FACING HISTORY AND OURSELVES IN SOUTH AFRICA

SUPPORTING DEMOCRATIC IDEALS
Facing History and Ourselves began working in South Africa in 2003, less than ten years after the country’s first democratic election. In partnership with Shikaya, a non-governmental organization based in Cape Town, we provide essential resources and training to educators, preservice teachers, school leaders, civil society organizations, and provincial and national Department of Education representatives. Together, we support the development of compassionate, informed, and active democratic citizens, and will reach an estimated 500 schools, 5,000 teachers, and over one million students over the next five years.

TRANSFORMING SCHOOL CULTURE
Our work addresses the urgent need to continue the process of transformation that began in the wake of apartheid and in the early years of democracy. This includes teacher training and curricular implementation, work with school leaders on policies related to diversity and belonging, training of whole school staff to promote inclusive school culture, and direct work with students to nurture their civic voices and participation. Facing History has influenced the direction of South Africa’s National History Curriculum, ensuring the inclusion of topics such as the study of eugenics and racial ideology, and the U.S. Civil Rights Movement.

SOUTH AFRICA BY THE NUMBERS

250
schools with Facing History-trained teachers

1,800
educators using Facing History materials

140,000+
students reached each year
“Teaching democratic values is not contained in a series of lessons; it is a lifestyle, an ethos that one creates in classrooms and the school as a whole.”
- Roy Hellenberg, educator, school leader, and co-author of A School Where I Belong

OUR WORK IN ACTION

A SCHOOL WHERE I BELONG

In response to increasing feelings of alienation and exclusion among students of color in former Model-C and private schools, our partners sat down with young people, teachers, and school leaders to reflect on transformation and belonging in schools. These stories became the foundation for a book, A School Where I Belong, as well as a multifaceted program of trainings for school leadership and staff addressing identity, implicit bias, and belonging. Our partners have also led “Dialogue Days,” in which entire school communities pause regular activities to participate in a day of structured activities focused on making their school more just, welcoming, and inclusive.

USING THE PAST TO BUILD A BETTER FUTURE

At Facing History and Ourselves, we believe the bigotry and hate that we witness today are the legacies of brutal injustices of the past. Through our partnerships, we help educators around the world face our collective history and address racism, antisemitism, and prejudice—so that their students can connect difficult choices made in the past to those they will confront in their own lives. Together, we are creating the next generation of leaders who will build a world based on knowledge and compassion.

Facing History reaches more than 100,000 educators who reach millions of students every year through our nine regional locations and international partnerships in France, Northern Ireland, South Africa, and beyond.

OUR MISSION

Facing History and Ourselves uses lessons of history to challenge teachers and their students to stand up to bigotry and hate.