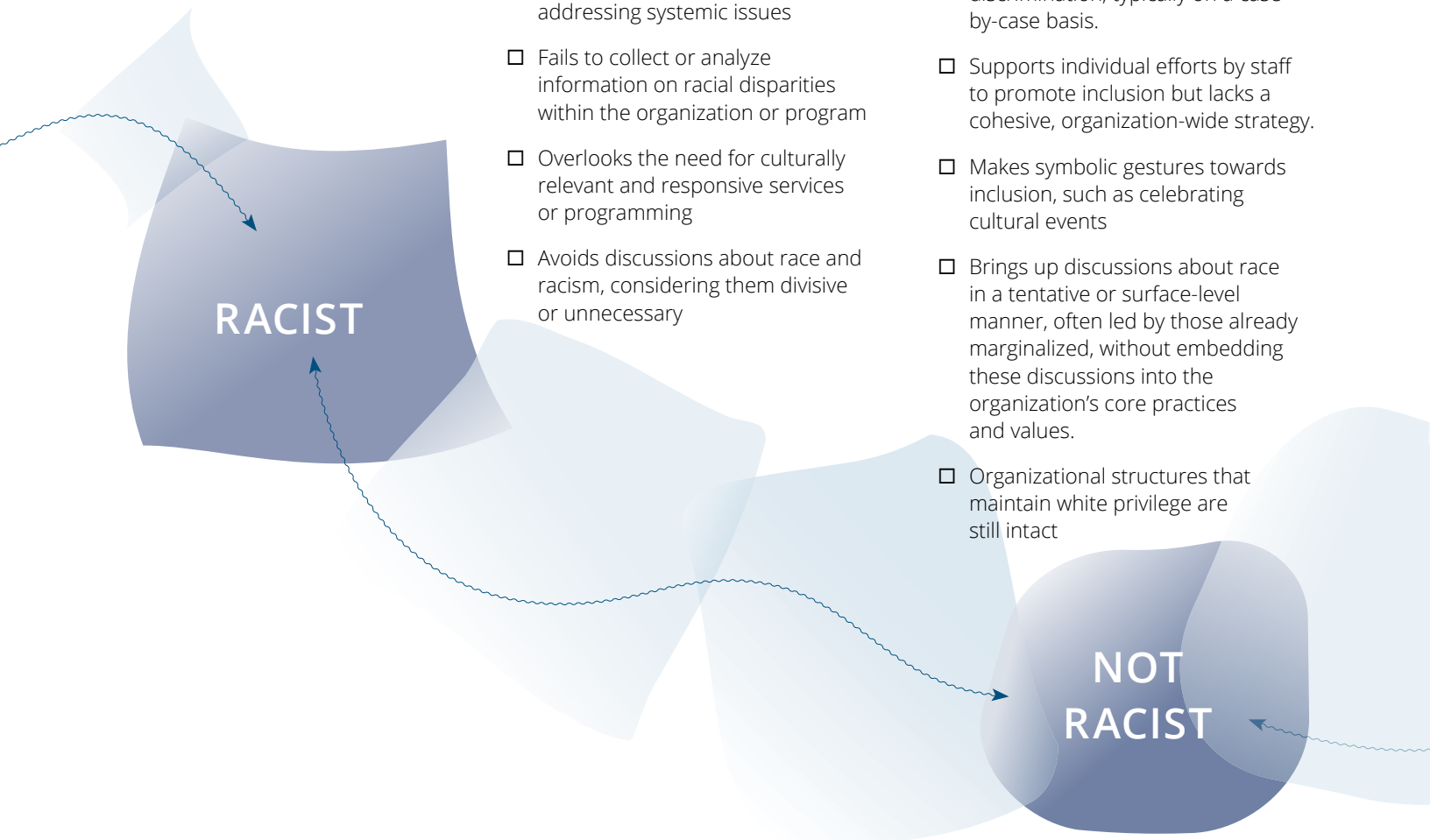
- ☐ Intentionally perpetuates systemic racism at all levels
- ☐ Maintains overt and covert discriminatory practices and policies
- ☐ Intentionally and publicly perpetuates the dominant group's power and privilege
- ☐ Denies opportunities and treats people unfairly based on race
- ☐ Endorses discriminatory actions, whether by leadership or staff
- ☐ Leadership and staff ignore or dismiss complaints about racial discrimination /bias

STAGE 2
RACE-UNAWARE
We close our eyes on racism

- ☐ Denies racial inequalities
- ☐ Adopts a "colourblind" approach, claiming not to see race.
- ☐ Ignores or dismisses complaints about racial discrimination, whether as a staff member or as leadership
- ☐ Ignores unique experiences and challenges faced by racialized people
- ☐ Maintains policies and practices that uphold existing inequalities.
- ☐ Believes treating everyone the same is sufficient without addressing systemic issues
- ☐ Fails to collect or analyze information on racial disparities within the organization or program
- ☐ Overlooks the need for culturally relevant and responsive services or programming
- ☐ Avoids discussions about race and racism, considering them divisive or unnecessary

STAGE 3
RACE-SENSITIVE
We acknowledge racism

- ☐ Has some awareness of racial inequality, but undertakes no specific actions to address it
- ☐ Begins to recognize the existence of racial differences and inequalities.
- ☐ Listens to and acknowledges the experiences of racial minorities but does not know what to do with this information.
- ☐ Implements basic diversity training and awareness programs, often without follow-through.
- ☐ Starts to identify and address some instances of racial bias and discrimination, typically on a case-by-case basis.
- ☐ Supports individual efforts by staff to promote inclusion but lacks a cohesive, organization-wide strategy.
- ☐ Makes symbolic gestures towards inclusion, such as celebrating cultural events
- ☐ Brings up discussions about race in a tentative or surface-level manner, often led by those already marginalized, without embedding these discussions into the organization's core practices and values.
- ☐ Organizational structures that maintain white privilege are still intact



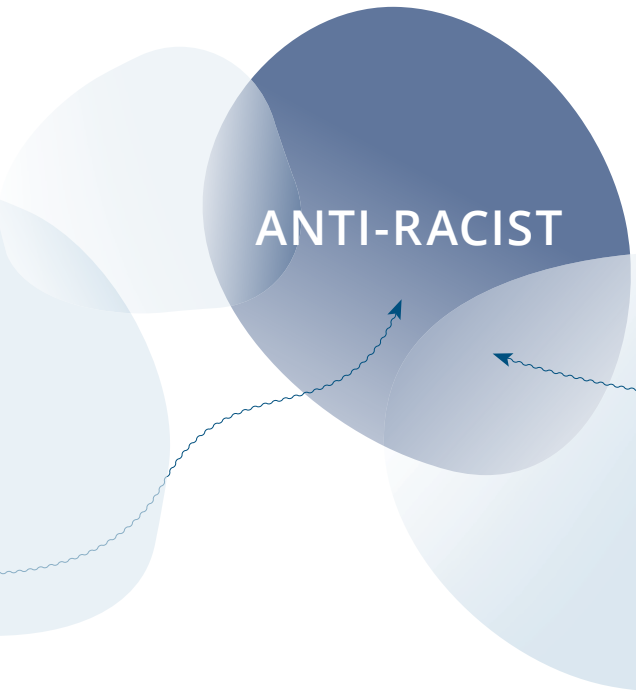
STAGE 4
RACE-SPECIFIC/RESPONSIVE
We care about racism

- ☐ Actively listens to and incorporates feedback from racial minorities to programs and services.
- ☐ Sets specific, measurable goals for increasing diversity and reducing racial disparities, with regular progress reports.
- ☐ Proactively recruits and retains diverse staff across all organizational levels.
- ☐ Sets clear, measurable goals and benchmarks for advancing racial equity.
- ☐ Drives ongoing education and training on racial issues for all staff.
- ☐ Allocates resources and funding to initiatives targeting racial disparities.
- ☐ Embeds discussions about race and equity into core organizational meetings and strategic planning sessions.

STAGE 5
RACE-TRANSFORMATIVE
We address racism

- ☐ Identifies and actively opposes and eliminates all forms of racial discrimination in systems and policies
- ☐ Actively collaborates with larger communities at municipal, provincial, national, and global levels to dismantle structures of oppression and discrimination
- ☐ Actively centers and amplifies the voices of racial minorities in decision-making processes.
- ☐ Co-creates and co-leads initiatives with racialized communities to ensure shared ownership and impact.
- ☐ Establishes targeted outreach and retention strategies to increase leadership roles for racial minorities.
- ☐ Sets ambitious goals with accountability measures for achieving racial justice and equity across all organizational practices.
- ☐ Allocates substantial financial resources to fund community-led initiatives and reparative justice efforts.
- ☐ Facilitates courageous conversations about race and power dynamics, creating safe spaces for learning and action within the program and organization.

Being anti-racist requires a proactive attitude towards racial injustices, while being "not racist" refers to a neutral passive attitude.



Model adapted from original research by Bailey Jackson and Rita Hardiman: Jackson, B. W (2006). Further adapted by Equitas. International Center for Human Rights Education in collaboration with partners, 2024.

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Tackling Racial Discrimination through *PANEL* in your Organization

ORGANIZATIONAL REFLECTION WORKSHEET · Equitas – International Centre for Human Rights Education

P	A	N	E	L
Participation & Inclusion	Accountability & Transparency	Non-Discrimination & Equality	Empowerment	Links to Human Rights

INTRODUCTION

We have explored the PANEL principles and how they connect to anti-racism and a human rights-based approach. In this activity, we will reflect on how these principles can be applied within your own organization, partnerships, and work.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Reflect on your organization's current practices, challenges, and priorities.
2. Think about what your organization is already doing (or is planning to do) to address racism and strengthen equity and inclusion.
3. You do not need to answer every question. Focus on the ones most relevant to your organization's journey.
4. Use the examples as prompts to support reflection and discussion.

Name: _____ **Organization:** _____ **Date:** _____

P Participation & Inclusion

Active, meaningful participation of all, including disadvantaged, historically marginalized and racialized persons and communities.

1. How are we listening and including the voices of marginalized communities to guide our decision-making?

e.g. *Safe spaces for dialogue · Community-led consultations · Co-leadership with local partners · Translation & accessibility supports*

2. What resources do we need to support the full engagement of IBPOC staff, local partners, and affected communities?

e.g. *Flexible funding · Affinity or support spaces · Accessibility supports · Capacity-sharing opportunities*

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A Accountability & Transparency

Duty bearers are identified and held accountable for upholding human rights and addressing discrimination.

1. Who holds decision-making power in our organization and partnerships, and to whom are they accountable?

e.g. *Co-defining roles & responsibilities · Accountability to communities · Collaborative, inclusive and transparent co- leadership processes · Shared oversight mechanisms*

2. Who are the rights holders (e.g., communities, partners or staff) affected by our policies, programs, and funding decisions, and how can their voices influence accountability processes?

e.g. *Community-Led MEAL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning) · Partner co-leadership in evaluations · Accessible reporting channels · Ongoing co- construction spaces*

3. What systems or practices do we have in place to address harm, inequity, or human rights violations, particularly on racism, when they occur?

e.g. *Anti-racism reporting systems · Partnership accountability commitments · Repair, restorative and healing- centered processes · Equity reviews or reflections · Anti racism policies or anti racism/ Equity committee*

N Non-Discrimination & Equality

The rights of all are addressed, including disadvantaged, historically marginalized, racialized, and affected communities.

1. Which individuals, communities, or groups may be excluded or disproportionately impacted by our work or decision-making?

e.g. *Groups missing from decision-making, for example local organizations, local communities, IBPOC women, PLWD and 2SLGBTQI+ people · Barriers to participation · Unequal access to funding or visibility · Language or accessibility barriers*

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2. What actions can we take to ensure meaningful and equitable inclusion, particularly of the most marginalized people/communities?

e.g. *Community-led decision-making · Partner veto power on key decisions · Rotating and shared leadership models · Transparent salary and power structures · Direct funding to grassroots organizations led by marginalized communities*

E Empowerment

Rights holders recognize and strengthen their capacities, leadership, and collective power to claim their rights and influence systems and decisions affecting them.

1. What strengths, knowledge, leadership, and capacities already exist within affected communities and local partners?

e.g. *Community-led organizing · Lived expertise · Indigenous or local knowledge · Existing advocacy networks ·*

2. What tools, knowledge, relationships, or resources are needed to strengthen the ability of rights holders to influence decisions and claim their rights?

e.g. *Access to decision-making spaces · Long-term funding · Human rights advocacy training · Networking & coalition-building*

3. What responsibilities do allies, donors, and organizations have in supporting empowerment while avoiding paternalism or control?

e.g. *Sharing power · Equitable partnerships · Flexible funding approaches · Reflecting on power dynamics*

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L Links to Human Rights

Human rights standards, frameworks, and principles are used as the foundation of our work.

1. Which human rights principles and frameworks are most relevant to our work and partnerships?

e.g. *Indigenous rights · Gender equality · Anti-racism frameworks · Participation & Inclusion · Non-discrimination*

2. How can human rights frameworks strengthen our advocacy, programming, partnerships, and accountability practices?

e.g. *HRBA in program design · Rights-based evaluation tools · Human rights regarded as a common ground in partnership commitments · Advocacy grounded in rights standards*

ADDITIONAL NOTES / KEY COMMITMENTS

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From Reflection to *Action*

Strategic Change Planning Worksheet · Equitas – International Centre for Human Rights Education

Name: **Organization:** **Date:**

1 Identify a Focus Area

⏱ 15 min ◆ **PAIRS**

INSTRUCTIONS

Take a moment to think about ONE area of your work or organization where you see an opportunity for change. Then, take turns with your partner (about 5–6 minutes each) to answer the questions below. Some examples of areas of work could be:

- ☐ A program or project
- ☐ A policy or practice
- ☐ A decision-making process
- ☐ A partnership or funding approach
- ☐ Organizational culture

> *Where do you experience tension or see gaps when it comes to anti-racism?? What is not working well?*
> *Why is there an opportunity to advance anti racism in this area of work?*

➞ **Identify your focus area and briefly respond to the questions above:**

2 Define the Desired Change

⏱ 15 min ◆ **PAIRS**

> Take a moment to think individually about the desired shift. Then discuss with your partner the following questions.
>
> *What would improve if anti-racism + HRBA principles were meaningfully applied here?*
> *What would change for racialized communities and staff in their participation and leadership in decision-making?*

➞ **Describe the desired change in 2–3 sentences:**

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3 Critical Path Mapping

⏱ 25 min ◆ **PAIRS → SHARED DRAWING**

Now take a moment individually to think about the following questions and map out the steps that would need to happen to achieve the desired change. Draw a simple flowchart.

Now choose ONE of your focus areas to deepen. Draw a simple flowchart together.

What needs to happen first?
What approvals, conversations, or processes are required?
What barriers might show up?
What are the "make or break" points?

➞ **Map your critical path: Start → Steps → Decision Points → Outcome**

Start	→	Steps	→	Decision Points	→	Outcome

💬 Share your diagram with your partner, and discuss:

- Where does this most likely get stuck?
- What feels hardest to move?

4 Stakeholder & Buy-In Map

⏱ 20 min ◆ **PAIRS**

Think about the people within your organization that you would need to engage in enacting the desired change. Map them in the table below guided by the following questions. Then share with your partner.

Who has influence (formal or informal)?
Who could slow this down?
Who could champion it (Ally)?
Who is often left out but should be included?

➞ **List key people/groups you need to engage — fill in together:**

Who	Role in the System	Level of alignment with the change	Level of influence (low, medium, high)

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5 Strategy for Buy-In

⏱ 15 min ◆ PAIRS

Pick 2–3 key stakeholders from your map.

> *What matters to each of them?*
> *What language or framing will resonate?*
> *Where are the points of alignment?*

➞ **Who do you engage first?**

➞ **What is your entry point into the conversation?**

➞ **What resistance might you need to anticipate?**

💬 **PAIR PAUSE**

- Where do you feel most confident?
- Where do you feel most uncertain?

6 Prioritization & First Step

⏱ 10 min ◆ INDIVIDUAL → PAIR SHARE

> *Individually, think*
> *What is ONE realistic next step you could take in the next 2–4 weeks?*
> *What is within your influence (not perfection, just movement)?*
>
> *Share with your partner and ask for recommendations, if they have any.*

➞ **Write your first action:**

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