



AWHIHIA TE RITO – NURTURE THE YOUNG

2023 Youth Statement

The Race Unity National Hui held in Auckland in June 2023 provided an important platform for rangatahi (youth) to share their thoughts on the root causes of racism and potential solutions to eradicate racism in Aotearoa New Zealand. This document gives the reader a synopsis of these rangatahi voices.

Unveiling the Underlying Causes of Racism

In the tapestry of human society, racism stands as one of its most disconcerting threads. Its roots dig deep into the complex soil of human psychology, history, and culture. To truly understand this societal affliction, we embark on a journey to uncover the multifaceted reasons behind the persistence of racism.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF BIAS

Our journey begins with a glance into the intricate workings of the human mind. Herd mentality, the tendency to follow the crowd, often results in the unquestioning acceptance of a single version of the truth. Ignorance, both wilful and passive, fuels racial biases. Fear, intertwined with mass misinformation, breeds prejudice. It is a tapestry woven with threads of ego, laziness, and a fear of the unknown.

THE SHADOWS OF HISTORY

As we delve deeper, we encounter the ghosts of history. Johann Blumenbach's false scientific race hierarchy theory reverberates through time, influencing the perception of racial superiority. Attitudes of different eras echo into the present, passing the torch of discrimination to subsequent generations. The scars of colonization remain, and the reluctance to admit past wrongs casts a long shadow.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

We find ourselves in the midst of societal influences. Institutions, upbringing, and a lack of diversity in childhood environments all play pivotal roles in shaping racial attitudes. Prejudices and biases are subtly passed down to the younger generation, normalized within our culture. Geographic factors, a lack of clear expectations, and a persistent belief in racial supremacy all contribute to the racial landscape.

THE SUBCONSCIOUS AND SILENCE

In the hidden corners of our minds, we discover the subconscious biases that fuel racism. Parents unwittingly transmit racial prejudices to their children. Humour becomes a veil for racism, and many are taught to tolerate it silently, without questioning its existence.

THE CALL FOR CHANGE

We realize the importance of comprehending these underlying causes. To combat racism, we must first acknowledge its roots. This intricate web of factors reveals the depth of the problem and points the way toward a brighter future.

The issue of racism is not a simple one. It is entangled in the very fabric of our society, stemming from psychological, historical, and cultural factors. To dismantle this deeply rooted problem, we must shine a light on its many facets and collectively work towards a world where racial equality prevails.

Eradicating Racism: A Comprehensive Strategy Rooted in Values and Actions

Racism is a pervasive problem deeply rooted in societies across the world. Tackling this issue requires a holistic strategy that integrates values-based solutions with tangible actions to foster unity, equity, and inclusivity. This report presents a comprehensive roadmap that combines values-based solutions with tangible actions to address racism effectively.

VALUES AS CORNERSTONES FOR ERADICATING RACISM

Kindness and Aroha (Love and Compassion): Encourage individuals to practice kindness and empathy towards others, irrespective of their racial background. Promote aroha, or love and compassion, as guiding principles in personal interactions.

Respect and Trust: Emphasize the significance of mutual respect and trust as foundations for harmonious relationships. Foster trust through transparency and accountability between individuals, in institutions, and communities.

Understanding and Acceptance: Promote cultural understanding and acceptance through educational programs, diversity training, and intercultural exchange initiatives. Encourage open discussions around lived experiences and embracing all cultures.

Honesty and Accountability: Encourage individuals and institutions to acknowledge and confront the historical and contemporary injustices related to racism. Implement accountability mechanisms to address systemic racism. Educate teachers about stereotypes, dispelling myths such as "Asians are good at math."

ACTIONS TO COMBAT RACISM

Youth-Led Online Campaigns: Empower young people to lead online campaigns that raise awareness about racism, challenge stereotypes, and promote inclusivity. Let young people speak and make the work against racism relatable for rangatahi.

Education and Curriculum Changes: Develop online resources that provide information on the history of racism, its impacts, and ways to combat it, making education accessible to all. Modify curricula to include diversity education from an early age.

Teacher Training and Addressing Racism in Schools: Implement comprehensive training programmes for teachers that address issues of racism and cultural sensitivity. Encourage teachers to address and, when necessary, take appropriate actions against racism within the school environment.

Create a cultural diversity facilitator role in schools to actively promote diversity.

Community Engagement and Cultural Exchanges: Foster a sense of belonging and community by encouraging participation in local initiatives and events. Promote diverse representation and voices within communities. Facilitate more cultural exchanges and opportunities between Kura and English-speaking schools to promote cross-cultural understanding.

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS AND STEREOTYPES

Teaching Love and Kindness: Integrate lessons on love, kindness, and the importance of speaking up for oneself and others, especially in times of adversity. Encourage rangatahi to trust their instincts and understand that if they must think twice, it is likely not okay.

Acknowledging Uncomfortable History: Educate about the uncomfortable history of Aotearoa, using the past to look forward and promote understanding. Equip leaders to go beyond superficial cultural celebrations and food festivals for community outreach.

Media Representation and Stereotypes: Challenge media representations that often portray minority cultures through a victim or deficit lens. Promote media that provides a balanced and authentic portrayal of diverse cultures.

CONCLUSION

Eradicating racism is a complex and long-term endeavour, but by combining values such as kindness, respect, and understanding with practical actions, we can make significant strides toward a more inclusive and equitable society. This comprehensive strategy highlights the power of genuine friendship, self-awareness, and unity in the work against racism. It emphasizes the importance of starting the journey to eradicate racism at home, fostering engagement with young people and conversations with elders, and creating a future where race unity is celebrated and racism is dismantled, one action at a time.

