



Education and **Anti-racism**



Education can promote positive social change and equality.

Quality and inclusive education can be a powerful tool to end inequality and promote an antiracist society; however, education can also replicate inequality and racism. Supporting equitable, quality educational opportunities is the key to promote racial justice and equality.

Key challenges



- **Education can only be a solution for antiracism when it is coupled with other practices, policies and redistributions of inequitable investments.** A recent study in the US shows that school districts with a majority of students of colour receive US\$23 billion less than predominately white school districts, despite serving the same number of students (EdBuild, 2016).
- **Current education budget cuts due to Covid-19 could negatively impact racial and ethnic minorities.** Given the economic damage, state budgets are already stressed. Cuts to primary and secondary education are likely to hit low-income and racial- and ethnic-minority students disproportionately, which could further widen the achievement gap (McKinsey & Company, 2020).

- **Current responses to distance learning are perpetuating inequalities.** In the US, engagement rates are lagging behind in schools serving predominantly black and Hispanic students; just 60 to 70% are logging in regularly ([McKinsey & Company, 2020](#)).
- **Education attendance and attainment correlate with race.** According to the 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report, although there have been advances towards increasing access in recent decades, there is still enduring racial inequality in educational attendance and attainment in Latin American countries. For example, in Uruguay and Peru, attendance rates are lower for Afro-descendants aged 12-17 and they are less likely to complete secondary school ([ECLAC, 2019](#)).

Make the case



- **Higher levels of education are associated with lower levels of racial intolerance.** In Latin America, people with secondary education are 47% less likely to express racial intolerance compared with those who only have primary education ([UNICEF, 2015](#)).
- **There are pedagogies that promote antiracism.** Experiential learning methods, such as Intergroup Dialogue, are particularly effective at reducing colour-blind attitudes, helping students understand the structural nature of inequality, and building intergroup empathy and collaboration ([Zuniga et al., 2007](#)).
- **Training and recruiting teachers who reflect the diversity of students can help promote learning.** Studies show that when teachers' ethnicity reflects that of the student body, there are improved learning outcomes, higher expectations and fewer disciplinary actions ([Economics of Education Review, 2015](#)).
- **Black Studies courses benefit black students, even in predominantly white institutions.** Data revealed several benefits, including psychological empowerment, self-determination, counterspaces, and community perpetuity ([Chapham-Hilliard & Beasley, 2018](#)).

- **Helping schools to implement education policies that support racially integrated schools has many social benefits.** Such schools have been found to promote greater social cohesion and cross-race relationships ([Eaton & Chirichigno, 2011](#)).
- **Addressing implicit bias can improve student outcomes and allow students to reach their full potential.** Reflective teaching, fair discipline policies based on data and use of external feedback are some strategies schools can use to reduce implicit bias ([Staats, 2015-16](#)).

Key infographic



In the US, school districts with a majority of students of colour receive US\$23 billion less than predominately white school districts, despite serving the same number of students

Key talking points



- Education has the power to promote a more equal and just society.
- Current threats to education systems including budget cuts stand to impact racial and ethnic minorities the most.
- When anti-racist pedagogies are coupled with other education policies, including redistributions of inequitable spending, education can be a force for positive change.

- **Several strategies, including intergroup dialogue pedagogies, supporting and training teachers who reflect the diversity of the student population, and addressing implicit bias, can improve social cohesion and learning outcomes.**