



A Public Education Program

Race is a powerful concept that shapes how one sees and is seen by others. Yet, the public poorly understands what race is and assumptions and misconceptions about race affect scientific and scholarly research. To clarify what race is and isn't, the American Anthropological Association (AAA) has developed an award-winning educational program entitled *RACE Are We So Different?* AAA received grants from the Ford Foundation and National Science Foundation (NSF) totaling nearly \$4.5 million to develop and produce a traveling museum exhibit, a website, and other educational materials.

Looking through two lenses, the sciences and humanities, *RACE Are We So Different?* helps individuals understand the origins and manifestations of race and racism in everyday life, and come to their own conclusion that race is a dynamic and sometimes harmful human invention. The project encourages appreciation and respect for human commonality and difference, and seeks in the long-term to inform and shape the national dialogue on race. The program is targeted for learners of all ages, interests and backgrounds with special outreach to teenagers, families, and underserved communities.

The 5,000 square-foot RACE exhibition opened in January 2007 at the Science Museum of Minnesota (SMM). SMM worked with AAA to develop and produce the exhibition. The exhibition includes interactive experiences for visitors to learn the history of race, the role of science in that history and the subtle and obtrusive expressions of race and racism in institutions and daily lives. The exhibition began a national tour of the US in May 2007 and is booked through 2011. Due to its popularity, AAA is working with SMM to extend the current tour schedule and to produce a replica exhibit that will also tour nationally beginning in 2010. Both exhibits will tour through 2014.

An interactive web site (www.understandingRACE.org), developed with S2N Media, Inc. in New York, debuted in January 2007. The website includes a virtual tour of the exhibition, videos, quizzes, interactive activities and resources for scholars, children, teachers and families.

Educational materials developed and produced for *RACE Are We So Different?* include two teacher guides, a family guide, an educator's guide to the exhibition, a discussion guide, scholarly papers, a glossary and bibliography. The educational materials are posted on the RACE website.

RACE Are We So Different? was developed over more than five years in collaboration with scientists, scholars, other science and humanities organizations, and with input from various publics. A 21-member Advisory Board of nationally- and internationally-known experts oversaw its development and production.

AAA, the world's largest organization of anthropologists, has addressed issues of race since the 1940s. This project builds on the expertise of AAA sections and members, AAA's 1998 Statement on Race, efforts in 1997 to assist the federal government's revision of race and ethnicity categories, continuing publications and Annual Meeting sessions that focus on race and human diversity.

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