



# **Becoming antiracist:** promoting a fairer, more inclusive and equitable UK ELT sector

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# FOREWORD

The events of 2020 shone a light on some of the serious ills in our society.

The murder of George Floyd by the police in Minneapolis sparked global protests against police brutality, systematic and institutional racism and discrimination.

The coronavirus pandemic has killed over a hundred thousand people in the UK, exacerbating and highlighting social inequity and disproportionately impacting black people and people of colour.

And the window to take action to address the climate crisis is closing, while its effects are already visible in fires and floods around the world. These too disproportionately impact black people and people of colour globally.

## IMPROVE AS WE REBUILD

With this in mind, and in the context of a global pandemic that gives us the opportunity to improve UK ELT as we rebuild it, we have developed an antiracism action plan.

We acknowledge that English UK has not given racism the attention it requires. We must do better as an organisation and as the representative body of a key UK industry.

In June 2020, we released a short statement committing to creating an antiracism action group and updating the English UK membership rules as our first steps towards becoming an antiracist organisation.

Our announcement was received with enthusiasm, reserved optimism and pessimism about the possibility of making a difference.

## CHANGE IS POSSIBLE

There is no doubt that the transformation we need will be demanding. It may feel uncomfortable, even insurmountable.

Yet the disruption we have all experienced during the Covid-19 crisis has shown us that change is both necessary and achievable.

Our habits and behaviour; our team organisation and projects; our member language centres; and our UK ELT industry have all been reshaped.

We have the opportunity to improve English UK and the UK ELT sector as we rebuild. Together we can create a better, fairer, safer world and stand in solidarity with everyone experiencing discrimination, racism and inequity.

## About this document

This plan outlines our antiracist commitment, approach, vision and strategic aims.

It is not exhaustive. We will continue to update and refine our plans as our knowledge grows. And we welcome comments and suggestions from industry colleagues to help us expand and improve our antiracism work.

We will share regular updates, findings and details of our activities on the English UK website and digital channels. We welcome your feedback, reflections and ideas at any time.



## OUR VISION

English UK's mission is to promote, represent and support English language teaching providers in the UK to give students the best possible learning experience. This can only be achieved if our industry is free of racism and discrimination.

Being antiracist at English UK means acknowledging our shortcomings and setting a new standard for ourselves, our organisation, our member centres and our industry.

It means creating genuinely open and inclusive working culture, policy and practice, events and services. It means enshrining antiracism in our membership rules and providing member centres with the tools they need to change their organisations and curriculum.

Our vision of an antiracist organisation includes trying to shape the UK ELT industry by sharing our values, plans, activities and findings to lead by example and receive feedback. It means confronting how we represent our industry and the UK to the world, and challenging racist perceptions of UK ELT professionals.

We will fight racism wherever it appears.

**“There is no neutrality in the racism struggle. The opposite of racist isn’t ‘not racist’. It is antiracist.” – Dr Ibram X Kendi**

## **OUR APPROACH**

### **1. WE WILL DO THE WORK**

We recognise that becoming antiracist takes time and hard work. We are committed to long term, sustainable change.

We do not expect black people or people of colour to shoulder the emotional or professional labour of addressing racism in UK ELT.

And as the national association for ELT and a representative body, we will demonstrate our commitment through understanding and action.

### **2. WE WILL LISTEN**

We welcome all input, ideas, concerns and criticisms that will help us expand and improve our understanding of racism and our plans to address it in UK ELT.

### **3. NO PROBLEM TOO SMALL**

We seek to address racism at all levels and will not trivialise any of its forms: covert, overt, structural or interpersonal.

### **4. PROGRESS NOT PERFECTION**

We will not be overwhelmed by what we cannot impact or what do not yet know how to address. We will focus on the action we can take and changes we can make for the better, knowing each step will making the seemingly impossible more and more achievable.

### **5. COMPASSIONATE CURIOSITY**

We will rise above fear and discomfort to speak up and take action, and will always be open to correction and ready to learn.

### **6. INTERSECTIONAL**

We will not isolate racism from nor diminish other forms of discrimination, but recognise their convergence to better understand and address inequity, prejudice and oppression.

This plan therefore regularly refers to other forms of discrimination as racism cannot be addressed in isolation.

### **7. COLLABORATIVE**

The aims of this plan are extensive and demanding. To be successful we must work together at every level, from the English UK team to board to member centre staff to the wider UK international education industry.

We will share expertise, provide support and hold each other accountable.

### **8. ACCOUNTABLE**

We will share and welcome feedback on our plans, goals, research and activities. As an industry representative, we expect to be held accountable by our members.



# WHY DOES UK ELT NEED ANTIRACISM?

## FIGHTING RACISM IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

To let injustice, discrimination, oppression or violence continue without challenge is to be complicit. Everyone can make a difference, so we must all strive to rid society of racism.

## BEYOND TEACHING RESPECT TO DISMANTLING RACISM

Many of us teach and celebrate respect. While that is important, racism runs deeper than interpersonal relations. It is perpetuated by social and economic institutions, systems and power imbalances. It must be fought at this level to create genuinely inclusive and supportive places of work and learning.

## WE ARE EDUCATORS

Educators should create classrooms and schools that work for everyone. All students and staff should feel included, supported, respected, engaged and challenged regardless of race, age, gender identity, ability and religion.

## UK ELT FACES SPECIFIC CHALLENGES

UK ELT faces specific forms and expressions of racism, from native-speakerism and historical connections to imperialism, cultural and racial supremacy, to how we represent our sector and misconceptions of what it is to be, or look like, an English language teacher or homestay host.

### A note on language

This plan refers to 'black people and people of colour' because we feel this best reflects the diversity of people affected by racism and who do not benefit from white privilege in the UK.

This is intended as political language that reflects social structures, institutions and systems of discrimination and oppression.

Language around race is complicated. It changes over time and with individual preference. We will continue to review and change our language as necessary.



# OUR AIMS

## LEADERSHIP

1. Promote diversity across English UK's senior team, boards and advisory groups in a sustainable way
2. Prioritise antiracism
3. Create an action group to help guide and deliver our antiracism action plan

## ORGANISATION

4. Start a conversation about racism at English UK
5. Promote diversity across the English UK team in a sustainable way
6. Embody antiracism in our language, branding, marketing and communications
7. Embed and communicate antiracism at all English UK events and member activities
8. Build a culture of respect, openness and inclusion at English UK
9. Enshrine antiracism in English UK policy and practice
10. Share our plans, findings, actions, mistakes and challenges with full transparency

## MEMBERS

11. Build antiracism into English UK membership rules and code of conduct
12. Support increased diversity in English UK member centres
13. Support, inform and empower member centres with training, guidance and tools
14. Support the creation of an antiracist, inclusive curriculum

## INDUSTRY

15. Build support networks for black people and people of colour in UK ELT
16. Challenge stereotypes of the UK and UK ELT in partners and agents
17. Amplify the voices of black people and people of colour in UK ELT
18. Facilitate zero tolerance of racism in UK ELT
19. Collaborate across the sector

## BEYOND

20. Develop an environmental action plan
21. Develop a discrimination, human rights and equality action plan.

## OBJECTIVES

# OUR LEADERSHIP

To achieve real and lasting change, we will lead by example and demonstrate genuine commitment from the top.

Decision makers at English UK will prioritise and resource antiracism work, set clear objectives, empower the wider team, support diversity and exemplify inclusive and reflective behaviour.

### 1. PROMOTE DIVERSITY ACROSS THE SENIOR TEAM AND ENGLISH UK BOARDS IN A SUSTAINABLE WAY\*

A diverse workforce not only encourages creativity and innovation through different perspectives but helps address institutional racism and discrimination. We will:

- i. Survey the leadership team on demographics, attitudes, experiences, needs, concerns and hopes around racism and discrimination.
- ii. Analyse the results against UK/ London demographics and determine goals and timeline to diversify English UK leadership.

### 2. PRIORITISE ANTIRACISM

Like all projects, antiracism requires clear goals, time and energy to succeed. We will:

- i. Include antiracism as a standing agenda item at director and board meetings.
- ii. Set antiracist objectives and KPIs and ensure regular measuring and reporting.
- iii. Allocate staff time and resources.
- iv. Appoint and empower a champion to challenge and support all levels of staff.
- v. Lead by example, exemplifying learning, inclusion, non-judgemental engagement and recognising shortcomings, mistakes or uncertainty without defensiveness.

### 3. CREATE AN ACTION GROUP TO HELP GUIDE AND DRIVE DELIVERY OF THE ANTIRACISM ACTION PLAN

An action group will give our antiracism work the focus and attention needed to drive through real, timely change. We will:

- i. Define details and remit of the action group.
- ii. Recruit volunteers. If necessary, the first iteration of the group will be formed for a temporary period with limited objectives including diversifying its membership.
- iii. Implement action plan.

\* Diversity is understood widely to include race, age, gender, religion, ability, nationality, UK region, level of education etc. Sustainable is understood as lasting change as opposed to a 'quick fix' or changes that are easily undone or reversed.

## OBJECTIVES

# OUR ORGANISATION

To embed antiracism at English UK, we will review all our services, activities and practices through an antiracist lens.

We will put racism on the agenda, share our findings and actions, build an inclusive and transparent working culture and lead our members and the UK ELT sector by example.

### 4. START A CONVERSATION ABOUT RACISM AT ENGLISH UK

A non-judgemental space for learning and discussion will help overcome any discomfort or uncertainty that can make racism difficult to address. We will:

- i. Survey the team on attitudes, experiences, needs, concerns and hopes around racism and discrimination at English UK. See also 5.1.
- ii. Create safe places at English UK to discuss, share, gain confidence and learn.
- iii. Create a language guide and glossary of terms to support understanding.

### 5. PROMOTE DIVERSITY SUSTAINABLY ACROSS THE ENGLISH UK TEAM\*

A diverse workforce not only encourages creativity and innovation through different perspectives but helps address institutional racism and discrimination. We will:

- i. Undertake a team survey to understand demographics. See 4.1.
- ii. Analyse the results against UK/ London demographics to determine goals and timeline to diversify English UK team.
- iii. Review recruitment process to ensure it is transparent and inclusive, from advertising to application review and interview.
- iv. Explore recruitment quality marks.
- v. Offer opportunities for under-represented, marginalised and disadvantaged groups, e.g. diversity internships.

### 6. EMBODY ANTIRACISM IN OUR LANGUAGE, BRANDING, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Imagery and language express our values and shape perceptions of UK ELT. We must reflect and celebrate UK diversity and include a range of people and stories. We will:

- i. Update our style guide to explicitly include our commitment to antiracism and provide guidance on inclusive language.
- ii. Review our message decks to ensure they are in no way discriminatory or racialised.
- iii. Create a visual guide to ensure all our materials reflect our antiracist commitment.
- iv. Review all materials against guidelines and update as appropriate.
- v. Review and update all digital content against guidelines, and identify opportunities for new antiracist content. See also 16.

\* The English UK team is understood widely to include trainers, consultants, support staff etc. Diversity is understood widely to include race, age, gender, religion, ability, nationality, UK region, level of education etc. Sustainable is understood as lasting change as opposed to a 'quick fix' or changes that are easily undone or reversed.



## OBJECTIVES

# OUR ORGANISATION CONT.

### 7. EMBED ANTIRACISM AT ALL ENGLISH UK EVENTS AND MEMBER ACTIVITIES

Events are an opportunity to engage with UK ELT colleagues and facilitate learning and action. We must demonstrate our antiracist commitment from promotion to content. We will:

- i. Survey trainers and speakers. See 4.1.
- ii. Survey event delegates to understand perceptions and any experiences of racism and discrimination at our events. See also 12.1.
- iii. Include content on antiracism and inclusion at all English UK events.
- iv. Deliver a regular webinar series to increase awareness and facilitate change.
- v. Include zero tolerance information on racism and harassment in event materials.
- vi. Ensure instructors are trained in creating an antiracist space and addressing discrimination.
- vii. Introduce standardised event introductions that set expected standards.
- viii. Train staff to handle discrimination or harassment at events.

### 8. BUILD A CULTURE OF RESPECT, OPENNESS AND INCLUSION

An open and inclusive culture helps prevent racism and discrimination. Respect and transparency benefit everyone, making it easier to navigate difficulties and helping erode the need for code-switching.

- i. Talk openly about racism. See 4.1.
- ii. Explore training, development and guidance on antiracism, racial equality, racism awareness, equality and diversity.
- iii. Hold regular non-senior staff meetings for open dialogue, informal idea sharing and support between colleagues.
- iv. Credit ideas and acknowledge the work of others sincerely and publicly.
- v. Develop clear and transparent career ladders and objectives to ensure promotion and praise are based on performance, not bias.
- vi. Appoint a diversity champion to support the action group and project management, and to ensure racism and discrimination remain 'on the agenda' at English UK.



## OBJECTIVES

# OUR ORGANISATION CONT.

### 9. ENSHRINE ANTIRACISM IN ENGLISH UK POLICY AND PRACTICE

Policies provide essential guidelines, rules and protections for staff, reducing the possibility of bias and favouritism. They also help counteract structural racism and are therefore an essential part of building long term change. We will:

- i. Review, update or implement a code of conduct, equality and diversity, grievance, complaints and whistle blowing policies.
- ii. Ensure all staff understand policies and rules.
- iii. Introduce zero tolerance on bullying, harassment and discrimination of all kinds.

### 10. SHARE PLANS, FINDINGS, PROGRESS, MISTAKES AND CHALLENGES

In order to be accountable to our members and beyond, and to learn from others, we must be transparent about our antiracism work and open to feedback. We will:

- i. Recommit publicly to antiracism by sharing this plan with the UK ELT sector.
- ii. House all information about our antiracism work, including survey findings and actions, prominently on the English UK website.
- iii. Share regular content, practical guidance and updates across channels.
- iv. Find and engage with new channels, e.g. ELT podcasts, teacher websites etc., including platforms by/ for black people and people of colour in UK ELT.



## OBJECTIVES

# OUR MEMBERS

English UK is a membership association. We represent and promote our members as top quality UK ELT providers, and help them achieve and maintain the highest standards of teaching and care.

This must include inclusive and antiracist practice. We expect, and will help, our members to provide a fair and enriching learning and working environment for everyone.

### 11. BUILD ANTIRACISM INTO MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

To put antiracism at the heart of our association and foster wide-reaching change, we must establish a higher standard for those we represent, support and promote. We will:

- i. Update membership rules and code of conduct to include new standards of anti-discrimination, harassment and bias.
- ii. Communicate changes to members with clear justification and examples.
- iii. Provide materials, guidance and training to support member compliance. See 13.
- iv. Update corporate membership rules and requirements in the same manner.

## OBJECTIVES

# OUR MEMBERS CONT.

### 12. SUPPORT INCREASED DIVERSITY IN ENGLISH UK MEMBER CENTRES

Diversifying UK ELT will help counteract wider systemic racism and discrimination. We will:

- i. Survey English UK member centre staff on demographics, experiences, needs, concerns and hopes around discrimination in UK ELT.
- ii. Analyse the results, determine goals to sustainably diversify UK ELT and update our antiracism plan with specific objectives.
- iii. Identify actions to better support member centre staff (see 13.1).
- iv. Identify the barriers black people and people of colour face in UK ELT and explore how we can help remove or reduce them.

### 13. SUPPORT, INFORM AND EMPOWER ENGLISH UK MEMBERS

To help our members address racism and discrimination, we must support them with relevant training and information. We will:

- i. Survey members (see 12.1) and determine what type of support is needed.
- ii. Provide guides to help member centre staff avoid prejudiced language and representation of people and cultures.
- iii. Embed antiracism in all member facing events and activities. See 7.
- iv. Run an antiracism webinar series. See 7.3.
- v. Produce materials to display and give antiracism a visual presence in member centres.
- vi. Produce agent/ student facing materials that help breakdown stereotypes of the UK, ELT teachers and staff and homestay hosts. See 20.

### 14. SUPPORT THE CREATION OF AN ANTIRACIST, INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM

We must review our educational practice through an antiracist lens to challenge discrimination and ensure black people and people of colour (as well as LGBTQ+, women, disabled people, refugees and other marginalised and discriminated people) see themselves in UK ELT materials. We will:

- i. Explore the creation of a working group to focus on curriculum review, including widely used textbooks, materials and lesson plans.
- ii. Survey members to better understand teacher and academic directors' concerns, actions, plans, ideas etc. See 12.1.
- iii. Ensure teachers are equipped to teach antiracism and address discrimination. See 13.
- iv. Work with industry colleagues and experts for the most effective and widest reaching solutions. See 19.

## OBJECTIVES

# OUR INDUSTRY

In addition to cultural and systematic discrimination in the UK, the ELT sector faces specific forms of racism including native speakerism and historical connections to imperialism, cultural and racial supremacy.

It is up to us to determine the future of our industry.

We will work with stakeholders and other leaders across the sector to build a profession that is respectful, inclusive and fair.

## 15. BUILD SUPPORT NETWORKS FOR BLACK PEOPLE AND PEOPLE OF COLOUR IN UK ELT

Support networks can increase awareness and drive improvement around racism and discrimination in UK ELT. They are also valuable to the individuals who join them, creating a space to be understood and heard, and for personal and professional support. We will:

- i. Support existing or create new support networks where none exist.
- ii. Explore the need for support groups for other marginalised or disadvantaged groups UK ELT.

## 16. CHALLENGE STEREOTYPES OF THE UK AND UK ELT IN PARTNERS AND AGENTS

UK ELT has a known problem with racialised (and otherwise stereotyped) expectations of ELT professionals, teachers and homestay hosts. We must change how we represent UK ELT and actively counter misconceptions. We will:

- i. Include antiracist expectations and rules for English UK partner agencies.
- ii. Include a section on racism and discrimination in partner agency welcome training.
- iii. Update English UK's messaging, visual guidelines, materials and webpages. See 6.
- iv. Provide visuals and language guidelines for English UK members. See 13.2.
- v. Run a campaign to celebrate the diversity of and address misconceptions around UK ELT homestay hosts, including content and visuals.
- vi. Run a campaign around UK ELT teachers and other professionals, as 16.5 above.



## OBJECTIVES

# OUR INDUSTRY CONT.

### 17. AMPLIFY VOICES OF BLACK PEOPLE AND PEOPLE OF COLOUR IN UK ELT

Racism silences and diminishes the contributions, needs and perspectives of black people and people of colour. We must counter this with active listening and by amplifying their voices. We will:

- i. Promote diversity in the English UK leadership team, especially in leadership roles. See 1 and 5.
- ii. Promote diversity among trainers and speakers. See 5.1.
- iii. Support and promote black ELT professionals and ELT professionals of colour online, e.g. via social media shares and guest content.
- iv. For those with privilege, personally commit to challenging marginalising behaviour, such as exclusion, interrupting and talking over, and to 'passing the mic' so others are heard.

### 18. FACILITATE ZERO TOLERANCE OF RACISM ACROSS UK ELT

We will not ignore racism in colleagues nor support racist organisations. We will:

- i. Review and update English UK policy and practice to include zero tolerance on racism in consultants, trainers and partners. (See 9.3)
- ii. Outline steps taken when faced with racism or discrimination in partners.
- iii. Provide guidance and training for English UK staff and members on addressing racism.

### 19. COLLABORATE ACROSS THE SECTOR

To be successful we must work together across the UK international education industry. We will:

- i. Identify and approach industry leaders, influencers and key players for input on our antiracism action plan as a whole and for collaboration on specific elements of it.



## OBJECTIVES AND BEYOND

Our antiracism reaches beyond board rooms, classrooms and conferences. Racism is a global issue entangled with other forms of discrimination, material inequality, environmental degradation and a complexity of other factors.

We will work to improve the impact our actions have beyond our sector with complementing action plans focused on environmental responsibility and inequality and oppression.

### 20. DEVELOP AN ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY ACTION PLAN

The climate and environmental crises disproportionately affect black people and people of colour around the world. To take our antiracism seriously, we must fight global warming, pollution and environmental degradation. We will:

- i. Develop an action plan to ensure we help address the climate and ecological crises.

### 21. DEVELOP A DISCRIMINATION, HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

Inequity and poverty disproportionately affect black people and people of colour in the UK and around the world. To take our antiracism seriously, we must fight inequality and oppression. We will:

- i. Develop a plan to play our part addressing discrimination, rights violations and equality.

# ENSURING SUCCESS

## FEEDBACK AND INPUT AT EVERY STEP

We will encourage and welcome feedback at every stage in our antiracism work — through formal surveys and consultations, as well as receiving thoughts and comments at any time.

Input from ELT colleagues will enable us to make informed decisions, take the most appropriate action and avoid wasting resources.

Starting with a baseline survey in 2021, we will undertake inclusion and diversity surveys for members and the English UK team every year.

This way we will continually evaluate the effectiveness of our actions, identify mistakes and successes, identify new needs or challenges, and improve our antiracism work.

We will also share our actions, findings and plans openly so everyone can share comment.

## REBUILDING TOGETHER FOR THE BETTER

UK ELT has been devastated by the impact of Covid-19. But the pandemic did not occur in a vacuum. It highlighted and exacerbated injustices in our society and gave us the opportunity to rebuild our industry for the better.

This antiracism plan is part of our commitment to creating a fairer, safer and better industry for everyone. This means fighting discrimination in all its forms, working for international market recovery and taking environmental responsibility seriously.

The aims of this plan are ambitious and its reach is wide. To work, we need a dedicated action group, support from all levels of the English UK team as well as across the membership.

Only by working together, offering constructive criticism and supporting one another will we be able to succeed. We hope you will join us however you can.

**“The beauty of anti-racism is that you don’t have to pretend to be free of racism to be an anti-racist. Anti-racism is the commitment to fight racism wherever you find it, including in yourself.” – Ijeoma Oluo**



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