

# Educating Children and Youth Against Racism

**R**acism and racist practices exist in every corner of the world. Racist activities run the gamut from offensive speech to the exclusion of victimized groups and individuals from adequate employment, housing, and other services, to violence, including beatings and killings. No racial or ethnic group is safe.

Perhaps no place is better to focus antiracism efforts on than education. Racism, after all, is only as strong as its proponents and practitioners, and educating the next generations is surely one of the most effective ways to reduce the number of racists and the potential appeal of their message.

The first section describes the scope of racist activities worldwide, with emphasis on how they affect young people. The second and principal section describes a variety of formal antiracism practices in schools around the Asia-Pacific region. Some involve national or local governments; others are private efforts by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other groups. Most involve teacher training and curricular activities; some include more, including bringing students of diverse backgrounds together informally but within the school context. These are only a few noteworthy examples of formal antiracism school practices in the region: this report makes no attempt to be exhaustive or scientifically representative. While it attempts to describe these efforts clearly and fairly, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is not in a position to endorse any of them.

The third section describes a handful of Internet websites designed to convey anti-racism information to children and youth. While these websites represent only a small fraction of informal antiracism educational efforts, they are of particular interest here, both be-

cause of the rise of racist activities on the Internet and because of their potential for reaching millions of young people all over the world.

The fourth and shortest section acknowledges the wide range of informal educational and other activities of youth groups against racism. While these activities are increasing, this report's scope does not include the detail they deserve and it remains for another report to carry out that task.

All the efforts mentioned here are intended to arm children with information to resist and debunk racism and its myths, and to inculcate in children knowledge about, respect for, and tolerance of differences between people to ensure that the children will not become racists themselves and that they will not ignore racism in others.

“Racism” has various definitions, some narrower than others. This report employs the inclusive approach adopted in Article 1.1 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), according to which racial discrimination is

any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race or colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and funda-

mental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.

This report uses “youth” to mean those 16–25 years old. This report covers efforts directed to school-aged children (5–15).

### **Racism Around the World**

The OHCHR and numerous others have documented the rise of racism and racist activities around the world.<sup>1</sup> This report does not exhaustively survey such activities but provides examples from all over the world to show that racism exists everywhere, and that it is an ongoing and serious problem.

As the Special Rapporteur noted, the current worldwide immigration crisis has made way for a new wave of racist sentiment and activities. The worldwide organization of the movement of goods and services has resulted in “problems in regulating migratory flows from the poorest regions to the most prosperous... All over the world, immigrants have become easy scapegoats and sacrificial victims of the economic crisis” (A/51/301). Activities against immigrants have increased, almost always amounting to racism, all over the world.

A relatively new phenomenon is the use of the Internet to spread racist propaganda.<sup>2</sup> Starting with a single racist website in 1995, hundreds (some have estimated thousands) of racist websites have proliferated. They reside on servers, typically in countries that protect racist speech under their freedom of expression laws, and are easily reached by computer users of all ages. Internet-based racism knows no borders.

The sites vary in complexity and sophistication, but they are no doubt effective, with sophisticated graphics and music. Stormfront, for example, advertises itself as a haven for “white pride” and allows other racists to post materials on its site. Anti-Semitic and Holocaust-denying sites have taken up the invitation. Other sites

specialize in the vilification of Arabs generally and Palestinians in particular. Others sell racist materials, including Nazi memorabilia.

All these racist activities affect children and youth, sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly. Many experience racism directed at them: in schools, where they may be ridiculed by bullies or teachers, or read textbooks that denigrate their people and culture; on playgrounds, where they may be excluded from activities and sports and ridiculed; on public transportation and on the streets. They witness mistreatment of their parents and other relatives; they live in relative poverty; the mass media portray their group and culture as violence-prone and dangerous; political leaders decry the increase in immigration of people from the children’s country of origin. Increasingly, children are being introduced to and are becoming adept at navigating the Internet. Despite the filtering tools that prevent access to objectionable web materials, children and youth are increasingly coming across racist materials on the Internet, and are sometimes persuaded to join racist groups or to commit acts of violence against certain groups of people.

There is, however, good news. All manner of people, in all corners of the world are making educational efforts, formal and informal, to combat racism. Educators—teachers, administrators, college professors, and other education professionals, sometimes (but not often enough) in collaboration with representatives of local and/or national governments—are working to create not only general human rights educational materials but also specifically antiracist materials for the basic curriculums.<sup>3</sup> Teacher training programs are being developed around the world designed on teaching students about and to resist racism, but also to recognize their own personal biases and stereotypes.

Less formal efforts abound as well. Websites have been developed, often in direct response to online racism, specifically to provide children and youth with information about racism and how to combat it.

## Formal Educational Efforts

### Dowa Education in Japan

The *Buraku* of Japan have historically been victims of discrimination although they are not at all distinguishable from other Japanese in appearance, language, or religion. Although the caste system was formally abolished in 1871, discrimination against the Buraku persists to this day, particularly in employment and marriage. In 1993, a government survey showed that there were over 4,000 Buraku districts with a total population of nearly 900,000.

However, the situation has improved. Until the early 1970s, enrollment of Buraku youth in upper secondary education had been less than half the national average. Now, Buraku children attend school at nearly the same rate as other children up to secondary education.<sup>4</sup>

In 1969 the government enacted the Law on Special Measures, which instituted Dowa education to help eliminate discrimination against Buraku children.<sup>5</sup> This law paved the way for the adoption of local measures, in part in response to pressure from the Buraku liberation movement and other human rights-related social movements.

Dowa education principles already existed when the law was enacted. The National Federation of Dowa Educators Associations (Federation) was founded in 1953. By 1955 it was holding annual national assemblies attended by 20,000–30,000 education personnel from around the country and had recognized the need for ethnographic work in Dowa districts to better understand their culture and history and to assess the degree of discrimination, and the need to encourage Buraku students to develop their self-esteem by writing about their lives and by learning about antidiscrimination movements.

The Federation further developed the concept of Dowa education, emphasizing that education should be undertaken jointly by children, teachers, parents, and the community,

and that teachers should be familiar with the culture, history, and life of the Buraku communities. The Federation supported the development of textbooks that were more accurate and informative about the history of the Buraku. The Federation encouraged the explicit acknowledgment of Buraku discrimination, including its evolution and how it has persisted. Finally, the Federation envisaged developing awareness and sensitivity among children and youth to make them agents of change.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for implementing the Law on Special Measures and issued “Dowa Education Materials in Schools: To promote Dowa education and guidance on discriminatory incidents” in 1994. The guideline emphasizes that Dowa education should be imported in all school activities and that schools must reassess their objectives to eradicate discrimination against Buraku and other minorities.

The efforts of the Federation, Buraku liberation movement, and other groups, and the effects of the Law on Special Measures have greatly promoted Dowa education. In the western part of the country, where most of the Buraku districts are, Dowa education is compulsory in university training of teachers although not mandated by law. A large number of teachers have thus been trained in Dowa education and many meet regularly to discuss how to improve Dowa education training.

Most government-issued textbooks have been revised to some degree to include some information about Buraku discrimination. However, Osaka, which has a large Buraku population, has formally adopted an entirely new textbook, *Human Beings*, which has much more information about the Buraku, including their history and culture, and the degree of discrimination, not only against Buraku but also against resident Koreans, women, the disabled, and indigenous people.

The Dowa curriculum varies greatly from district to district and even school to school. Some schools devote considerable time weekly

to topics about Buraku, interweaving them into different school subjects. Even in schools that do not devote such resources and time to these issues have at least one Dowa education course every trimester for the entirety of compulsory education.

Parents are encouraged to participate in the educational process. Parent-teacher associations exist throughout the Buraku districts and give training courses in Dowa education. Trainers include parents, researchers, and various outreach workers. Buraku students are also encouraged to continue their education informally after school.

The Dowa education movement has greatly helped combat discrimination against the Buraku and others in Japan by instituting new human rights education and antidiscrimination guidelines, teacher training methods, textbooks, and curricular materials.

#### Peace Education in Jordan

In 1993 the Global Education Initiative began educational reform in a number of Arab countries, including Jordan, Lebanon, Algeria, Oman, Syria, and the West Bank. The program was a joint effort of United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Middle East and North Africa regional office and ministers of education of various Arab countries, with technical assistance from the International Institute of Global Education at the University of Toronto, Canada, and funding from UNICEF. The Global Education Initiative has recently been adopted in the UNICEF countries of Eastern Europe, with projects in Albania and Armenia.

Global education envisages educating youth to become "world-minded"—to think in terms of an interdependent world where nations form a part of a whole and whose interests must be taken into account. Students must interact with each other, learn about each other, and encounter and come to understand and appreciate diverse viewpoints as well as personal and cultural differences.

Educational content is typically delivered through existing subjects, using explicitly antiracist materials. For example, in language arts, students are taught to be aware of personal attitudes, beliefs, perspectives, and values, and asked to analyze textbooks and library books for stereotyping and bias. In social studies, students are taught peer and group mediation techniques to deal with school conflicts and to be aware of their own prejudices and to challenge racism and other forms of prejudice and discrimination.

In Jordan the initiative gradually introduced global education materials and methods into the educational system. Jordan's program began with a three-day orientation in May 1993, and over the next six months the core team looked at existing curriculums, modifying some to reflect global education themes and developing activities. All materials were drafted in English and Arabic and sent out to consultants for review and revision. At the end of this phase, 48 different activities had been developed, including 13 in social studies, many of which focused on antiracism and mutual respect.

In the second phase, 16 pilot teachers (8 women and 8 men) were trained for six days. Activities included a two-day workshop on the philosophy and practice of global education, and a three-day training session on integrating the developed activities into the curriculum.

A national core team for global education was then created. It was attached to the Centre for Training and Certification at the Ministry of Education, with a mandate to develop new materials for grades 5 and 6, in the same topics as before and also for Arabic language studies. Materials development was guided by a number of criteria, including the need to allow students to interact openly and freely with each other in small groups, and the need to relate content to real-life situations, including conflict and bias.

The Ministry of Education produced a booklet for public distribution to explain global

education and a promotional video on global education practice in the nation's schools.

Global education made a similar journey into schools in Lebanon and Syria. In Lebanon, government involvement was considerable in the form of representatives on the core team from the National Centre for Educational Research and Development, Ministry of Education. In Syria, the deputy minister of education has been personally involved in steering the Global Education Project, and senior curriculum advisors have helped develop project materials.

The Lebanese minister of education, in remarks before the First Regional Conference on Global Education in 1995, described the impact of global education:

Global education aims at going beyond the self-oriented perspective in looking at things to attempt to see them from the point of view of others. Most of the misfortunes in the world are the result of misconceptions and adhering to such misconceptions as if they were indisputable facts that could be forced on others. The world can only be set right by eradicating these misconceptions and prejudices, which are the basis of oppression, violence and injustice, and of discrimination based on race, class, and religion. If our perspective is straightforward and unbiased, this will enable us to understand the other and to recognize his rights and to cooperate with him in a framework of mutual respect.

### Racism. No Way! in Australia

Racism. No Way! is a national effort to document, analyze, and combat racism in schools. The project came into existence in 2000, as a result of efforts on various fronts, including government and nongovernment studies in the early 1990s on racism and its impact on Australian society. These studies documented racist activities, including violence in schools and elsewhere, particularly against indigenous Aus-

tralian and others from non-English-language backgrounds.

In response to these reports, and in the context of the International Year for Tolerance in 1995, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs—consisting of ministers of education from the various states, territories, and the Commonwealth comprising the Australian federation—concluded that the country needed a national antiracism education project. The council established a task force, consisting of representatives from education systems, parent organizations, and union representatives, to create a database of policies and resources on racism and how to combat it in the schools.

Two years later, chief education officers across Australia created a second task force, subsuming the first one, to establish a national antiracism education agenda. Racism No Way! grew directly out of the efforts of this task force, and is funded jointly by state education systems, the New South Wales Catholic Education Commission, and the federal departments of immigration and multicultural affairs, and education, training and youth affairs, among others.

The project recognizes three preconditions for effective antiracism education:

- Action must occur at all applicable levels—the system, the school, and the individual.
- Antiracism strategies must go through a cycle of planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- Implementation must occur throughout the gamut of educational institutions and activities: it must be part of policies and guidelines, curriculum and pedagogy, teacher training and staff development; parents and communities must be involved in implementation; and efforts must be continually monitored and reported.

The project has thus adopted the following goals: defining racism in education, develop-

ing an understanding of Australia's history and cultural diversity, documenting racism in schools, developing strategies to recognize and deal with racism in schools, and monitoring and evaluating antiracism efforts in schools. The project has developed various resources such as a guide for all schools, which sets out principles for effective antiracism education, describing the nature of racism, how it is manifested in educational institutions, and practical antiracism strategies.

Another resource is a special edition newsletter, which highlights effective antiracism initiatives and practices from schools around the country and contains articles and news stories from each state and territory.

The most ambitious and farreaching of the project's resources, however, is [www.racismnoway.com.au](http://www.racismnoway.com.au). It contains electronic versions of all the project's print documents, and several sections for specific audiences, such as a games room for students, with games, comics, crosswords, quizzes, competitions, and a graffiti wall, all with antiracism themes and information. Another section is a library containing reference material, including information on understanding and recognizing racism, dates and details regarding Australia's development as a culturally diverse nation, relevant national and international legislation, and an annotated bibliography. Another contains lesson ideas and fact sheets for teachers' use. Teachers are encouraged to submit their own teaching ideas and suggestions in a moderated teachers' forum within the section. Other sections are a news section, containing information on recent antiracism initiatives of note. Schools are encouraged to submit information about their own activities.

Perhaps the greatest significance of this project is its national scope and mandate. While Australia's school system is principally a state-by-state enterprise, an overarching countrywide initiative provides a unifying imprimatur to the message that racism in schools or anywhere else is not tolerated and is being combated.

#### Clover Park Middle School, New Zealand

Clover Park Middle School is in Otaru, South Auckland, has a governmental socioeconomic rating of 1, the lowest of 10 levels. While originally for students in years 7 and 8 only (around 12–13 years old), the school was formally expanded in 1995 to official middle-school status, serving students in years 7 through 10, aged 12–15.

Clover Park has about 390 students. Of these, 36% are Maori, 35% Samoan, 16% Cook Islanders, 9% Tongan, and the remainder from some smaller Pacific Island groups; 10 students are from Asian backgrounds, and 2 are white.

Thus, virtually all of the students from the school—and this has been true for many years—are from minority groups, with highly developed cultures of their own, often speaking languages other than English. Each cultural group has faced racism in their community, and children from these groups have faced the challenges of studying in English.

Clover Park has responded to the challenge of respecting and securing the cultural identities of its students, of strengthening them against the threats of racism, and of assuring mutual respect between them, by instituting a comprehensive cultural and cross-cultural schooling program. Its principal goals are to empower students, make them autonomous, and engender in them self-respect and respect for others different from them.

Students at the school are grouped ethnically: the Maori and Samoan groups—both in bilingual programs; and two other groups, while ethnically mixed, each composed mainly of Cook Island and Tongan students. The latter programs are not bilingual, although fluent speakers of the native languages of participating students are employed by the school to assist as needed. Students enter a group at the beginning of the 7th grade and stay with that group throughout their time at the school. Teachers also stay with the same group over many years.

The students, along with their parents, choose their group. In some cases, for example, Maori students and their parents have decided that they prefer the students to be with a mixed group.

The principal concepts underlying schooling at Clover Park are described, focusing the Maori bilingual program, but the description would be the same for the other programs.

The Maori program is based on the Maori's self-conception of kinship, including family obligations and the extended family. For example, Maori families are not separated into subgroups based on age or gender. Similarly, students are taught in multi-age groups, and older students are expected to work with younger ones, formally and informally. The curriculum is designed to elicit questions from the students about themselves, their communities and cultures, their country, and the place of the Maori within the country's history, political organization, and culture. The focus on the group's culture is intended to infuse cultural issues and content into all aspects of the curriculum. Teachers are expected to develop these ideas while meeting the requirements of the national curriculum.

Most teachers are from the culture of the group: thus, whenever possible, Maori teachers teach the Maori group, Samoans teach the Samoan group, and so on. Teachers must permit students to read and to speak and write in their heritage language if they so wish, or in English if they prefer. If, as can often happen, teachers from the culture are not available, the school employs its own funds to hire teaching assistants from within the culture who are fluent in the native language. These assistants work in the program under teacher supervision.

Parents are updated regularly on their children's progress, and the school's program in general through newsletters and parental support groups. Recently, the school convened student-run conferences in which the students describe how and what they have been learning.

The attempt to infuse the students' culture into the learning process extends beyond the classroom. For example, for the past few years, the school has employed a full-time Maori social worker who, among other things, helps families of Maori students. The school also allocates funds to assure that it fulfills certain obligations recognized by the culture, such as the provision of food for visitors and gifts and donations for various cultural-based reasons. In 1998, the school opened a formal Maori *marae*, or meeting place, such as would be found in a traditional Maori community. Visiting groups are hosted in the marae, and the Maori group sometimes spends days at a time there instead of in the classrooms, in workshops, preparing food, spending time with their parents, and so on.

Finally, while the groups in the school function separately and independently on most days, they spend significant amounts of time in cross-cultural studies, learning about and from each other. For example, in social studies, students in the Samoan group study certain ceremonies such as funeral practices of other cultures and compare them with their own.

#### Israel and Palestine: The Israel/Palestine Centre for Research and Information

The Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRI) is a Palestinian/Israeli NGO, founded in 1988, which does various kinds of work to develop peace and mutual understanding between Israelis and Palestinians. The Education for Peace Project, for example, now in its fifth year, encourages tolerance and mutual respect between youth who are members of groups that have been engaged in serious conflict for decades.

The project began in 1996, when IPCRI approached the education ministries in Palestine and Israel and obtained approval to contact individual schools under their jurisdictions, and to carry out the project's program in schools that were willing to comply with cer-

tain conditions. In school year 1999–2000, 32 schools in Israel and Palestine adopted the program for their 10th grade students. This year, 45 schools—22 in Palestine, including some government schools (representing about 25% of all Palestinian high-school students), and 23 in Israel—participate in the project.

To participate, a school must agree to various conditions. A minimum of three teachers must commit to the program and undergo a minimum of 10 hours of training. The curriculum must be offered for a minimum of two hours per week. Classes must be divided in two for all project activities to facilitate work in small groups. At least one of the classes must be of the 10th grade. The school must commit the class to participate in a two-day intensive encounter at some point during the program. The school must pay for any extra costs incurred to operate the program.

Students study for 48 hours, and teachers train for more than 150 hours, including follow-up supervision in classrooms. Over 300 teachers have been trained. The goal is to continue to develop teacher training and curricular materials, to be formally adopted by the education ministries of the two countries for mandated distribution in all schools.

Teacher training involves uninational workshops where teachers are taught how to teach the basic curriculum. Two workshops are held over five days, focusing on the concept of diversity of narratives. The workshops are intended to aid teachers in learning about their own attitudes regarding the “other side,” and about tolerance, mutual respect, and the creation of peace.

The curriculum, being developed in collaboration with education ministries in both countries, exists in two versions—Israeli and Palestinian—which are adapted to the different school systems as well as to the differing cultural and political contexts. However, both versions are committed to certain underlying themes, including equality, tolerance, and mutual respect.

The curriculum is taught through various subjects, rather than in a single block. In Israel, it is taught mainly through history, sociology, and literature, while in Palestine it is taught through social sciences and English. All parts of the curriculum are interactive, with focus on cognition, emotion, and conflict resolution.

Student encounters bring together Israeli and Palestinian students to “provide an opportunity for Palestinians and Israelis to meet the ‘other’ and to challenge their assumptions.” At the personal level, students exchange names, family histories, information about their birthplaces, and so on. At the cultural level, information about relations between boys and girls and between children and parents, customs in the respective cultures, and culture-related values is shared. At the political level, students are encouraged to develop different narratives of the conflict.

A preliminary evaluation of the encounters, commissioned by IPCRI, has been completed. The executive summary states that the vast majority of participants (about 80%) said they were very eager to participate. Most said that before the encounters their impressions of the other side were quite negative and highly stereotypical and based mainly on violent television images and on stressful encounters with authorities from the other side. Most participants, however, indicated that the encounters had broken down these stereotypes. For example, most participants said that they came to see their counterparts as more friendly, tolerant, considerate, and open to change than they had believed them to be before the encounter.

Finally, an extension of the project currently under development is worth noting. The Virtual Meeting Ground Project will allow students, before actual encounters, to meet over the Internet in a neutral educational setting. Each class participating in the project, with help from IPCRI, will prepare its own web page, with information about the class and its students and teachers, as well as other relevant



materials. Discussion forums will be added to each page as topics suggested by students (again, with appropriate supervision). Links to other relevant and useful information will also be added to the pages.

#### iEARN: School-Based Education Using the Internet

The work of International Education and Resource Network (iEARN) is school-based, within the structures of formal curriculum development and implementation.

iEARN was founded in 1988 to enable students, as part of the classroom curriculum, to interact with each other over the Internet to discuss issues, including racism, intolerance, conflict, and cultural insensitivity. Now, iEARN is an international network: over 5,000 schools in 95 countries are enabling their teachers and students to engage in collaborative project-based learning. This year, around 500,000 students interact daily on iEARN projects.

Many iEARN projects directly educate students against racism. For example, the Balkan Voices project, for 2000–2001, brought together students and teachers from 10 schools in each of nine countries in the Balkans. Three classes from each school were involved and about 13,500 students participated. The purpose of the project was to enable students and teachers to reestablish relationships based on mutual respect and tolerance, and to resist and combat racist elements where they live, by facilitating online work, including the development of curricular materials in cultural history.

The CIVICS Project, involving 20 schools and 24,000 students, links schools in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon, to enable students to interact on issues of religious and other tolerance, South Asian conflict, and Middle Eastern developments. Online methodologies to integrate conflict resolution and regional issues into curriculums are being developed.

Finally, Racing Against Racism was initiated by teachers and students in Australia in 1996.

The project explores the root causes of racial stereotyping by having students study their images of persons of different ethnic, racial, and national backgrounds. The project has received grants from the Australian Department of Education and the Asia Education Foundation.

iEARN has national coordinators throughout the world. They recruit schools and promote and publicize iEARN through the local mass media, encouraging many schools seek iEARN membership.

A school that joins iEARN must enable teachers to participate in online projects as part of their regular classroom duty. Schools must also enable considerable online interaction between their students and others outside their school. This commitment depends principally on the state of computer resources and computer literacy in the schools.

Teacher members are introduced to the range of iEARN projects to help them choose projects best suited to their pedagogical and personal needs.

Teachers receive training from the local iEARN country coordinator and his or her team. In some cases, the training is financed (in whole or in part) by the Ministry of Education or by local grants. The United States Department of State provides training in about 35 countries, emphasizing the development of local capacity so that trained teachers can train others. iEARN has developed multilingual training materials and online training courses. All iEARN projects are initiated, designed, and developed by the teachers themselves, who develop curriculum relevant to their projects. iEARN provides the tools to enable these teachers to bring their classroom lesson plans, curriculums, and so on, to a global education community.

Students engage in projects as part of their regular curricular activities, in such subjects as history, literature, world affairs, and civic responsibilities. The teacher introduces them to the goals of the project and asks them to read

essays written by students from other countries involved in the same project. If students have good access to the Internet, they access the iEARN forums. In schools with limited Internet resources, the teacher prints the essays and hands them out. The essays become the subject of class discussions, research assignments, and so on. Students write their responses to the essays, and essays of their own, which they post online. At all times, teachers monitor this online student interaction and provide needed facilitation, direction, and resources.

iEARN circulates information on all projects (including general descriptions, activities, and lesson plans) to all teachers within the network, via hardcopy (in a project description booklet) or online and by e-mail. Each project is evaluated by its participants, and the evaluations are circulated. Projects are presented in annual international conferences held in July each year (this year in Cape Town, next year in St. Petersburg).

iEARN is not solely devoted to antiracism projects but also to the environment, poverty, and child labor, to take just a few examples. Still, iEARN's antiracism work is prominent and farreaching. It combines the Internet—promising the widest possible dissemination of antiracism materials adaptable to local contexts by local teachers and students—with the formal classroom setting, where materials from everywhere can be marshaled, developed, and contextualized for local needs.

### **Informal Educational Efforts: Internet Web Sites**

There are a great many informal efforts to educate children and youth against racism, and it is beyond the scope of this report to attempt to describe them representatively, let alone fully. It must suffice here to cast our attention on one particular informal educational tool that has seen increasing use recently: the use of the Internet itself—the very medium that racists use to send out their messages worldwide—to combat racism. This tool has an undeniable

power and scope: an antiracism website created and residing in the United States (US) or the United Kingdom (UK) reaches people worldwide, and the only restriction on the accessibility is the limitation of language.

Two websites created and operated by the United Nations (UN) are perhaps worthy of mention. Cyberschoolbus, at [www.un.org/cyberschoolbus](http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus), is devoted to providing educational materials to teachers and students on human rights themes, including antiracism. A special page, “Racism 2001,” invites visitors “to learn, reflect, and take actions against racial discrimination.” It includes links to a wide range of antiracism materials, including articles, such as information on the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. Another page is devoted to the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

The curriculum section contains a page on peace education, with five units, targeting different age groups. One unit, for youth 14 years old and older, contains materials on social justice; another unit, for children and youth aged 11–16, has materials on promoting tolerance and respect for individual dignity and identity. Links are provided to related materials.

The website contains a global atlas of student action; an “interactive Declaration,” which contains a plain language version of each right contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and discussion of aspects of those rights; a quiz and game section, with resources for teachers, interactive learning tools, and animations about different cultures; and a page with UN core treaties with student-friendly versions.

A second UN website, created and operated by UNICEF, is UNICEF Voices of Youth at [www.unicef.org/voy/](http://www.unicef.org/voy/), which is a discussion forum where students and teachers can post their own opinions and read the opinions of others from around the world on a wide range of topics—some suggested by the webmaster, and by students and teachers. At the Meeting Place,

young people are invited to “speak your mind,” and to share their thoughts with others. Areas within the Meeting Place include children’s rights, and children and war. Antiracism content is evident in both areas. The website also contains the Learning Place, and Teachers’ Place, where teachers can have online discussions about human rights education.

Many private organizations also operate antiracism websites to get information to young people. The Southern Poverty Law Centre, which also creates and disseminates antiracism curricular and teacher training materials, designed [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org) for a young audience. Among many other things, the site contains news stories about racist incidents, and profiles of antiracist efforts by individuals and organizations; links to other human rights groups; stories and artwork submitted by children who have visited the site; and instruction and information for teachers and parents designed to help them guide their students and children around the website. There are also interactive sketches of some US-based hate sites: visitors are encouraged to click on highlighted areas within the sketches, and when they do, the racist materials are debunked and refuted by “truth balloons.”

Chichester University in the UK has created and operates a website for children and youth at [www.britkind.org](http://www.britkind.org). Visitors are invited to provide information about themselves, including age, race, and religion. The site introduces the visitor to other young people of about the same age, who describe their own lives and cultures, including problems with racism. The site also contains statistics and other information on the occurrence of and fight against racism; and it contains links to other public service and information sites.

Another UK site of interest is Schools Against Deportations at [www.homebeats.co.uk](http://www.homebeats.co.uk). It was created by the Institute of Race Relations, an organization that conducts research and produces educational resources about racism as it occurs in UK and internationally.

The website is designed to teach young people about the experience of fighting deportation efforts that have racist implications and overtones. The website relates in detail the efforts of students and others in four schools in Britain (three already successful and one still in progress) to resist the deportation of students who were asylum seekers—children from Tanzania, China, and Angola.

The site features such as activities by families, friends, students, and teachers; writing petitions; holding discussions, creating and displaying banners and posters; organizing letter-writing campaigns to members of parliament and other politicians, and so on. Teachers and others active in the campaigns, as well as the asylum seekers themselves, are interviewed.

The site contains more general information designed to educate children and youth about asylum seeking, including the racism surrounding it. Visitors can obtain information about the countries from which the students were seeking refuge, know why they became refugees. A discussion forum invites comments and questions from students and teachers. Another page, Media Myths, debunks racist myths about refugees and asylum seekers. Finally, the site provides other information, including links to other organizations and to further reading of interest on this topic.

The Media Awareness Network (Mnet) is a Canadian not-for-profit organization that, among other things, operates an educational website called the Web Awareness Canada site at [www.media-awareness.ca](http://www.media-awareness.ca). This site provides information and interactive activities for parents, teachers, librarians, and students (from ages 9–18) designed to help young persons learn how to use the Internet wisely and safely. The information on the site focuses on online marketing efforts directed at children, safety issues, and how to deal with offensive, including racist, content. One animated computer game that students can access at the site, for example, is specifically designed to help young persons to “detect bias and harmful stereotyping in online content.”

The World Against Racism Memorial, at [www.endracism.org](http://www.endracism.org), educates the public, particularly young people, about “the memory of those millions of persons whose lives were stolen or irrevocably scarred by racism.” The “museum” has a number of exhibits. One contains interactive questions about racism. Another has information about forms of racism. A third, particularly realistic and arresting, is “Global Racism Acts,” which describes in vivid detail episodes of racism, including the Nanking Massacre, the Irish famine, the Holocaust, and various events involving Native Americans.

Artists Against Racism is “an international non-profit organization where artists reach out as role models to youths.” At [www.ArtistsAgainstRacism.org](http://www.ArtistsAgainstRacism.org) visitors can view radio and television public service messages prepared by member artists (authors, actors, and children’s entertainers). They can also send e-cards with antiracism messages and read news stories about racist incidents and antiracism efforts. At the site’s School Help page, there are links to related organizations, quotations, community contacts, classroom exercises, a teacher’s guide, articles on education’s role against racism, and other materials. This site, it is worth noting, was developed by students at Ryerson Polytechnic University in Ontario, Canada.

Of the many websites that mainly collect links to websites with, among others, antiracism content, Crosspoint ([www.magenta.nl/crosspoint](http://www.magenta.nl/crosspoint)) is perhaps the best known, with links to over 2,000 organizations in 112 countries, categorized as well by subject matter such as indigenous peoples, Jewish resources and Shoah, human rights and refugees, Roma and Sinti Travelers, and women. The site encourages human rights groups to submit their website addresses for inclusion at Crosspoint. A search with the term youth brings up dozens of links to sites with materials for and about youth, including much antiracism material.

Finally, a US-based group including the Leadership Conference Education Fund, the

Center for the Prevention of Hate Violence, and the Anti-Defamation League has received a \$1 million grant from the US Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention; and the US Department of Education’s Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program, to develop the Partners Against Hate project. Its main goal is to increase awareness of racist crime and to disseminate information about education and countering strategies to educators, young people, community groups, and other interested persons. Most of the project will involve the development of a website, which will contain a “comprehensive clearinghouse of hate crime-related information, resources, news reports, and counteraction tools.” It will also contain training and other assistance for dealing with racist conduct.

### **And All the Rest . . .**

This report has been restricted to formal efforts in school systems to combat racism, and to one type of particularly farreaching informal educational method. But there are vastly many more efforts, both directly and indirectly educational, in every corner of the world, to combat and resist racism. Thousands of youth groups exist around the world: some are small, in a particular community or village or town; some are much larger, committed to a statewide or nationwide agenda; yet others are councils or other associations of youth groups that span regions. A great many of these groups are committed to human rights work generally, and to antiracism work in particular, of a great many sorts, from going into schools informally to share experiences of racism with students, to shutting down local Internet websites that contain racist content, to organizing antiracism rallies and campaigns, to preparing and disseminating pamphlets and other educational materials of their own, and so on.

The students in the UK schools who successfully resisted the deportation of some of

their colleagues are emblematic of a local, committed single issue and highly effective approach. By contrast are efforts that are larger in scope and more general in target, as might be typified by the work of the Rights of Children youth group in Guyana, which has just completed a campaign to obtain pledges from groups, companies, and institutions around the country that they were “race-free zones.” This nationwide effort involved 150 children from around the country, making contacts (amidst considerable positive media coverage) with potential pledgers, and lobbying their leaders to sign and display the pledge. In the end, there were more than 4,500 pledges signed, including by the country’s President and members of his Cabinet.

Still other groups, often associations of national groups, exist on the regional level, and cooperate to hold regional conferences and other events that feature antiracism themes.

This report provides the merest indication of the countless antiracism activities by youth groups. It is beyond its scope to begin to catalogue them or to represent them fully. It is enough here to acknowledge the breadth and value of such efforts, and to insist that even the full antiracism *education* story cannot be completely told until the story of the efforts of these groups is told.

## Conclusion

Antiracism work is on the increase. Networks of educators, often with government support or participation, are being formed and alliances are being established. The word is spreading that racism can be countered by providing information to children and youth to enable them to see what is wrong with it, and what is right with others who are different from them. This report has chronicled a sampling of such educational efforts, by national and local governments, unions, NGOs, and dedicated teachers, administrators, and citizens of the world. Antiracism education is becoming a recognized

necessity for young people, and there is every reason to be confident that as these, and other, efforts continue and increase in power and scope, the messages and activities of racists will fall on increasingly knowledgeable—and, therefore, deaf—young ears.

## Notes

1. See reports on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, prepared by Maurice Glele-Ahanhanzo. Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, A/50/476, A/51/301, E/CN.4/1997/71. See also the report of the HCHR on how the Internet is used to incite people to racial hatred, spread racist propaganda, and stir up xenophobia, and how to promote international cooperation to stop these activities (A/CONF.189/PC.2/12 [Prep. Report]).

2. See “Legal Instruments to Combat Racism on the Internet,” report prepared by the Swiss Institute of Comparative Law, CRI (2000) 27.

3. A vast amount of educational materials has been and is being produced on human rights generally, falling within the definition of human rights education as defined in the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education. As the High Commissioner for Human Rights has explained, human rights education “is a learning and participatory process by which we understand together our common responsibility to make human rights a reality in our lives and in our communities. Its fundamental role is to empower individuals to defend their own rights and those of others. It is education for action, not only *about* human rights but also *for* human rights” (*Human Rights Education: A Shared Responsibility Within and Beyond the UN Decade for Human Rights Education (1995–2004): A Message from the High Commissioner* [1–2 December 2000]).

As the High Commissioner’s remarks indicate, human rights education covers a large area, involving all aspects of human rights. This report, however, focuses on just one area within the general coverage of, and that is the teaching of antiracism, directly and indirectly (by promotion of mutual respect, understanding, and so on).

4. However, many Buraku youth still drop out of high school, and the rate of advance to college and university among the Buraku is about half the national average.

5. The concept of Dowa education was conceived by

the government in the 1940s to stop discrimination against Buraku in the military. “Dowa” became the official term after the World War II to refer to government policy and measures on Buraku issues.