Initiative for Institutional Anti-Racism and Accountability

"Anti-racism is the active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared equitably" (NAC International Perspectives: Women and Global Solidarity).[1]

The Initiative for Institutional Anti-racism and Accountability (IARA) is a newly formed initiative at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government's Shorenstein Center. The goal of IARA is to use research and policy to help institutions adopt anti-racism as a core value and norm throughout the US and globe.

While diversity and inclusion work is an important step in the process of building equitable institutional practices, anti-racist change encompasses equitable shifts at every level of an institution in conjunction with the adoption of new norms, values, and practices.[2]

Implicit bias training, for example, helps uncover the problem of racial prejudice and racist stereotypes among individuals but does not resolve the question of how to change institutional policies and practices rooted in racial exclusion and organizational cultures narrowly defined by the lived experiences of white people. Individual awareness of bias is one thing; institutional transformation based on that training is something else.

IARA works at the intersection of community programs, academia, and policy to address intellectual and practical questions related to anti-racist institutional change. The objective of IARA is to promote anti-racism as a core value for organizations by critically evaluating structures and policies within institutions.

The initiative aims to examine the current field of anti-racist practice through the lens of research. Through participatory action research, dialogue, and community involvement, we seek to understand the landscape of organizational racial justice work, and answer the following questions:

- What organizations and individuals provide anti-racist training and capacity building? What is their underlying approach and pedagogy, and how do they assess their impact?
- Who are the organizations – both public and private – taking on equitable institutional change?
- In addition, what industry level norms are appropriate for assessing the efficacy of anti-racist transformation?

Our work focuses on researching existing organizations that conduct anti-racism training and development while analyzing their effectiveness and promoting best practices in the field. Additionally, we study the implementation of anti-racism work among institutions that have taken on organizational change processes, and we promote our findings to help organizations create accountability structures so they might better achieve their goals. Lessons learned are applicable and useful for further organizations who choose to undertake anti-racist institutional change.

We see great potential in the creation of research, platforms and convening's that unite practices from the field of anti-racist pedagogy, uniting scholars, practitioners and organizational leaders and employees. Our vision is to be a leader in organizational anti-racism research, policy, and advocacy, and propose change in institutions and media in the public, private, non-profit, and digital sectors.

RECENT EVENTS

Striving to Build an Anti-Racist Education Community
Shorenstein Center Speaker Series Event with Jeff Ginsberg, Executive Director of the East Harlem Tutorial Program, in conversation with Prof. Khalil Gibran Muhammad

Caste Matters
Shorenstein Center Speaker Series Event with Suraj Yengde, Post-Doctoral Fellow with the IARA program, in conversation with Prof. Khalil Gibran Muhammad

The Politics of Difference: Race, Technology, and Inclusion
JFK Jr. Forum Panel Event at Harvard Kennedy School with Prof. Khalil Gibran Muhammad, Prof. Ruha Benjamin (Princeton), Latoya Peterson, and Dr. Joan Donovan

Truth and Transformation Conference: The First Step Towards Institutional Change
IARA annual conference on the experiences of anti-racism and institutional change practices

Racecraft. Castecraft. A Transnational Weapon to Criminalize and Dehumanize African American, Dalit, and Romani People
Panel discussion with Cornel West, Magda Matache, Suraj Yengde, and Prof. Khalil Gibran Muhammad

Undesign the Redline
Interactive exhibit created by Designing the WE, on historical and contemporary institutional racism and spatial inequities. Co-sponsored with the Wiener Center for Social Policy

White Fragility
Lecture by Robin DiAngelo, author of *White Fragility*, at Harvard Kennedy School, co-sponsored with the Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative

How to Be an Antiracist
Harvard Kennedy School bookclub discussion with students, faculty and staff on Ibram X. Kendi's new book *How to Be an Antiracist*

TEAM

Professor Khalil Gibran Muhammad
Faculty Director
Professor of History, Race, and Pubic Policy at Harvard Kennedy School
Suzanne Young Murray Professor at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Studies
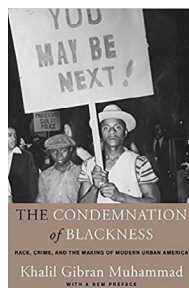
Suraj Yengde, PhD
Research Fellow
Post-Doctoral Fellow, Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy

Erica Licht, MSc
Research Assistant
MPA Student, Harvard Kennedy School

Miriam Aschkenasy, MD, MPH, MPA
Program Manager

PUBLICATIONS

Caste Matters
Bestseller
Suraj Yengde, Penguin India, July 2019

The Barbaric History of Sugar in America
Khalil Gibran Muhammad in *The New York Times'* 1619 Project, August 2019

Why Police Accountability Remains Out of Reach
Khalil Gibran Muhammad in *The Washington Post*, July 2019

The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America
2nd Edition
Khalil Gibran Muhammad, Harvard University Press, 2nd edition, July 2019