

# Institutional Racial Equity Policy



alcoomon **CESE**  
Projetos que mudam vidas

## Institutional Racial Equity Policy



### INTRODUCTION

CESE, an ecumenical organization that works for the promotion, defence and guarantee of rights, identifies and recognizes the existence of individual, institutional and structural racism in the historical construction of the State and Brazilian society, and that this racism generates injustices against the black population.

Driven by its institutional mission to “strengthen grassroots movements and groups and other organizations involved in the struggle for the political, economic and social transformations that lead to structures in which democracy with justice prevails from a human rights perspective”, CESE publicly reasserts its commitment to the anti-racist struggle by drawing up this Institutional Racial Equity Policy in which strategies to overcome racism in institutional management and actions are defined.

The components of class, race and gender are pillars of the profound inequalities existing in Brazil and are the basis for racism in society. Violence against black people, particularly against women, the genocide of black youth, mass incarceration and discrimination against African-origin religions are only some of the appalling expressions of Brazilian racism. It is imperative to denounce racism and, on the other hand, reassert the identity, culture, religiosity and thought of these sectors, as historic subjects and in their contribution to the formation of Brazilian society.

Throughout its near 50-year history, CESE has always supported the grassroots movements, organizations and groups of the black population, supporting the strengthening of anti-racist struggle in Brazil. Notwithstanding this commitment and all the practices constructed over more than four decades, the organization did not have a formal position on this subject to guide activities in all dimensions of institutional practice. This subject was discussed during the construction of the 2019-2021 three-year plan, and a decision was made to draft an institutional policy related to race. To this end, a work plan was drawn up for 2019, during which time several training meetings were held involving the entire CESE team, with contributions from

black Christian religious leaders, representatives of black movements – in particular black women, quilombolas and young people – academia and partner organizations. This journey included support from an external consultant, who accompanied the process up to the culmination of this final document.

Based on the commitment assumed throughout its institutional history and reaffirmed in this policy, CESE hopes to contribute to overcoming racism and to advances in the promotion of justice and the guarantee of rights for black people, the majority of the Brazilian population<sup>1</sup>.



## **CONCEPTION OF RACIAL EQUITY**

Starting with the assumption of the existence of racism, not only as an individual and institutional phenomenon, but particularly as a structural one, this policy considers that racism, alongside patriarchy and capitalism, structures oppression and the exploitation of the black population. Racism, historically engendered in the colonization process and in the enslavement of black men and women, generated an abysmal injustice between the black and white populations in Brazil. This abysm, however, has been disguised through the fallacious myth of racial democracy, which, although not sustained by socio-economic indicators, remains alive within the country's culture and has significant capacity for renewal. Given the ignoble and violent picture of racial inequality, CESE understands the importance of racial equity for the fulfilment of its mission.

Recognizing the inequality in Brazilian society and, given the social, political, economic, environmental and cultural disparities between the black and white populations, the conception of racial equity adopted here has a direct relationship with the conception of justice and equality expressed in CESE's mission. Racial equity must be a practice that enables the construction of a just and egalitarian society from the point of view of the guarantee of rights and the fair distribution of income and wealth. Given Brazil's historic debt to the black population, CESE adopts the principle of racial equity, intrinsically linked to gender equity, institutionally, to propel

---

<sup>1</sup> This process revealed the need and importance of further examining the issue of ethnicity and the definition of specific strategies for CESE's operations, which have historically worked with indigenous peoples in the defence of their rights.

the creation of concrete conditions and opportunities for black people and, externally, to contribute to overcoming racism so that the black population may access their rights.

The basis of this policy refers to CESE's mission and one of its ethical principles: "Equity, without discrimination according to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and religious creed". For these assumptions to be effectively guaranteed, CESE's conception of racial equity is composed of the following elements:

- Adopting the assumption of intersectionality between the dimensions of class, gender and race/ethnicity in the structuring of inequalities in Brazil;
- Recognizing and valuing self-organization and the struggles of black organizations and movements, particularly those of black women;
- Valuing religious diversity by confronting religious racism and promoting respect for and valuing of African-origin religions;
- Expansion, with the Christian churches, of knowledge and experiences related to Black Theology in order to contribute to the deconstruction of majority white, North American and European theology.



## **GUIDANCE FOR INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES**

CESE's Racial Equity Policy includes practice guidance across 6 topics that are profoundly integrated with one another. As well as the premises this policy is based on, this guidance is objectively put into practice in the institution's daily life, in order to promote internal transformations and contribute to external changes which generate equity, equality and racial justice.

### **1. Management**

From the point of view of race, CESE understands that democratic management assumes black presence in each sector team, with fair working conditions and the representation of black people in its arenas of power. This means constructing opportunities for

black people to occupy decision-making arenas. Overcoming the historical absence or under-representation of black people, particularly of black women, in these arenas must occur in an explicit, intentional and incisive manner. To this end, CESE should:

- Provide opportunities of access for black people in processes to select personnel, expanding this presence across all of CESE's sectors, including with service providers;
- Encourage, alongside the churches, the presence of black representation in its Assembly, in order to provide opportunities to join the Institutional Board;
- Encourage the participation and speech of black people, particularly of women, in arenas for the representation of the churches that constitute CESE;
- Create spaces to welcome, reflect and refer cases of racism that occur within the institution, as well as to guide and support victims;
- Create an environment and institutional culture to denaturalize and not tolerate racism;
- Secure the representation of black movements and black women in meetings and other CESE activities, in order to support the Institutional Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Systematization process – PMES.

## **2. Ecumenical Relationships and Inter-religious Dialogue**

Taking as its reference the ethical principle of respect for religious diversity, CESE understands there is a historical construction of racism, prejudice and discrimination towards African-origin religions and people from their places of worship. For this reason, it is important to promote black presence, active participation and leadership in the churches with which CESE has relationships. The mutual relationships that CESE establishes with civil society organizations and social movements, as well as their ecumenical nature, are powerful generators for significant arenas for dialogue and critical reflection about religious diversity. These may be further strengthened through the following strategies:

- To strengthen relationships and inter-religious dialogue between Christian churches, African-origin religions and people from their places of worship;

- To promote inter-religious dialogue and ecumenical relations between organizations, movements, Latin American experiences and those from the global south;
- To promote reflections and practices that help confront religious racism and reassert respect for religious diversity and the valuing of African-origin religions with the churches, the Assembly, the Board, the team, and CESE's partner organizations;
- To publically demonstrate, whenever possible, against acts and positions that express religious racism;
- To encourage reflections and undertake training with church leaders and their grassroots members which address the history, foundations, features and contents of Black Theology.

### **3. Support for Projects**

Adopting strategies in the field of project support has significant potential for strengthening black organizations and movements and those of black women, and for expanding the anti-racist struggle. For this strategy to be effective, it is essential for CESE's programmes to support projects to be explicit about the relevance of the race dimension, seeking to encourage its incorporation into all projects. Efforts will also be made to:

- Ensure methodologies and instruments that address the race dimension in systematic Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Systematization – PMES;
- Stimulate, at the point of seeking funding, reflection about the issue of race based on an analysis of projects and fundraising for specific programmes to combat racism and strengthen black organizations and movements and those of black women;
- Establish specific funding streams aimed at supporting black organizations and movements;
- Improve data collection disaggregated by race and sex in order to provide quantitative and qualitative analyses of project results and impacts on the lives of the black population, particularly of black women;
- Encourage supported organizations to reflect on the race issue by incorporating action strategies on this theme into their institutional planning and practices.

#### 4. Dialogue and Coalitions

It is extremely important for the dialogue and coalitions that CESE historically undertakes with the churches, social movements and agencies to intensify activities with movements and organizations of the black population, as well as quilombolas and people from the African-origin worship houses. Based on these initiatives, CESE should advocate within the arenas it occupies to expand the guarantee of rights for this sector, in the countryside and in the cities, in the forests and the waters. Further, CESE should:

- Reassert its institutional position in the anti-racist struggle and against religious intolerance in all the arenas it occupies as an institution;
- Encourage critical reflection about the representation and effective participation of black people in the churches and in their decision-making arenas;
- Contribute to in-depth approaches to themes such as racism, whiteness, the anti-racist struggle, religious diversity, the genocide of black youth and black representation in arenas for decision-making and power with partner organizations and in the arenas it occupies as an institution, such as networks and coalitions.

#### 5. Training

Internal training is important for reflecting on the context in which Brazil's black population lives and its contribution to the formation of Brazilian society, racism, whiteness and anti-racist struggles. Given this, training initiatives should support reflections on personal and institutional experiences, to expand the team's theoretical and methodological knowledge and for consistent activities with the public with which CESE relates, particularly grassroots groups, organizations and social movements. Additionally, CESE should:

- Conduct continuous internal training which promotes in-depth approaches and the practices laid down in this institutional policy;
- Support and create internal training opportunities for black people, seeking to expand their knowledge and capacity;
- Address the issue of race, gender and class in its training;

- Contract black instructors to run training activities, wherever possible, not only those specifically related to race;
- Raise awareness of and encourage black people's participation in the various training processes directly promoted by CESE or in partnership with other organizations;
- Include mixed organizations and movements involved in the anti-racist struggle in this training.

## 6. Communication

Communication is not only essential for the dissemination of this policy but also to create specific affirmative strategies which promote the representation of black people in images, speech, contexts and struggles. In order to publicize communication which denounces the racism and rights violations faced by black people, deconstructs racist and sexist stereotypes, and values the elements, symbology, ancestry, aesthetics and history of black people, CESE should:

- Promote the visibility of, support, disseminate and develop education campaigns for the affirmation and reaffirmation of black people, their struggles and rights, in permanent dialogue with organizations and movements from this sector;
- Ensure that representation in these materials highlights black people's dignity;
- Produce communication materials that express, in a range of languages and with a black aesthetic, black people's thinking, knowledge, practices and challenges – particularly those of women, young people, the elderly and black and quilombola communities;
- Disseminate its racial equity policy to the churches, the Assembly, the Board, the team and CESE's partner organizations;
- Provide visibility for race issues and highlight their relevance in the publicity related to support for projects.





## **PATHWAYS TO IMPLEMENTATION**

- Review the texts of CESE's institutional and reference policies, its main documents and communication channels, in order to make adjustments that incorporate the premises of this policy;
- Monitor and evaluate this policy's implementation, making adjustments where necessary at specific and mixed collective moments, with people who self-declare as black;
- Create spaces to welcome, reflect and refer cases of racism that occur within the institution, as well as to guide and support victims;
- Ensure that the Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Systematization process uses methodology and adopts instruments that address and provide evidence of the race issue and enable measurement of the results and impacts of CESE's work.



