The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond
Principles of Anti-Racist Organizing™
To Build a Movement for Social Justice and Equity

Undo Racism – We understand racism as a dehumanizing ideology that is the single most critical barrier to building effective coalitions for social change. Racism has been consciously and systematically constructed. It can be undone as people understand what it is, where it comes from, how it functions and why it is perpetuated.

Understand, Share and Celebrate Culture – We recognize culture as a way of life - the life support system of a community. When people understand, respect and nurture their culture, they get a sense of their own power. In the United States the dominant culture has been dehumanized by racism. Understanding this dominant culture is the first step toward transforming it into a humane culture.

Learn from History – We believe that history is a tool for effective organizing. History teaches that all institutions in the U.S. have roots that can be traced back or linked to periods of genocidal enslavement or separate-but-equal policies that have created inequities in wealth, access to and control of those institutions. As individuals and organizations research our history, we are able to use anti-racist principles to create a more just and equitable future.

Analyze Manifestations of Racism – We identify manifestations of racism in individuals, institutions, culture, language and in our relationship to our environment. These forms of racism are interrelated. For example, individual racism is nurtured by the dominant culture and backed up by institutions. Racism manifested as militarism is enforced by police at home and armies abroad. In order to dismantle racism we must analyze the power of its interlocking manifestations.

Network – We recognize that the growth of a movement for social transformation requires networking – “building a net that works.” Networking means building principled relationships based on humane values. These relationships, in turn, allow us to create alliances across issues and ideologies that otherwise tend to divide us. As the movement develops strong networks, people are less likely to fall through.

Undo Internalized Racial Oppression – We understand that Internalized Racial Oppression manifests itself both as Internalized Racial In inferiority and as Internalized Racial Superiority. It leads individuals, institutions and whole systems to accept and act out definitions of individuals and groups that are rooted in a racial construct that designates one or more “races” as inferior and others as superior. Over many generations, internalized racial inferiority expresses itself in such self-defeating behaviors as self-blame, rage, colorism, ethnocentrism, denial, etc. The process of internalized racial superiority, over generations, gives those designated as a “superior race” unearned privileges and unacknowledged power and often makes their racial advantages invisible to them. Naming and analyzing Internalized Racial Oppression are first steps in overcoming its debilitating effects.

Develop Leadership – We believe that anti-racist organizers need to be intentionally and systematically developed within local communities and organizations. We especially encourage and mentor young people and grassroots leaders to find their voice and assume their rightful roles as anti-racist organizers.

Maintain Accountability – We have learned that to organize with integrity requires that we be accountable to those communities that struggle with racism. Individuals and institutions that serve, work on behalf of, and obtain resources in the name of those communities must respect and follow their collective leadership.

Reshape Gatekeeping – We recognize that persons who work in institutions often function as gatekeepers who ensure that the institution perpetuates itself. Gatekeepers who operate with anti-racist values and who maintain an accountable relationship with the community can help to generate institutional transformation rather than perpetuate an unjust status quo.

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