

**BRIDGES** A **toolkit** for **diversifying knowledge** and **tackling discrimination** through **civil society participation** in universities.

# Toolkit Workshop

# Decolonize

# Education

# ACTIVITY

## DIVERSIFYING UNIVERSITIES? DECOLONISING EDUCATION!

### OBJECTIVE

Reflecting on whether or not is possible to advance decolonial struggles within Universities.

### STEP 1

Read the article *Black Studies, Black Struggles* by Robin D. G. Kelley:

<https://bostonreview.net/forum/robin-d-g-kelley-black-study-black-struggle>

and answer the following questions.

- The author argues: "Certainly universities can and will become more diverse and marginally more welcoming for black students, but as institutions they will never be engines of social transformation." What is the difference between attempts to make universities more diverse, and struggles for social transformation in education?
- Can you think of any analogies and similar tensions in other sectors of society?
- Why does the author refer to Rodney's notion of the 'guerrilla intellectual', and how does it relate to the Harney and Moten's concept of 'undercommon'?
- What does the author mean by 'The Personal Is Not Always Political'?
- The author discusses trauma and healing. What are the key problems identified within these concepts and what solutions are proposed?

### STEP 2

Find your University "Equality and Diversity" statements and policies (University Website) and make a mindmap of the keywords that emerge in these documents following the questions below:

- What are the key objectives expressed in these documents?
- What steps are being taken to achieve these objectives?
- To what extent are these policies formulated around concepts of diversification and inclusion?
- What images, if any, are used to promote these projects, and what messages do they convey?
- Discuss the mind-map you have created by addressing your answers to the questions proposed in Step 1.

## **STEP 3**

Research student-led activities and projects happening in your area or in your University, and read their "manifesto". An example can be found on this link:

<https://decoloniseukc.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/decolonising-the-curriculum-manifesto-final-2.pdf>

- What are the key problems discussed, and what solutions are proposed?
- Who is involved in these projects and whose voices are foregrounded?
- Are their priorities oriented towards diversity and inclusion, or something else emerges?
- To what extent their discourses and practices match with, or are in conflict with, the ones you highlighted in the mind map above?

## **STEP 4**

Having in mind everything you have discussed through the previous steps, draft your own manifesto for a Decolonial Education, highlighting 5 problems and 5 demands.

## **STEP 5**

Discuss whether you believe these changes could take place within the institution you inhabit.

- If yes, what steps and what obstacles do you envision?
- If not, what alternative infrastructures can you imagine?

# ACTIVITY

## THE DANGERS OF A SINGLE STORY

### OBJECTIVE

Reflecting on how dominant constructions of knowledge limit our perspectives and imaginaries, while perpetuating racialised structures of oppression.

### STEP 1

Watch the TED talk by the feminist writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and answer the questions below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9lhs241zeg>

<https://www.chimamanda.com>

- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie refers to "single stories" that informed her imagination, as well as the "single stories" that others had of her. Can you list them?
- In your own experience, what are the "single stories" you grew up with, and when did you come to the realisation of their complexity?
- How has this realisation shifted your relationship to yourself, to people around you, and to the world you live in?
- In her talk, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie says that "it is impossible to talk about 'the single story' without talking about power". What relations of power does she address?
- Later on, she mentions that "stories have been used to dispossess, but they can also be used to empower; stories can break the dignity of people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity". How, according to her, alternative stories can be told? In your view, could these "single stories" be dismantled just by adding and including new elements, or did they require a radical shift in your understanding of the situation?

### STEP 2

Reflecting on the subject you study, can you address at least 3 "single stories" that are being told in your syllabus?

- How are these stories constructed?
- Who is telling these stories?

- What are the forms of power and domination reproduced in these stories?
- Whose voices are silenced, and which histories are erased in these stories?
- Write a 500 words text summarising the reflections above, and a 500 words proposal on "how could 'multiple stories' be told" in your subject of study.

## STEP 3

Watch this Saidiya Hartman interview:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bG5Y8NDdGtY>

and if you have access, read one chapter of your choice of one of her books. If you do not have access to her books, read this lengthy interview:

<https://www.thewhitereview.org/feature/interview-with-saidiya-hartman/>

In her work, she traces "Black genealogies" and positions blackness at the centre of scholarship on race and racialisation. Hartman defines her methodology as a "critical fabulation": "an "impossible writing that attempts to say that which resists being said".

- How does this methodology enable a shift in our gaze on historical events and processes?
- Which voices, bodies and lives are foregrounded and to what extent they dismantle an "essentialization of blackness"?
- To what extent this scholarship can contribute to anti-racist struggles against the backdrop of continued racial and imperial violence?
- In what ways does it differ from scholarship aimed at the "inclusion of difference"?

## STEP 4

Look at this photo-gallery by Electric Marronage collective:

<https://www.electricmarronage.com/electricblog/2020/6/4/rebellionwakework>

and listen to the podcast "Abolition: A Black Feminist Method" with Dr. Savannah Shange:

<https://www.electricmarronage.com/podcasts>

<https://cres.ucsc.edu/faculty/regular-faculty.php?uid=sshangeb>

- In the Photo Gallery description, the authors argue: "The Black rebels in these photos challenge the notion of private property and fiercely refuse the legacy of Black bodies as chattel. Beyond the actual 'looting' of property, they steal their right to mourn for the dead in their own ways; they steal back their voices in a world that aims to silence them; they steal back their bodies in a country that devalues them as property".
- What does it mean "to steal" in this context, and what does the photo gallery tell you about Black Lives rebellions? How have these rebellions been framed in mainstream discourses, and what alternative perception does this photo gallery mobilise?
- In the podcast, Dr. Savannah Shange elaborates further on the practice of "stealing". Write down 2 key quotes from the podcast discussion, summarise her key argument, and reflect on how this can/cannot relate to your own context and to the educational spaces and practices you encountered in your experience.

## **STEP 5**

### **Creating counter-narratives**

- In a small group, produce a booklet/magazine/collage to create a counter-narrative to your syllabus, and to express your lived experience within higher education.
- Syllabus: how would you imagine your syllabus differently? What would you cut off, and what would you "paste in"? How would you reformulate the key learning outcomes, study materials and classroom activities?
- Lived experiences: What images/photographs help you express your own experience in the classroom and in your course of study? What alternative images would you envision?
- Add anything that emerged from your discussions and that you find relevant!

***We would love to receive your counter-narrative!***

# ACTIVITY

## STRATEGIES FOR COLLECTIVE RESISTANCE

### OBJECTIVE

Counter-mapping and understanding the colonial legacy of University, learn from and get inspired by existing struggles.

### CONTEXT

Rhodes Must Fall was an anti-colonial protest movement at the University of Cape Town, South Africa, that in 2015 led to the removal of the statue of Cecil Rhodes. This sparked the beginning of a mass mobilisation about colonization in higher education.

### STEP 1

Research the Rhodes Must Fall campaign, by searching on websites, social media and videos channels.

- Who was Cecil Rhodes and why was his statue contested?
- What meaning was assigned to this statue, and why was it important to remove it?
- Who initiated and participated in this campaign?
- What critique and what demands did they formulate?
- What has been its legacy, and how did their slogan resonate in other places?

### STEP 2

Read the article: Reparative histories: tracing narratives of black resistance and white entitlement, by Cathy Bergin and Anita Rupprecht

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0306396818770853>

Find activist project of countermapping/retracing histories. Map the colonial and anti-colonial legacy within your own university, institutions or of the spaces you inhabit (See this example in Brighton):

<https://www.brighton.ac.uk/about-us/news-and-events/news/2019/01-23-tracing-brightons-forgotten-slave-owners.aspx>

- Identify the colonial legacy of the educational spaces (virtual and material) that you inhabit: who are the buildings named after, who have been the donors, who has been teaching and conducting research in your University, who are the main authors thought in the curriculum.
- Create an "alternative walking tour" to highlight the university's legacy of imperialist donors and scholars, as well as of histories of struggle, contestation and self-organisation.
- Alternatively, create a counter-map (not necessarily cartographical) of the main colonial relations and anti-colonial struggles present in the institution.

### **STEP 3**

Counter-map the forms of knowledge that dominate the University. What departments? Who is teaching?

### **STEP 4**

Design an alternative reading list and syllabus within your own discipline. See existing materials and resources: decolonise the library etc.



# RESOURCE LIST

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