Advancing Racial Equity

Racial equity is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. Advancing racial equity requires a systemic, structural approach, addressing root causes of inequities, not just their manifestations. Advancing racial equity means eliminating policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them[1], along with the proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all.[2] To advance racial equity, we must better understand how historical legacies, individuals, structures, and institutions work interactively to distribute material and symbolic advantages and disadvantages along racial lines.[3]

How we 'see' racism matters. The word "racism" is commonly understood to refer to instances in which one individual intentionally targets others for negative treatment because of their perceived racial identity. This individualistic conceptualization is too limited. Racialized outcomes do not require racist actors;[3] we must focus on outcomes.

Narrow View of Racism Racism is ONLY…	Comprehensive View of Racism Racism is OFTEN…
Individual bias	**I**nstitutional inequity
Intentional acts	**I**mpacts of actions
Isolated incidents	**I**nfused throughout society
Immediate and obvious	**I**nvisible and insidious
In the past	**I**n the present

Applied Research Center, 2009[5]

Racism is the systematic oppression of American Indians, African Americans, and persons of Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern and African descent, along with other people classified or identified as other than white. Racism operates at interacting and reinforcing, individual, internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and cultural levels. It may be overt or covert, intentional or unintentional.[3] Ongoing racism and the legacies of historical oppression distribute power, opportunity and advantage along racial lines.

Structural racism normalizes and legitimizes an array of dynamics – historical, cultural, institutional and interpersonal – that routinely advantage white people while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for American Indians, African Americans, and persons of Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern and African descent, along with other people classified or identified as other than white. Structural racism is difficult to locate in a particular institution because it involves the reinforcing effects of multiple institutions and cultural norms, past and present. Structural racism is the most profound and pervasive form of racism – all other forms of racism emerge from structural racism.[4]

Institutional racism: The ways in which policies, practices and systems of organizations or institutions contribute to different outcomes for different racial groups. Policies may never mention any racial group, but still create, maintain or fail to remedy accumulated advantages for white people and accumulated disadvantages for people from other racial groups.[3]

Personal Racism: Individual attitudes regarding the inferiority of one racial group and the superiority of another that have been learned or internalized. These attitudes may be conscious or unconscious.[3]

Interpersonal Racism: Actions that perpetuate inequities on the basis of race. Such behaviors may be intentional or unintentional; unintentional acts may be racist in their consequence.[3]

Internalized Racism: The personal conscious or subconscious acceptance of the dominant society's racist views, stereotypes and biases of one's racial group.[3]

Interpersonal Racism: Actions that perpetuate inequities on the basis of race. Such behaviors may be intentional or unintentional; unintentional acts may be racist in their consequence.[3]

Cultural Racism: The individual and institutional expression of the superiority of one race's cultural heritage, values, styles of communication, linguistic expression, etc. over another.[3]

Sources:
1. Center for Assessment and Policy Development, published at http://racialequitytools.org/glossary#racial-equity
2. *Catalytic Change: Lessons Learned from the Racial Justice Grantmaking*, Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity and Applied Research Center, 2009
3. Conversation Guide for *Cracking the Codes: The System of Racial Inequity*, World Trust, 2012.
4. *Structural Racism*, presentation for the Race and Public Policy Conference, Keith Lawrence, Aspen Institute on Community Change and Terry Keleher, Applied Research Center, 2004.
5. *Measuring the Racial Impacts of Public Policies*, presentation for the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, Terry Keleher, Applied Research Center, 2009.

Aim for Racial Equity: Make Racially Equitable Outcomes the Goal

Key institutional strategies for achieving racial equity:

- Consider the impact of all decisions on racial equity.

- Identify and address the potentially differential impacts based on race of all programs, policies, practices and systems.

- Identify and measure differential impacts and outcomes based on race.

- Analyze and address power dynamics embedded in in programs, policies, practices and systems.

- Build accountability to communities where race-based disparities are deepest or most persistent.

- Target investments in communities where race-based disparities are deepest or most persistent.

- Eliminate barriers to participation by people from communities where race-based disparities are deepest or most persistent, whatever their source.

- Create pipelines to opportunity in and for communities where race-based disparities are deepest or most persistent.