UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

IMPACT OF DECOLONISING INITIATIVES AND PRACTICES IN THE FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We want to recognise and honour the many organisers, activists, students, and staff that came before us and will continue to push for change long after we are gone. We wish to acknowledge their struggle for racial and social justice.

We have made this report open access with the hope individuals, organisations, and advocates can take it, make it their own, and support them in their anti-racist and decolonial practices in, and outside, educational spaces.

Given the time constraints, and both the emotional and physical labour that has gone into this report, this document focuses on the work needed to challenge and dismantle harmful colonial and racist discourses and practices within the Faculty of Environment at the University of Leeds.

These issues are not isolated to a single institution and are prevalent across the Higher Education (HE) sector, though we use the Faculty of Environment at the University of Leeds as a case study to influence change.

We hope the awareness gained will have positive knock-on impacts on every practice in our university and beyond.

This work will look, and be different, for diverse groups of people. In other words, the anti-racist and decolonial work and practices needed by white colleagues and students will differ from those relevant to staff and students that are Black or of Colour. Context matters. Positions of power and privilege will also influence what this work entails and its effects.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We acknowledge the shortcomings of the report.

We would like to thank everyone who shared and/or completed our survey.

Dyslexic-friendly design and font (open dyslexic size 13, 1.5 line spacing, 12 letter spacing)

Content and trigger warning

Please be aware, some may find the content distressing as there are real life discussions and comments of racism, anti-blackness, xenophobia, and work-related stress vocalised by participants in the report. Mentions of mental health are also made. We have provided comfort breaks throughout the report to help with the heaviness of the content.

To cite this report

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Decolonising UK Higher Education

"There can be no discourse of decolonization, no theory of decolonization, without a decolonizing practice" (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012: 100).

This report is a living document which understands anti-racist and decolonial practices as everyday actions and lived experiences which seek to end racial, colonial and other societal inequalities through transforming material realities. This report is not exhaustive nor definitive, hence, it will need to be continuously revisited and updated. What we present here is not new. Many of the dimensions of racism and colonialism and strategies to combat them highlighted in this report have been vocalised by grassroot activists, community advocates, students and staff within and beyond the Global North for many years.

We cannot decolonise the university until the material realities in which colonial institutions (such as the university) were founded upon and continue to thrive in are abolished. As Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui reminds us in the above quote, decolonising theory emanates from the literal struggles, often by marginalised communities of Colour, to break free from colonialism, capitalism, racism and other forms of discrimination and violence. Theory cannot be detached from practice. Decolonisation is not an end point, but rather continuous practice, which involves every aspect of our lives. It requires systemic, collective and individual transformations at every level.

It is beyond the scope of this report to give a full account of decolonising social movements/struggles across the globe and their influence on decolonising Higher Education (HE). Yet, it is important we understand the role education and the curricula play in transforming these realities as: "Curricula reflect ideological influences and philosophical approaches to knowledge, teaching, and learning to students" (Reddy, 2018:163). As a teacher, you

implement the curriculum via reading lists, lectures, seminars, tutorials that are all under a specific pedagogical umbrella. This specific philosophy transfers to learning environments, how you bring inclusivity and diversity in the curriculum and the classroom. From this standpoint, we view pedagogy as "a moral and political practice that functions as a deliberate attempt to influence how and what knowledge, values, and identities are produced with particular sets of classroom social relations" (Giroux, 2013: 461).

Our specific pedagogical approach influences how students view the world and interact with their immediate surroundings. Therefore, this report is "[...] an invitation for readers to reflect on their own embodied identities and experiences in the classroom, to consider how they might be read by their students and what strategies would work best to communicate clearly, honestly, and compassionately with them" (Chi Hyun Park and Tomkinks, 2021: 289).

Over the past couple of years, there has been increased pressure for more radical and inclusive pedagogical practices in UK Higher Education. Edited volumes such as ***Inside the ivory tower: Narratives of women of colour surviving and thriving in British academia*** (Gabriel and Tate,2017), ***Decolonising the University*** (Bhambra, Gebrial, and Nişancioğlue, 2018), ***Dismantling Race in Higher Education: Racism, Whiteness and Decolonising the Academy*** (Arday and Safia Mizra, 2018) and ***Antiracist scholar-activist*** (Joseph-Salisbury and Connelly, 2021) analyse how the university plays a key role in (re)producing white supremacy and colonialism (Reay, 2018; Arday, Belluigi and Thomas, 2021). For this report, we use white supremacy within UK universities as Azeezat Johnson describes it: "the context within which whiteness can remain a neutralised and privileged racial positioning" (2018: 18).

For those of us who have been racialized in UK academia, there are many terms used to agglomerate us into a single group such as Black and Ethnic Minorities (BAME) and people of colour.

These terms have been helpful in uniting the voices and struggles of minorities in UK HE. Nevertheless, they have also contributed to invisibilise antiblackness, in particular misogynoir (misogyny directed towards Black women where race and gender both play roles in bias) which is pervasive in UK universities. It only takes a visual reading of classrooms and offices across UK universities to see that those of African heritage in particular women, trans and non-binary people are the least represented and heard demographic.

There are currently only 51 Black women professors in the UK out of a total of 23,000 (Zelzer, 2022). A 2019 report by Leading Routes found: "over a three year period just 1.2% of the 19,868 studentships awarded by all UKRI research councils went to Black or Black Mixed students and only 30 of those were from Black Caribbean background" (Williams, Bath, Arday and Lewis, 2020). Black PhD students often must overcome a multitude of systemic barriers to graduate, particularly in overwhelmingly white disciplines such as geography (Ogoegbunam Okoye, 2021).

Recent student movements such as Rhodes Must Fall, Goldsmith Antiracist Action Group (GARA), Warwick Occupy and Leeds Occupy have demanded systemic changes in universities: from hiring practices to include more racially minorities staff, addressing racism in universities, ending hostile environment to transforming the curriculum, among other things. These demands reflect a wider social need for transformation.

In the past, the University of Leeds has showed solidarity with international social movements by receiving exiled Chilean refugee students during the Pinochet dictatorship in 1976, with a mural in the Student Union commemorating this act (LUU, 2020). Recent events such as Why is my curriculum white? by former education officer Melz Owusu, Decolonising geography and Decolonising Psychology organised by students in conjunction with Dr. Laura Loyola-Hernández from the University of Leeds, reflect a demand from students, particularly Black students, for things to change within our university.

The University of Leeds has engaged to some extent with these conversations by forming a decolonising working group as well as supporting student-led research into the university's colonial past by Naomi Eluwa, diversifying the reading lists by Esta-Rose Nyeko-Lacek, creating a decolonising framework (see here) and the recent Student Education Conference in March 2022 (Owolade, 2022).

It is within this context and out of our commitment to antiracist and decolonial practices within HE we wanted to understand some of the challenges and resistance these initiatives have in our work, teaching and learning environments. As we argue in the recommendations section, the university needs to simultaneously address the unequal material realities among staff and students, including professional support, academic related, cleaning, catering, security, IT and library staff. They must also be included in conversations and actions around decolonising our university, yet they are often left out of these conversations all together.

Mural located in University of Leeds Student Union.
Painted by Chilean refugee students in 1976.
Source:
https://leedsartfund.org/whatson/viewEvent/112

Critical pedagogy as a transformative tool: we must move away from focusing on reading lists

"I don't buy the story that revolutions are made in universities, no matter how much critical thinking there is, because in the end they are institutions. Things can be done that can generate critical thinking and this can influence social movements in a positive way"
(Ochy Curiel in Cejas, 2011:186). (own translation)

There has been focus on changing reading lists without a fundamental understanding of the need to systemically transform our pedagogical and working practices which entail (re)learning and reflection by staff and students. We have become increasingly frustrated to see a watered-down version of what decolonisation means within education. "Decolonising" the curriculum has become a popular term within Higher Education. The misconception here being that it is enough to add diversity in the form of authors to reading lists without producing meaningful institutional change.

Our report demonstrates that there is resistance from some colleagues to start implementing changes to their curricula. This can be problematic when we co-teach, as the more people you have in a module the more chances are that they will have different pedagogical philosophies and approaches to teaching materials and activities. The power imbalances between junior and senior colleagues, including not having control of the material taught by demonstrators and not wanting to "rock the boat" are major barriers which are discussed in this report.

The danger then becomes that while one member of the teaching team might want to fundamentally change the canon to include more knowledge production from outside white, Western/Eurocentric, and male authors, the other team members might have an "affirmative" approach to the curricula. An "affirmative" approach is when the underlying cause of unequal canon is never fully addressed.

Whereas a "transformative" approach to the curriculum is a: "radical approach associated with dismantling and restructuring the underlying generative frameworks" (Reddy, 2018: 165). A possible solution to this is having students actively be involved in the curriculum design (Bovill, Bulley and Morss, 2011).

A liquid curriculum "focus[es] on students' and tutors' stances and personal identities and provide[s] opportunities to design modules and lessons in open and flexible ways" (Steils et.al., 2015:155). Nevertheless, students might not benefit from changes, rather the beneficiaries would be subsequent cohorts. This approach also increases workload and stress on staff who are already performing beyond their contract hours (see further down in this report). Given how there is increased pressure to accept more students, and not having enough resources, a liquid curriculum approach would prove difficult.

Our own teaching practices as educators are influenced by critical pedagogy. Pioneered by Brazilian philosopher Paul Freire, critical pedagogy seeks to use education as a liberating tool for marginalised people against their oppressors. In this sense, Freire (1996) views critical pedagogy as a dynamic and symbiotic relationship in which oppressor and oppressed come together to transform unequal power relations in society. Our teaching practices specifically take from two "sub-branches" of critical pedagogy: response-able pedagogies and pedagogies of discomfort. According to Bozalek and Semblyas, the proposers of response-able pedagogy it is a: "relational processes through which social, political, and material entanglements in Higher

Education (i.e. students, facilitators, discourses, texts, performances, drawings, face-to-face and online comings together) are rendered capable through each other to bring about social transformation" (Bozalek and Zemblyas, 2017: 64). In other words, it is a symbiotic and interactive relationship between students, teachers and the physical and virtual spaces which constantly changes. This type of pedagogy is based largely on implementing participatory learning and action (plan) techniques, which: "are interactive, usually practised in groups and often rely on visual methods, where the participants are asked to draw something and then discuss it with other participants in their groups afterwards" (Bozalek and Zemblyas, 2017:70).

This type of pedagogical approach and techniques allows students to: "work collaboratively on themes of community, self and identity [...] and to become more aware of differences and inequitable economic, social, political and cultural structures and practices" (Bozalek and Zemblyas, 2017: 71). The thought behind it is that by sharing diverse experiences, students can understand how certain actions affect others in different ways and this is what impacts students most. By doing this, we seek to build a community and safe space where students can engage with sensitive and difficult topics.

Another useful teaching philosophy is pedagogies of discomfort; a "teaching practice that can encourage students to move outside their 'comfort zones' and question their 'cherished beliefs and assumptions" (Boler 1999 in Zemblyas, 2015:163). A decolonising curricula includes diverse topics which at times, produce this discomfort which "can compel students to think beyond hegemonic worldviews that underpin unequal societies and confront 'on a personal level' our own roles in sustaining socio-political inequalities" (Connelly and Joseph-Salisbury, 2019: 1034).

The radicalness of critical pedagogy is limited by the wider context of the neoliberalisation of HE. That is, as teachers we are only able to implement a bounded social change " that is imaginatively bound by the constraints of the students' immediate

environment: the neoliberal university" (Connelly and Joseph-Salisbury, 2019:1037). We are restrained by metrics, surveys and assessments.

Since the increase of undergraduate fees in the UK from £3,000 to £9,000 in 2011 (Millican, 2012), teachers are increasingly seen as providers of services, whilst students are seen as consumers. Its impact can be felt with progressively more interest in students being able to transfer skills to being employable (Giroux, 2013; Lambert, Parker and Neary, 2007). This is contrary to critical pedagogy as "a focus on employability perpetuates a "banking" approach to education" (Millican, 2012: 637).

With the pressure to "get what you paid for", if educators are not careful, surface learning is pushed where the ultimate goal is for students to pass assessments with little to no engagement with deeper learning. Additionally, there is the nuance of providing for the needs and wants of the students and making sure that education provides skills required from graduate employers.

Within the current context of the neoliberal university in UK HE, we cannot decolonise the university. Yet, we can continue to push for change influenced by decolonial thought and practices. This report seeks to trace some of the attempts as well as barriers to implement transformation in the Faculty of Environment.

Methodology

This report is based on an online anonymous survey launched online from May 13th - June 17th, 2022. We used the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) online survey platform. All staff (including academic related and professional staff) from the Faculty of Environment at the University of Leeds were invited and encouraged to participate in the survey through local school newsletters and emails. In total, we received 104 responses from the four schools within the faculty: School of Earth and Environment, School of Geography, School of Food Science and Nutrition and Institute for Transport Studies. See Appendix 1 for survey questions. The survey consisted of 12 closed questions and 4 open questions. In the open questions, we asked all participants to provide a short explanation to allow demonstration of the breadth and depth of opinions on decolonising initiatives within the Faculty of Environment. The average time of completion was 10 minutes.

It was under individual discretion whether participants wished to complete the survey in a voluntary capacity, with participant information provided and informed consent collected at the start of the survey. If they decided to take part, by clicking the button to continue, they were consenting to taking part in the anonymous survey. Confidentiality and anonymity were crucial given the nature of issues explored and the power dynamics in place around gender, race, immigration status, role within the university and type of work contract. We also need to recognise some individuals are at different stages of their career (PGRs, early careers, professors, among others) and in some cases

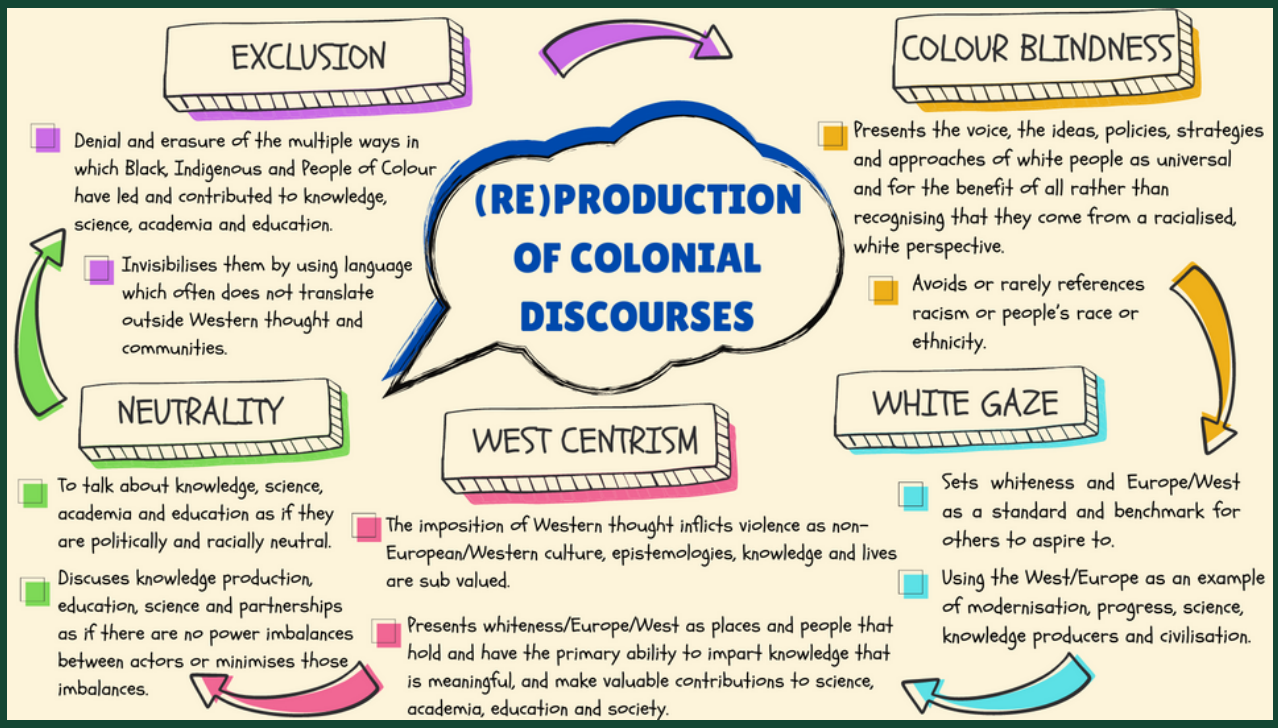
participants expressed genuine fear to speak up on issues around decolonisation and racism, out of fear of negative repercussions around their jobs. We have not de-segregated the results by school as the number of responses varied significantly between schools (see section: Composition of participants).

Anonymity of responses was ensured through no specific characteristics, such as name of participant, module names, or funding projects being collected. In cases where participants wrote any characteristics that might identify them, we have chosen not to include these details in any quotes throughout the survey. Only the authors had access to individual anonymised responses. Survey data was stored in password protected files and information will be deleted after producing the final report.

Analysis of open-ended questions is based on the 'six dimensions of racism and coloniality' framework co-created by Dr. Laura Loyola-Hernández and Natalie Lartey for the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) (Lartey and Beauchamp, 2022). There are small variations to the framework implemented in this report in comparison to the original framework developed for IIED. This report uses five dimensions instead of the original six and uses 'West centrism' instead of eurocentrism.

The core framework consists of racist and colonial dimensions (see below), which help (re)produce harmful and unequal relationships and practices within universities. Collectively when applied, the five dimensions identified together shape identities and ways of thinking about whiteness and colonialism that uphold racism, promote neo-colonialist agendas and white supremacy systems which continue to inflict harm towards Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) in and outside university spaces. We have positioned these five dimensions within a circle to

Figure 1 Five dimensions of racism and coloniality in university settings



Source: Adaptation based on the 'six dimensions of racism and coloniality (Lartey and Beauchamp, 2022).

demonstrate the complexity and complicity within each trend (Figure 1). The figure of the circle also allows us to comprehend the multiple ways in which these discourses permeate societies. By placing them in a circle we wish to convey there are no hierarchies within them rather each one is interconnected and reinforces one another in upholding a white supremacist capitalist world order.

The dimensions we are using in the framework are: colour blindness, white gaze, West centrism, neutrality and exclusion. A circle also acknowledges the continues functioning of these systems. It points to the fact that anti-racist and decolonial praxis are everyday actions and reflections. It counters the notion of having a one size fits all, cookie cutter solution to decolonising.

Determinants of organisations such as universities deconstructing the colonial and racist dimensions within their narratives include practices involving teaching, producing content, and research by both staff and students:

- An explicit recognition of colonialism and racism, and how pervasive they have been and continue to shape global patterns of poverty, wealth, and inequality in education and beyond.
- Systematically see and discuss race, racism and colonialism in their work, teaching and research. They will routinely include discussions of race, racism and colonialism in all of their work within the Higher Education sector and beyond.
- Acknowledge how racially minoritised communities have resisted colonial and racist interjections in order to drive their own agendas to address issues such as education, medical access, housing, and job creation.
- Appreciate how Black people, Indigenous and People of Colour have long understood, valued and nurtured the connection between humans and nature and promoted environmental stewardship.
- Acknowledges how Black, Indigenous and People of Colour have established effective systems of trade, justice, economics, medicine, epistemologies and collective care outside of Western understandings.
- Emphasise the need to shift the white gaze within HE. This means a substantive move away from 'binary' ways of framing challenges that juxtaposes low and high income, developed and developing, Global South and Global North, to name a few. This will require the identification of a new language and practices to describe our work, to recognise who is considered an expert, whose knowledge is valued and who is looked at for solutions.
- Material and systemic changes specified in our recommendations section.

Comfort breaks

We aspire to use this report as a decolonial practice. Given the nature of the content in this report, we felt the need to provide comfort breaks throughout. The comfort breaks are also meant to break away from the colonial capitalist consumption of quick solutions often posed within Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) frameworks. These breaks allow us to sit with discomfort, reflect on a personal and organisational level on the structures which help (re)produce colonial and racial discourses and practices within our institution. All comfort breaks address the four schools in the Faculty of Environment in diverse ways: food, transport, geography, nature, our relation to our environments and communities. There are three comfort breaks in the report.

The first comfort break is a playlist. The links we have shared are Youtube videos. We believe videos can transmit through visual cues more than what an audio only playlist could offer. Dancing, singing and music are forms of knowledge and resistance. We need to incorporate them in our pedagogies. This will help break the dichotomy of what is knowledge and who are knowledge producers. We start with **Shock** by Anita Tijoux, a video recorded during the Chilean student movement in 2010. The song's name comes from Naomi Kleim's The Shock Doctrine. It recalls the devastating effect neoliberalism has had in the Global South. Students from the majority world have been at the fore front for calls that everyone should have access to free and quality education.

As Paulo Freire (2000) argues, education can be a liberating tool to combat oppression and inequalities. Education must extend beyond traditional and formal school settings to embrace alternative forms of living and understanding our place in the world. The next song, **Retribution** by Tanya Tagaq combines Inuit throat singing with spoken word to give a stark warning of the

damage humans have inflicted on Mother Earth. We then move on to **Mas que nada** (More than anything) by Sèrgio Mendes who reminds us of the role music and dancing have in healing and connecting with our communities. We then turn to Gil Scott-Heron. Through **Inner City Blues** (a cover from Marvin Gaye), Scott-Heron sings about the impact the cost of living, gentrification and racial inequalities has had on Black communities. This song is even more pertinent as we navigate the current living crisis.

Decolonising universities also means addressing the working and studying conditions of staff and students. It means, readjusting what we understand by community beyond the university context. How can we connect to our immediate surroundings? **Ojalá que llueva café en el campo** (Hopefully it will rain coffee in the field) by Café Tacvba (original by Rubén Blades) helps us to understand how we must acknowledge, treasure and respect Mother Earth and the food she allows us to produce. Le Grand Kallé and L'African Jazz's **Parafifi** was written under Belgian colonial Congo. Via the rhythms of jazz, we navigate anticolonial independence struggles in the Global South. **Electric Pow Wow Drum** by Halluci Nation also reminds us there cannot be decolonisation until Indigenous, Native Americans, First Nations and Aboriginal people get their land back.

Helwa Ya Balady (Oh sweet, my homeland) by Dalida is a popular Egyptian song from 1979, which was used in Tahir Sqaure during the 2011 Arab Spring. The **Mystery of inequity** by Lauryn Hill is our tribute to Black feminist thinkers and organisers across the globe whose contributions have shaped our understanding of racial, social and colonial injustices. We end with the legendary Celia Cruz's **La Vida es un Carnaval** (Life is a carnival), who sings: Life is a carnival, and it's more beautiful to live singing.

The second comfort break is about food, and our connection to land. For many of us, food is knowledge passed down from our ancestors to us. For others, food is comfort, joy and being in

community. How can we think of food and its relation to decolonisation? Who has access to healthy and affordable food? When we have reunions or events in our workplace, do we have inclusive practices which consider the personal, cultural and religious food needs of our colleagues and students? When we have reunions, do we have them in places where people who do not consume alcohol feel comfortable? Is the timing of our reunions inclusive for those who have caring responsibilities? Can all of us afford to financially attend? How do students learn, and staff teach, when they may struggle to eat and have to rely on food banks?

Food crisis among university communities is increasingly becoming more common (Magoqwana, 2018, The Guardian, 2022). Decolonisation is also about food justice and about transforming the material realities of our communities: "We deserve to have access to safe, nourishing food and the joy of having time to gather with loves ones for a meal" (Cradle Community: 2021: 54). We have chosen a simple vegan and gluten free affordable recipe which has been handed down from generation to generation. We hope you can prepare, share, and enjoy it.

Our third and final activity is to reflect on notions of self and collective care in and outside the work and/or study space. Who has the privilege to disconnect from work and study? Are we making time for ourselves and loved ones outside of working and/or studying? Are we reminding our students to do the same all year round but particularly during times of heightened stress, for example the exam and assessment period?

1 comfort break: playlist

Shock/Anita Tijoux

Retribution/Tanya Tagaq

Mas que nada (More than anything)/ Sèrgio Mendes

Inner City Blues (Makes me wanna holler)/ Gil Scott-Heron

Ojalá que llueva café en el campo (Hopefully it will rain coffee in the field)/ Café Tacvba

Parafifi/ Grand Kallé and L' African Jazz

Electric Pow Wow Drum/ Halluci Nation

Helwa Ya Balady (Oh sweet, my homeland)/ Dalida

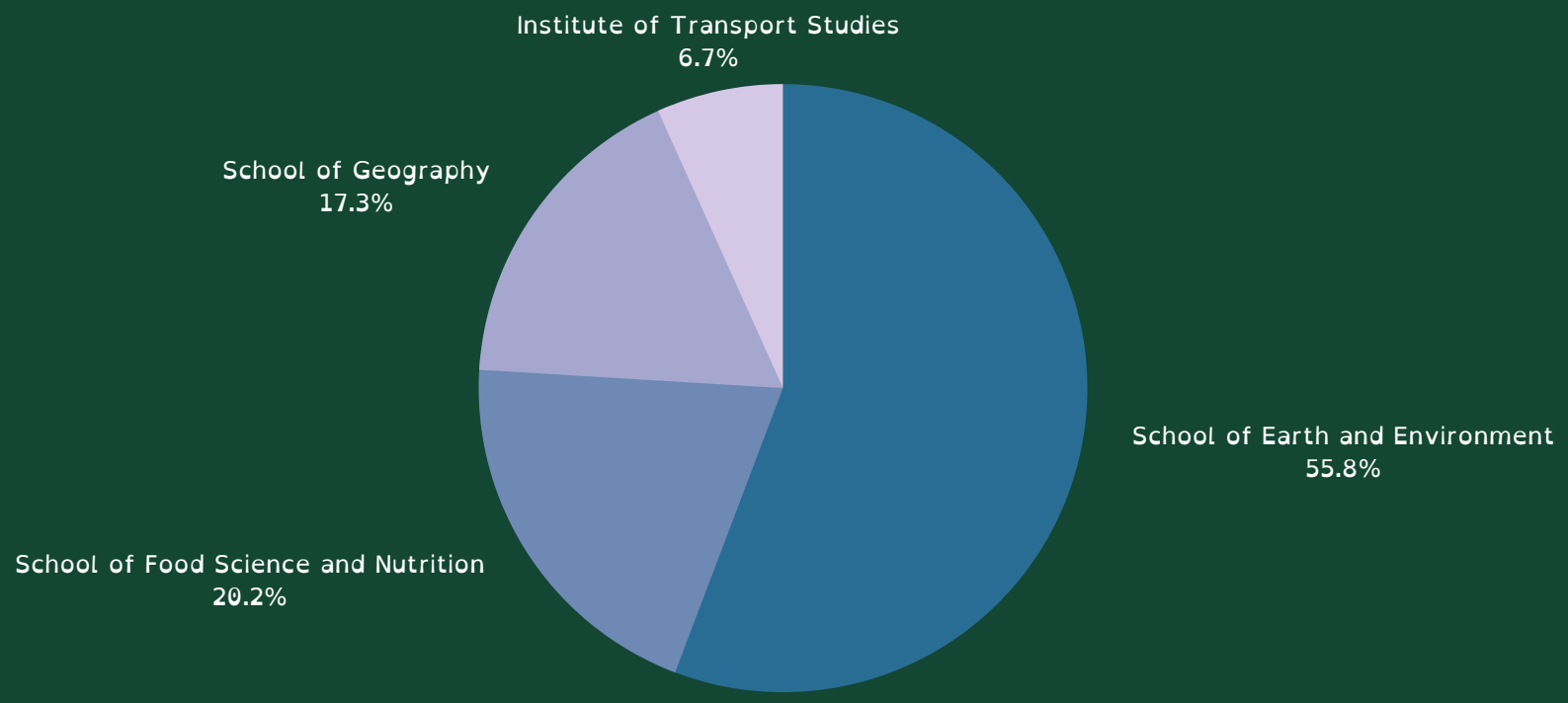
Mystery of iniquity/ Lauryn Hill

La vida es un carnaval (Life is a carnival)/ Celia Cruz

Composition of participants

A total of 104 people responded to the survey across the Faculty of Environment. The breakdown of who responded to our survey is as follows:

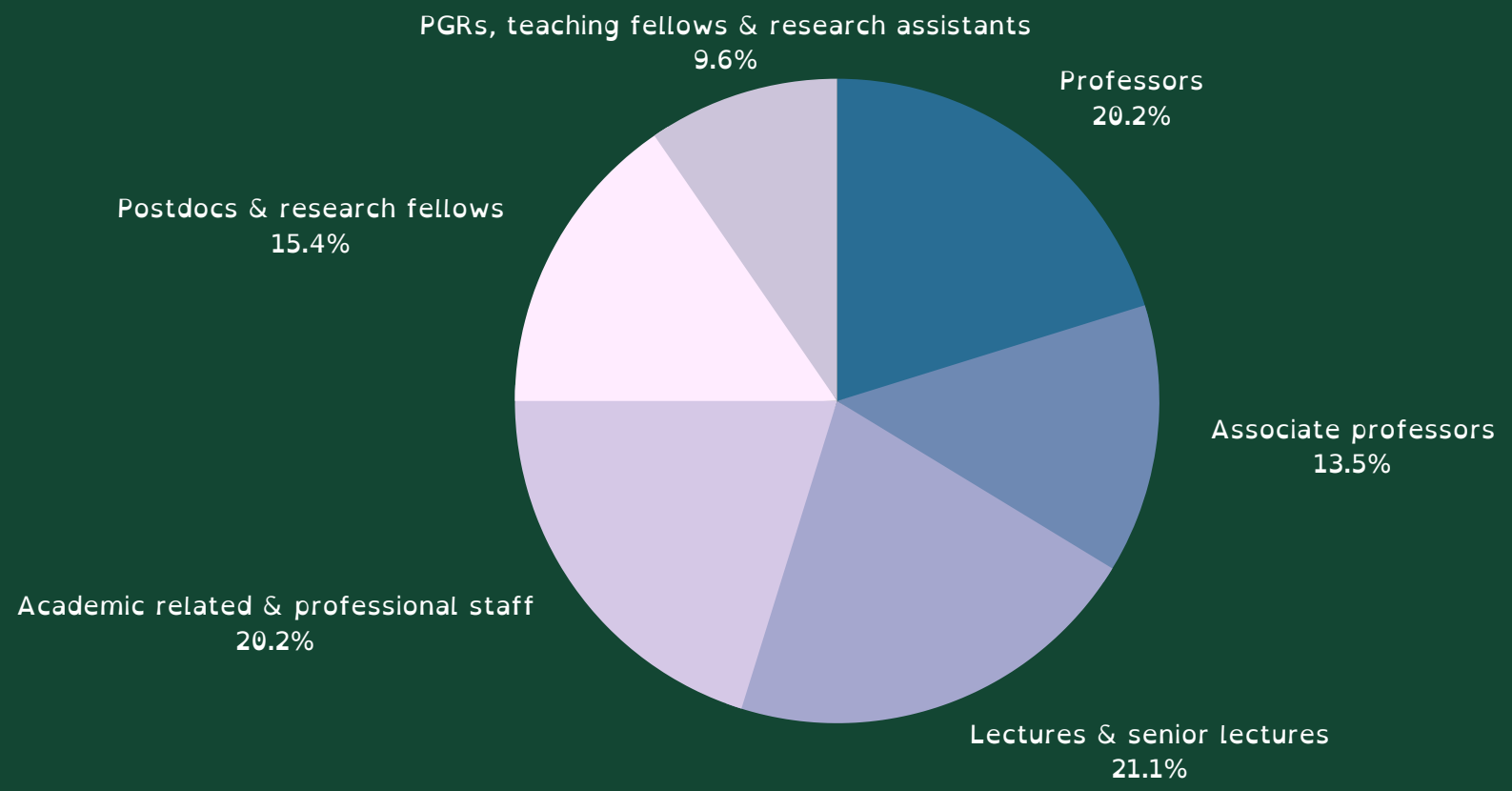
- 50% identified as male, 48% as female and 2% preferred not to say.
- Most staff who participated in the survey identified as white (83.65%).
- Over half of the responses came from staff of the School of Earth and Environment. The different schools vary in size, with response rates being proportionally representative:



- There was a variety of teaching engagement and student related activities carried out by participants:
  - Most participants are directly involved in teaching activities: lectures (75%), dissertation supervision (68.3%), practical sessions (51.9%), seminars (50%), tutorials (48.1%), fieldtrips (40.4%).

- 53.6% of respondents were module leaders, 51.9% were academic personal tutors and 8.7% were in Student Education Support.
- 10% indicated they are not involved in any teaching related activities.

- The survey received responses from a variety of people in diverse roles in the Faculty of Environment:



The multiple understandings of decolonisation

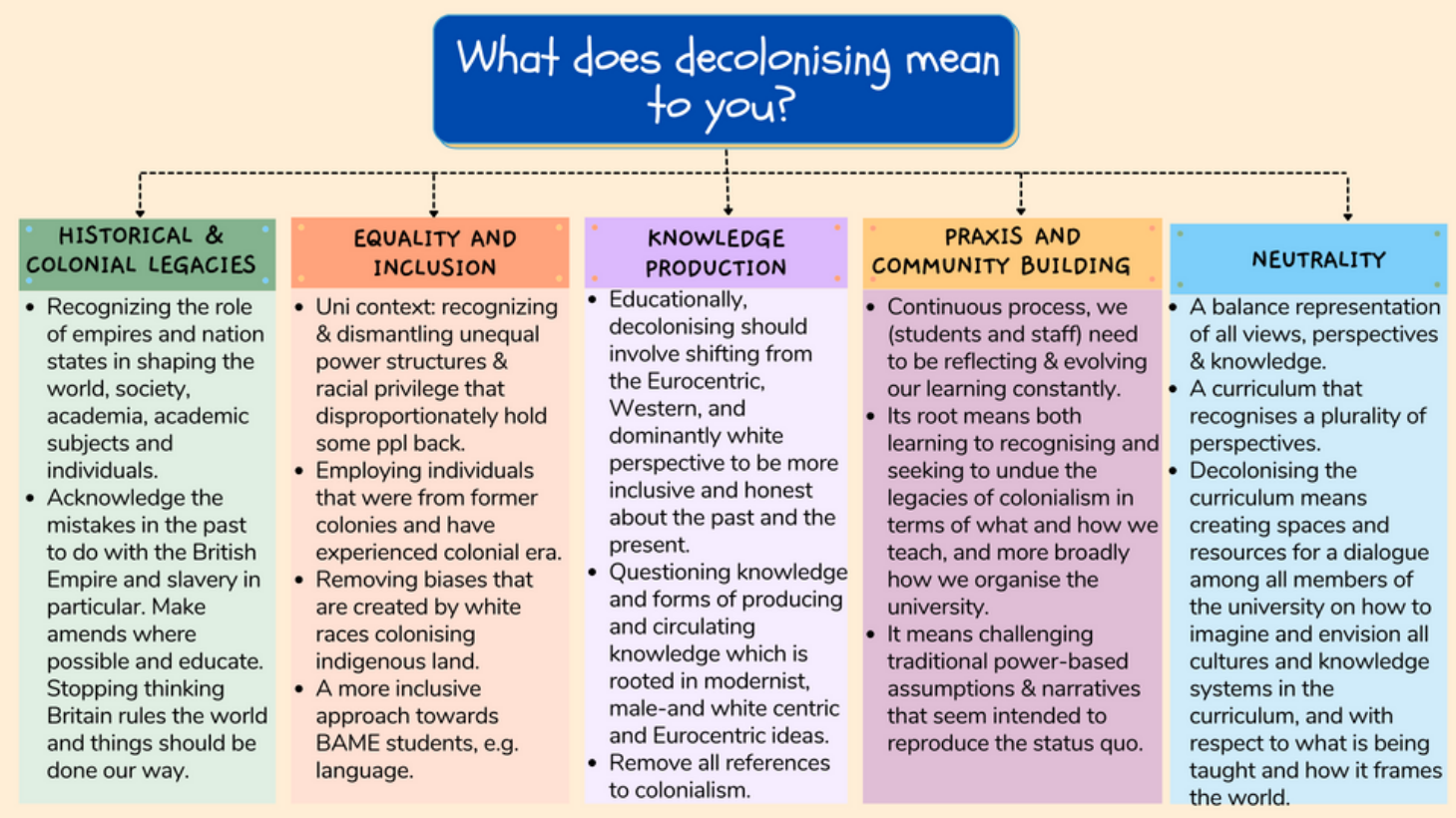
> *"While in Western academia, we are always in competition with one another; as Indigenous scientists we collaborate because we know that we are ultimately stronger together. Being an Indigenous scientist means our communities come first, and we will continue building frameworks and paradigms to shift settler colonialism within the sciences" (Hernandez, 2022: 12).*

An overwhelming majority of participants indicated they knew what 'colonialism' meant (88.5%). It was important for us to know if people were familiar with the term and how it is used within the 'decolonising the university' context. Despite traditional views assuming university staff share a common understanding of what terms such as colonialism and decolonisation mean, this is not the case. Our follow up question "What does decolonising mean to you?" reflects the wide variety of definitions about these terms.

There was a consistent lack of understanding and/or inconsistencies of what decolonising is in the HE context and beyond. This is relevant as how staff are (mis)understanding decolonisation has a direct impact on the way change is (not) implemented or resisted in the Faculty of Environment. In order to understand the multiple meanings participants attributed to 'decolonisation,' we applied the harmful narratives framework discussed in the methodology section of this report.

We grouped the 104 responses into 5 major categories: historical and colonial legacies, equality and inclusion, knowledge production, praxis and community building and neutrality. An example of some of the quotes which highlight each category are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Staff responses on what decolonising means to them



Source: Own elaboration. Examples of participant quotes to the survey question: What does decolonising mean to you?

As seen in the quotes in Figure 2, there were huge differences in definitions given by respondents. It is particularly worrisome that decolonisation has often been conflated with Equality and Inclusion initiatives and/or practices. It is important we try to address racial and social inequalities within our faculty, yet decolonisation is much more then institutionalised EDI initiatives (Arday, Belluigi and Thomas, 2021).

Using EDI work as interchangeable with decolonisation can do more harm than good as: "'Decolonization' has emerged as a buzzword in this context but intended goals of decolonization movements are self-determination and sovereignty (of land, health care, education, justice and governmental structure), and the dismantling of colonial systems that fuel inequity. Individuals and

nations may or may not be interested in economic parity or equity within a Eurocentric system of values, therefore EDI (equality, diversity and inclusion) enhancements are usually understood as anticipated results of decolonization, not ultimate goals themselves" (Klymiuk, 2021: 245).

It is encouraging to see a high number of participants understanding decolonisation as challenging knowledge production, particularly that emanating from the West/Europe. Nevertheless, as stated in the introduction as well as recommendations sections of this report, decolonising the university requires the transformation of the material realities which are embedded at a structural level, which allows colonial power relations to persist in educational spaces.

Our findings coincide with what Shahjahan, et. al. (2022:85) found in their review of decolonising the curriculum and pedagogy (DCP) initiatives across the globe: "Overall, the literature on DCP suggested three meanings of decolonization: (a) recognizing constraints, (b) disrupting, and (c) making room for alternatives. All three meanings, while not exclusive, fed on each other." For example: "Across the literature, faculty frequently resisted Eurocentric knowledges as an act of curricular decolonization." (Idem: 92). However, it is concerning to see there were several participants which believed decolonisation means not discussing the harms of colonialism, removing authors just because they are white or European or that the goal of decolonisation should be to be 'neutral' and have a 'balance' representation in the educational material we teach.

A consistent lack of understanding of what decolonising is, misinterpretation of terms and practices has meant a focus on swapping reading lists without addressing structural issues, including our pedagogical practices. Lack of understanding leads to lack of deeper engagement and consideration of our own positionality and privileges within power structures.

A minority of staff understood decolonisation to entail a holistic approach which constitutes a continuous process involving questioning the colonial legacies in maintaining the status quo. This is important, as it reflects a better understanding of the connections between university as a powerful institution and wider social power inequalities.

A small number of participants were unsure what the term meant: “Seems like a minefield and not sure where to start or what is expected” (Survey participant). As seen in What is decolonising the curriculum section, there is a fear among several staff of being seen as not knowing something they should, hence feeling anxious and overwhelmed at the prospect of decolonising their research/teaching and/or role in the university.

We have found there is a perception that there is little to no allowance for people to express they are unfamiliar with what decolonisation is and where to begin to decolonise our lives. While minor in quantity, we did get answers which completely opposed the entire concept of decolonisation. We will expand on this point in the What's race got to do with it section. Finally, despite an overwhelmingly positive engagement with the question: what decolonisation means to you, participants showed hesitation and resistance when it came to diving deeper as to what this looks like in their own research and teaching.

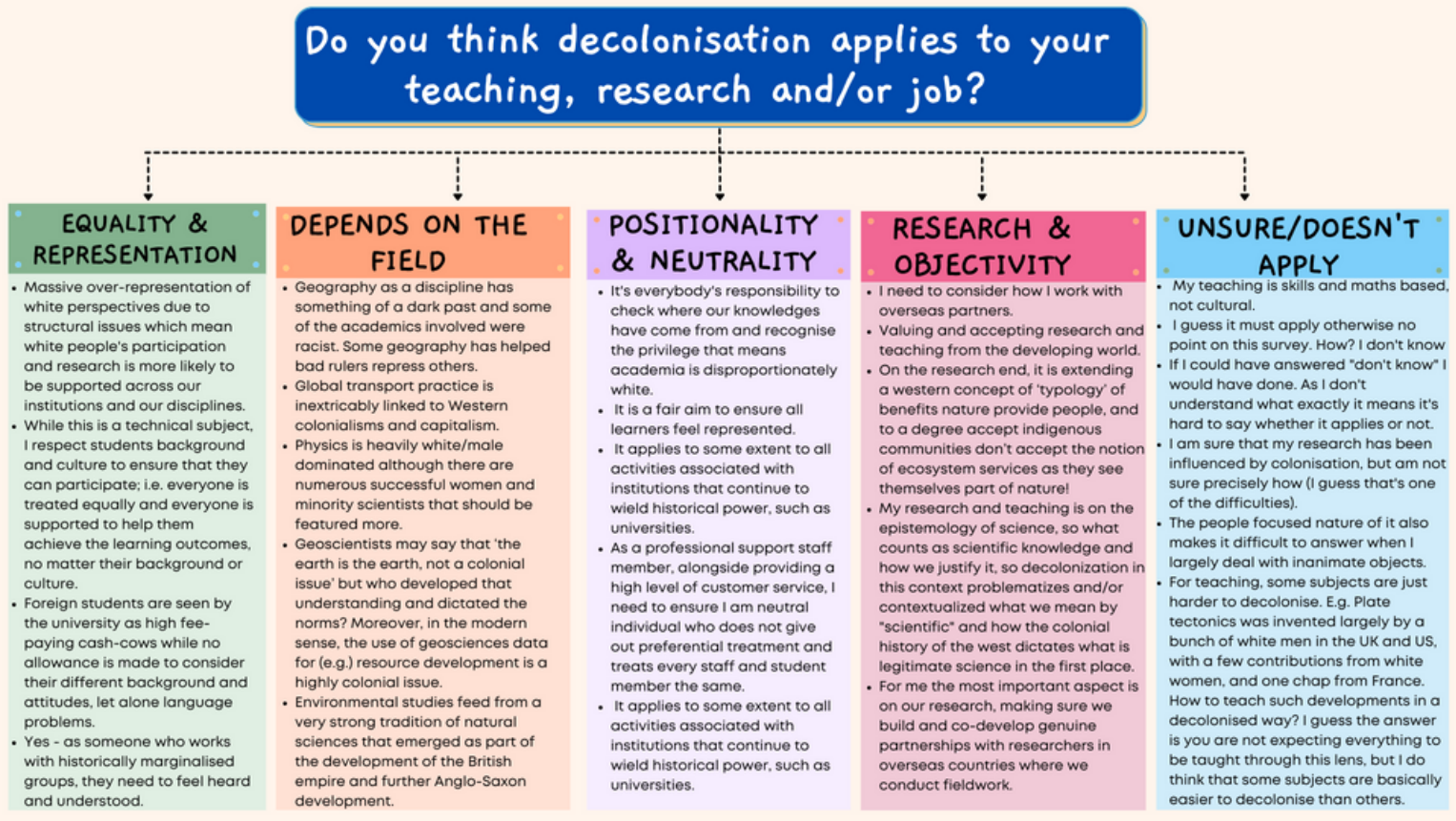
The (in)animation of coloniality

"Whether we engage students in the learning of mathematics, history and social studies, language arts, chemistry, physics, or vocational skills, the content of our pedagogy highlights, examines, and discusses transforming the mutually reinforcing systems of neocolonial and capitalist domination and exploitation [...]."
(Tejeda, Espinoza, and Gutierrez, 2003:31).

We wanted to see what responses we would obtain when we asked participants to reflect deeper on whether decolonisation applied to their own research, teaching and/or role at the university. In order to understand the responses; we utilised the harmful narrative framework discussed in the methodology section. We have separated quotes into five themes based upon the answers we received: equality and representation, depends on the field, positionality and neutrality, research and objectivity and unsure or doesn't apply (see Figure 3).

A high number of staff believe Equality and Inclusion practices are decolonisation. While it is important we increase the number of students and staff from marginalised backgrounds, particularly racially minoritised communities, representation politics does not equal equality nor decolonisation if the root of the harm continues to stay in place. As decolonial thinker Jairo Fúnez reminds us: "I repeat, decolonization isn't about making room for historically excluded people to have a seat at the same table. It's about destroying the damn table to change the terms of the conversation & to dismantle the colonial order of things [...]" (Fúnez, 2022). Decolonisation within the university (and beyond) is about dismantling structural systems which allow violence, inequality and epistemicide to flourish. We understand epistemicide as the explicit point of action of the colonisers to erase and disrupt indigenous knowledge and practices as a form of submission (de Sousa Santo, 2014).

Figure 3 Staff responses on application of decolonising their jobs



Source: Own elaboration. Example of participants quotes to the survey question: Do you think decolonisation applies to your teaching, research and/or job?

The tension between EDI language and decolonising practice became evident when we analysed participants' responses regarding their own (lack of) involvement in conversations and actions around decolonising their own research and teaching. There was a tendency among respondents to think decolonisation applies more to teaching than research.

When discussing teaching, a high percentage of respondents felt decolonisation doesn't apply to their disciplines because of the nature of them which involve a "rigorous" scientific process. They argued decolonisation did not need to happen in their field given they focus on experiments, working in labs and/or with inanimate objects versus human relations. Yet, as Tejeda, Espinoza and Gutierrez (2003) remind us, there is no discipline,

including those heavy leaning towards science, which is exempt from colonialism. For example, in environmental and conservation studies: “Topics [...] such as managing common-pool resources, defending wilderness and wildlife, and addressing population growth are commonly presented through readings that center the perspectives of white, male writers: Guifford Pinchot, Madison Grant, Garett Hardin, or Paul Ehrlich, for example. The inclusion of these voices introduces students to the zombies of racial supremacy arguments, while also entrenching a patriarchal narrative in the field (Wohlforth 2010). In so doing, people of color and historically marginalized populations can often, even if inadvertently, become depicted as solely a cause of problems, barriers to progress, and passive sponges on the receiving end of environmental harms” (Bratman and DeLince, 2022: 199).

It is imperative decolonisation conversations and initiatives are happening at every level and school in the Faculty of Environment, especially when courses tend to be studied by a large portion of white students. We need to begin to question how are racially minoritised communities both in the Global North and the Global South depicted in our teaching, even if our modules are about more “scientific” based topics (Semken, 2005).

As noted by Le and Matias: “Although discussions of race are discomforting, educators everywhere, and particularly science educators whose field is lacking racial and gender diversity, need to understand how race relates to the way we imagine science. Ignoring such a relation only inhibits our understanding of how racism and, particularly, whiteness, may manifest within the classroom, thus recycling its hegemonic stronghold” (Le and Matias, 2019: 17). Our findings show there is reluctance to acknowledge how research is influenced by colonial relations.

We must therefore ask:

- What counts as research?
- What and who shapes research?
- Who gets to do research?
- Who benefits from research? In what ways?
- How are communities involved in different stages of the research cycle and projects?
- What counts as accountability?
- Who are we accountable to?
- What is the purpose of the research?
- Who finances the research?
- How does our positionality in terms of gender, race, immigration status, class, among other intersecting identities, affect the answers to the above questions?

A small number of respondents took the approach of "West is best" and "Science is objective and to imply otherwise is "woke." Frequently science goes unquestioned, particularly around the power dynamics between researcher-participants. Global North research tends to extract data, knowledge and practices from the Global South which disproportionately benefits the West (Cruz and Luke, 2022).

Furthermore, the problem with understanding objectivity as interchangeable with neutrality obscures the fact that many scientific advancements were made at the expense of marginalised communities (Edwards and Shahjahan, 2021). Therefore, it is important we reflect on the role of science in colonisation and its continuous impact in our teaching and research because: "We see how white scientists continue to be oblivious to settler colonialism and how deeply rooted it is in the environmental sciences, physics, medicine and other science fields. There is a failure to reflect on the founding history of these fields and how these founding histories continue to play a major role within the fields and disciplines that have been created from within" (Hernandez, 2022: 83).

Work has begun to address the ongoing legacies of colonialism in specific fields such as astrology, conservation, environmental science, medicine, physics and oceanography to name a few (Bratman and DeLince, 2022; de Gracia, 2021; Hernandez, Scherr, German and Horowitz, 2022; Lokugamage, Ahillan and Pathberiya, 2020; Puniwai: 2020; Witze, 2015). In the field of food science Indigenous, Aboriginal and First Nation academics and community activist have long advocated for the recognition of their epistemologies in relation to plants, dietary needs and health issues; as well as the impact colonialism has in their communities (Hassel, Lal Tamang, Foushee and Bad Heart Bull, 2019).

For example, Spencer, Fentress, Touch and Hernandez (2020) explore how current colonial relations in Hawai'i impact health and food justice for Native Hawaiians as most of the food is now imported. They contain high levels of salt, sugar and processed goods which increase the appearance of diabetes, heart attacks and other health issues among the population. They argue we cannot address access to healthy food without discussing environmental justice, US occupation and the role the US army plays in contaminating Hawai'i: "Food justice recognizes that the food system is a source of injustice, oppression and environmental degradation. It is also widely recognized that it is part of the neoliberal capitalist project" (Singh, 2017: 1).

In geoscience, there has been a more active attempt to include Indigenous scientists in research projects that is not tokenistic (Klymiuk, 2021: 246). It is important to note some participants have begun to question their role in extractivism and power imbalances in relation to their colleagues and communities in the Global South.

On whiteness: What's race got to do with it?

> *"It is in the shuns we receive from colleagues, who stop inviting us for lunch when we have spoken up for students of colour too often at department meetings, in the silence when it is always only our voices speaking out, and in the emotional labour of absorbing the anger and deflections of defensiveness, or soothing tears of awakening" (Dar, Liu, Martinez Dy, and Brewis, 2021: 700).*

It is often assumed staff and students are in favour of decolonising the university. This is not necessarily the case, and we must recognise some of the reasons behind this. It was important for us to be as honest as possible about the range of answers in the survey. Throughout the survey we received responses which reflected resistance towards decolonisation. Though a minority, responses ranged from decolonisation not being applicable to the person's field, feeling offended we were questioning scientific methods to outright racism (see Figure 4). It is relevant to note those who expressed negative attitudes towards the topic of decolonisation identified as white which reflect wider conversations around white discomfort.

We understand white discomfort as: "[...] explicitly or implicitly as evading questions, dismissing counter arguments, expressing shame, remaining silent, interrupting others in anger, withdrawing from conversations, avoiding non-Whites and so on" (Zemblyas, 2018: 87). Discussing issues of power imbalances based on colonialism and racism generates discomfort in university spaces which are overwhelmingly white and: "[...] white discomfort is not allowed within the colonizing project of the university –that is, the project by which the university creates hierarchies of people, knowledge, and spaces based on race" (García Peña, L. 2022:15).

Figure 4 Resistance expressed by staff on decolonisation

Source: Own elaboration. Example of participants quotes which highlight their resistance towards decolonisation.

This is reflected in one of the answers from the survey where a participant called us “minorities with a grudge”. It is pertinent we acknowledge not everyone has the same positionality within university spaces. We ask the reader to reflect on whose voices are often heard more, whose are silenced, how are Black, Indigenous and People of Colour staff and students referred to and portrayed when these topics arise. It is not the same to address racial and colonial injustices within university spaces if you are a white person, even if you are a woman, then if you are a racially minoritised person. We must build community spaces which “[...] build power in individual and group anti-racist practice, even when this is difficult to envisage because these systems are embedded. As radical practitioners we can use our discretion to ask critical questions, and build alternative frameworks of resistance into our culture of practice” (Johnston and Akay, 2022: 32).

This brings us to the emotional toll this work has, particularly for Black, Indigenous and People of Colour, who must navigate white fragility, uncomfortableness and racist attitudes (Chi Hyun Park and Tomkinks, 2021). For those of us who have been engaged in decolonising conversations and practices long before it became "trendy," we have witnessed and experienced first-hand the pushback against discussing colonialism and racism within our institutions. This is not about wanting the reader to have pity, but rather to come to terms with the realities many of us face.

It is not about individual attitudes but structural dynamics as: "Attributing white discomfort to individuals – e.g. Whites' disinclination to scrutinise their personal advantages and privileges – and urging Whites to 'deal with' their discomforting feelings do not necessarily interrogate the wider structures and practices of race, racism and whiteness that trigger such feelings in the first place" (Zemblyas, 2018: 87). Our findings coincide with Shahjahan et.al. (2022), who have studied the effect of whiteness in decolonising initiatives in education.

This backlash is representative of wider socio-political dynamics which have been exacerbated since 2020 with the global protests against the murder of George Floyd by police officers in the United States which highlighted police brutality towards Black people and the toppling of slave trader Edward Colston's statue in Bristol. These actions have generated conversations around racism, white privilege and the ongoing impact of colonialism in our communities. Universities have not been exempted from those conversations. Many universities, including the University of Leeds, put out statements in support of Black Lives Matter (University of Leeds, 2020). Yet one needs to ask what has happened since. What clear and tangible actions have been taken by institutions who put out statements to change the reality of Black staff and students? What support have universities given to community-led projects who are actively combating racial and colonial injustices? In our recommendations, we set out clear steps the university, Faculty of Environment and the four schools can take to address some of these issues including reparations

(Stop the Maangamizi Campaign; Holly Jr. and Masta, 2021). It would be naïve of us not to discuss the adverse reaction that has occurred since 2020. For example, there is now an attack on Critical Race Theory (CRT) in the UK and the US where: "More than 42 states in the U.S.A. are currently introducing legislation that either ban or restrict the teaching of CRT and other forms of inequality such as sexism, homophobia, etc. within school curricula (Villarrea, 2021; Morgan 2022). In a similar vein, in the U.K., The Report of the Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparities (HMG, 2021), which is also known as the Sewell Report, effectively rewrites the official narrative on state of racism within the U.K. and denies any form of institutional racism (Tikly, 2022)" (Rizvi, 2022: 226).

We highlight the example of CRT as this was mentioned by one of the respondents who stated "The entire concept of decolonisation was developed by critical race theorists, who take the rejection of Enlightenment rationalism (the basis of modern science and, therefore, everything I teach as one of their starting points. [...] Such anti-scientific ways of thinking must never be allowed to infiltrate university science departments" (survey participant). This quote not only represents the type of resistance emanating from some staff but also highlights the notion that "West is best" which is also reflected in other quotes seen in Figure 4. Despite this push back, many staff are in a disposition of engaging with decolonisation conversations and practices which is reflected in the next section.

What is decolonising the curriculum?

"Whiteness centers Eurocentrism, and therefore, White voices on what science can be. As such, educators unwittingly expect students to assimilate and think about science the way it is presented (Ryan 2008). It burdens our students of Color to internally reconcile their own beliefs and narratives with mainstream science" (Le and Matias, 2019: 24).

Various challenges are faced by staff in the face of decolonising their research, teaching and/or job. The majority thought it did apply to their teaching, research or role and it was their responsibility to engage in wider conversations and practices on decolonisation. Though the challenges faced appear to be in not knowing where to start, and not having resources, including time and finances. There was moderate agreement there was a 'fear of getting it wrong.' Anxieties around challenging power structures and bringing up the subject had lower agreement rates, suggesting once bottlenecks of resources (including time) are addressed, staff would be willing to challenge power structures and engage in decolonisation conversations to a greater extent.

- There was a 48.1% agreement that staff did not know where to start, with 29.8% disagreeing, and the remaining 22.1% being neutral.
- Only 19.3% agreed that decolonisation did not apply to their teaching/research/job specification, with a large proportion of 65.4% disagreeing and only 15.4% remaining neutral.
- Similarly, there was low agreement (14.4%) that it was not their responsibility to address this issue, with a high 70.2% disagreeing, with 15.4% remaining neutral.

- Lack of time was seen to be an issue, with 57.7% in agreement, 19.3% in disagreement, and 23.1% remaining neutral.
- Lack of resource availability had a 56.7% agreement rate, with 15.3% disagreeing and 27.9% remaining neutral.
- A 'fear of getting it wrong' received an agreement rate of 45.2%, with 30.8% disagreeing, and 24% remaining neutral.
- Stress and/or anxiety to challenge existing power structures within the university had a 29.8% agreement rate, with 51% disagreeing, with 19.2% being neutral.

Over half of respondents agreed lack of resources and time was a major barrier to decolonise their research, teaching or job.

Fear, anxiety and stress of getting it wrong and/or challenging power structures in the university was also expressed.

Efforts to decolonise the curriculum

> *"[...] the reduction of decolonial agendas to hollow diversity initiatives - in which concerns are limited to the tokenistic inclusion of one or two Black and Brown authors on reading lists - shows that, for anti-racist institutional change, there is yet much work to be done (Doharty, Madriaga and Joseph-Salisbury, 2021: 234)."*

There is slow progress within the Faculty of Environment to diversify reading lists and engage in other decolonisation practices. This is reflected in participants responses which show:

- 48.1% of participants make an active effort to reflect diverse voices including ethnic minorities, Global South scholars, LGTBQ+ and other marginalised groups in their teaching versus 31.7% which make efforts to an extent and 20.2% who don't.
- 62.5% of respondents do not think modules and/or programmes in their school enable the use of non-English sources in the curriculum and teaching activities.
- Many respondents (67.6%) had not read the University of Leeds Decolonising Key Principles.
- Over half of participants (56.7%) had heard of decolonising initiatives within their school/faculty/university versus 33.7% who hadn't. A small minority was aware of community led projects outside the university (9.6%). It must be stated we cannot engage in decolonisation without involving communities outside our university. Shahjahan et. al. (2022: 92) found that "Work with populations outside of higher education institutions emphasized that social issues were not simply bound to campus. Some researchers considered the outside walls of the academy as important sources of decolonizing the curriculum and pedagogy."

Overall, we have identified two barriers to thinking and applying decolonising practices to staff teaching, research and specific job roles based on survey responses. These are individual and structural barriers. From an individual perspective, an overwhelming majority of staff are eager and keen to learn, reflect and apply decolonising practices but state they are overworked, underpaid and feel overwhelmed (see Figure 5).

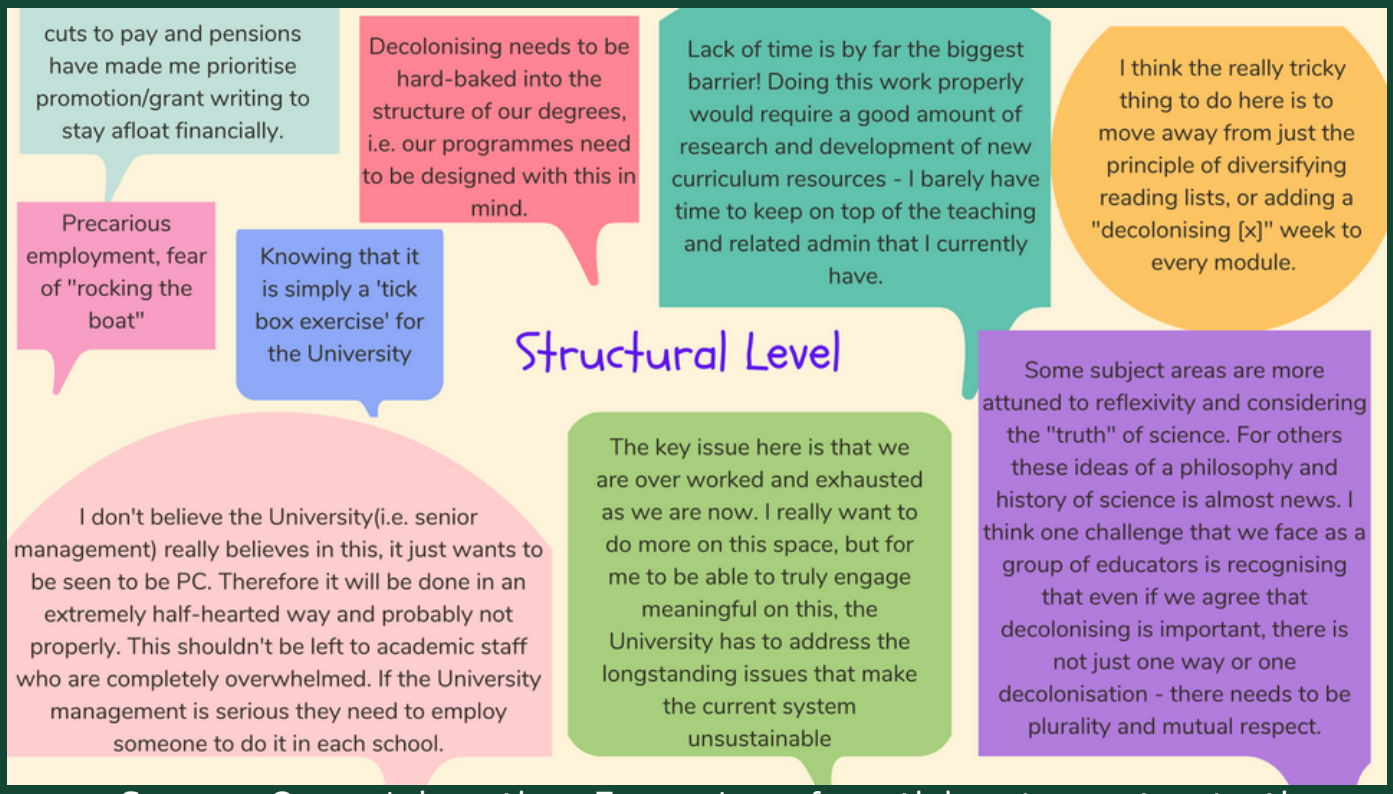
Figure 5 Individual challenges for decolonising your job

Source: Own elaboration. Examples of participants quotes to the survey question: Are there any other challenges you face (when thinking about decolonising your research, teaching and/or job?)?

How can staff reconcile these issues with working towards decolonising? Junior staff and others belonging to marginalised communities have existing barriers to deal with and expressed being worried about having to continuously bring up the topic in conversations with colleagues and/or staff meetings. Another repeating theme was not having sufficient time to engage with literature to get acquainted with terms and practices. This contributed to fears and anxieties of not knowing where to start.

With university staff overworked and overwhelmed, there is a sense of feeling pressured to get a quick guide on steps to implement the university's decolonial framework without having the time to reflect on what this means. Therefore, these initiatives become a top-down imposition and a watered down version of decolonisation rather than a desire to radically change our understanding and position in the world. Staff are not given sufficient time and resources to sit and reflect. This brings us to the structural barriers staff encounter when trying to engage with decolonisation initiatives.

Figure 6 Structural challenges for decolonising your job



Source: Own elaboration. Examples of participants quotes to the survey question: Are there any other challenges you face (when thinking about decolonising your research, teaching and/or job?)?

Overall, our findings of individual and structural barriers are common to other institutions across the globe who have begun to decolonise their curriculum and pedagogy (DCP).

Shahjan et.al. (2022: 95) identified 5 barriers in their research on DCP: " (a) student resistance, (b) context (institutional type and culture and/or disciplinary context), (c) systematic/structural barriers (policies, lack of leadership support), (d) lack of access to resources (knowledge, funding, and staff), and (e) finally, a major challenge was the recognition that there was no pure local or Indigenous knowledge and that all knowledges were entangled with each other, particularly in postcolonial and White settler contexts."

At a structural level, participants expressed how the burden to decolonise seems to also fall on those most involved in teaching, particularly those on fixed-term contracts and lower paid staff members. Respondents also showed hesitation towards these initiatives as they thought this was just a tick box and tokenistic exercise on behalf of the university. Others raised the issue of the university wanting to apply a blanket one size fits all approach across the institution without considering multiple variables such as the nature of the discipline, module, type of research and most importantly power dynamics around gender, race, immigration status, class, type of employment, etc.

2 comfort break: Refried beans

Ingredients:

500 gr dry black beans

epazote (optional)

Water

Salt

Onion and garlic

Vegetable oil

Instructions:

Empty the beans into a container, remove stones and those beans that are split.

Put clean beans in a large pot and cover with water. How much water? What the beans ask for, this might vary according to type of beans, humidity and altitude. Add salt. If you have access to epazote include a tiny bit in the pot.

Cook the beans over low heat and cover. How long? This again will vary depending on the needs of the beans. Keep checking until they are tender.

When they are cooked, uncover. Meanwhile in another pan, chop the onion and fry it in oil until it changes colour to a light/dark brown, add the onion to the beans.

Uncover, keep cooking and let them get as thick as possible.

Put oil in a pan and add the beans with as little broth as possible.

Smash the mixture with a utensil and if it is necessary put more oil in the pan. Enjoy!

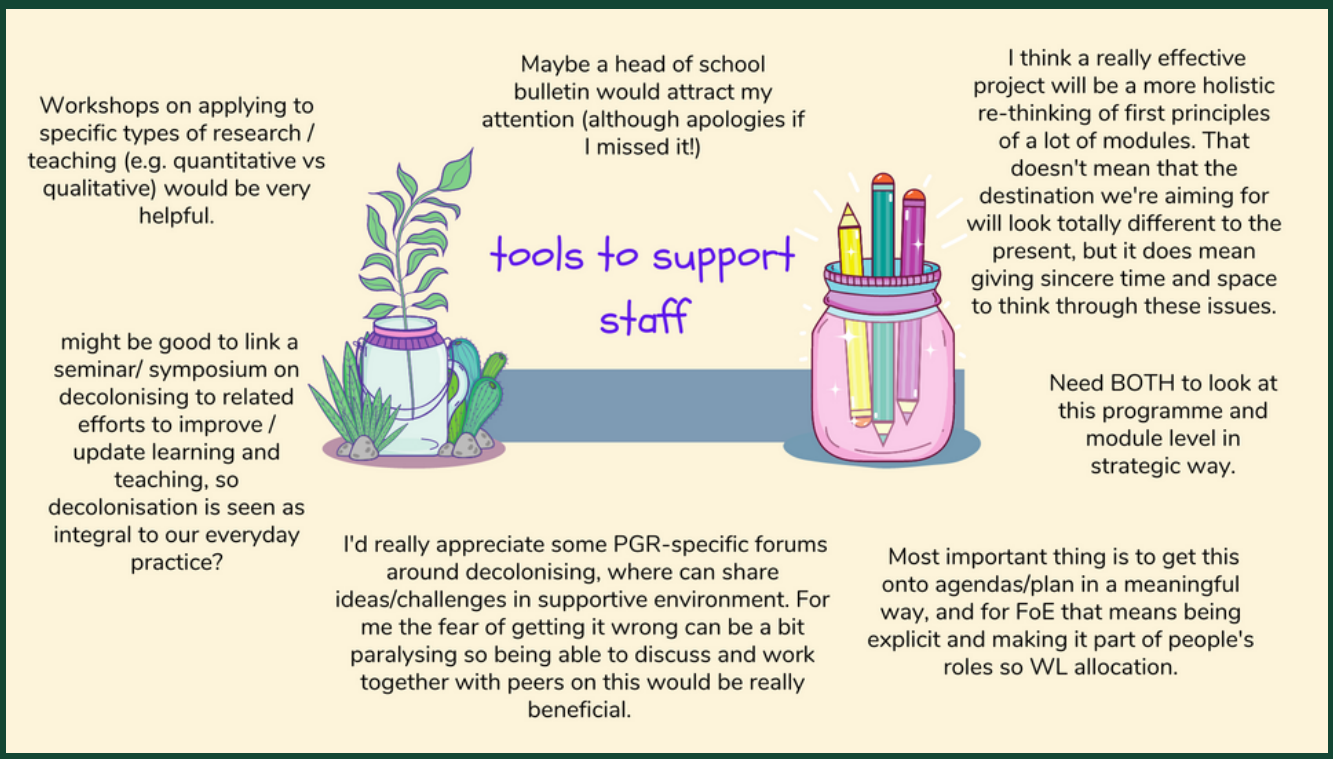
Where do we go from here?

"Decolonizing the university requires that people recognize their own complicity with the colonizing project of the university and make efforts to change those structures even when they benefit from them. To decolonize the university, we would need to admit that our successes are not solely the reflection of our labor but also the result of institutional inequality" (García Peña, L., 2022: 41).

A variety of support measures were proposed to the survey respondents, which enlisted varying levels of agreement. As every measure had a majority in agreement, and low disagreement rates, it highlights the need for wider implementation and diversity of support measures for staff. Measures ordered from most to least agreement. Being allocated the time, having school lead spaces for staff and students were the most supported measures of support (with agreement at over 67% for all three). Disagreement rates were low for all questions, with a tendency for participants to select a neutral response (neither agreeing nor disagreeing), demonstrating low levels of opposition for these measures.

- Respondents were in 76.9% agreement that they needed time allocated to do this work, with a further 6.7% disagreeing and the remaining 16.3% being neutral.
- School-led spaces for staff to discuss issues related to decolonisation had a 69.3% agreement rate, with only 8.7% disagreeing, and a remaining 22.1% being neutral.
- School-led spaces for students to discuss issues related to decolonisation had a 67.4% agreement rate, with only 8.7% disagreeing, and a remaining 24% being neutral.
- Staff student forums had 57.7% agreement, 9.6% disagreement, with the remaining 32.7% being neutral.

Figure 7 Suggestions from staff on support needed



Source: Own elaboration. Example of participants quotes to the survey question: Any further comments.

- The provision of recommended lists had a 59.6% agreement rate, 11.5% disagreeing and the remaining 28.8% being neutral.
- Resources, including financial for both individuals and/or school level initiatives had 52% agreement, with 16.3% disagreeing, with the remaining 31.7% being neutral.
- An annual symposium of staff and student decolonising initiatives in the Faculty had an agreement rate of 45.2%, with 17.3% disagreeing, and 37.5% remaining neutral.
- Provision of workshops had an agreement rate of 48%, with 11.5% disagreeing, with the remaining 40.4% being neutral. Collaboration with community-led projects outside the university had an agreement rate of 45.2%, 16.4% disagreed, with the remaining 38.5% remaining neutral.

We found those in dialogue with decolonial theory and practice within environment and conservation disciplines recommended taking a place-based approach to teaching and researching (Hernandez, Scherr, German and Horowitz, 2022). A place-based approach seeks to engage communities and environments within and near the university. This means it is tailored specifically to each module consequently: "[...] each camp is unique because they constitute diverse mixes of culture, language, activities, and people at each site" (Belczewski, 2009: 195).

This type of teaching and research would mean opening up the university both in a physical and epistemological sense to people and communities outside the university. This would also challenge notions of knowledge production. With an ever-increasing necessity to tackle climate change, a place-based approach has been shown to have a positive effect on students to engage in sustainability practices (Bratman and DeLince, 2022; Hernandez, Scherr, German and Horowitz, 2022; Zocher and Hougham, 2020).

Recommendations

There needs to be structural changes at a societal level. As long as we live in a society where capitalism, neoliberalism, colonialism, racism and other forms of inequalities, discrimination and violence are rampant across the globe and in our immediate communities, we cannot achieve decolonisation. For there to be decolonisation we must address the material realities that make such inequalities persistent and normalised in our societies. Decolonisation is not a destination but an everyday individual and community praxis, way of thinking and understanding our place in the world.

Within the context of Higher Education, until institutions commit to:

- free, accessible and quality education to all regardless of immigration status
- reparations for their role and benefit of the slave trade
- giving land back to Indigenous, Aboriginal and First Nation communities and reparations to them
- abolishing tuition fees
- divesting from fossil fuel energy
- ceasing investing in the arm and border trades
- stop functioning as border agents to international staff and students which enables Hostile Environment policies
- addressing institutional racism, xenophobia, ableism, transphobia and other forms of discrimination suffered by staff and students
- offering safe, fair and equitable working, paying and pension conditions for all staff including those on the lowest pay grade

we must divest from utilising the term decolonising the university.

Nevertheless, we believe there are practical things we can do at different levels to start to address and challenge some of the material realities expressed in this report, in an effort towards decolonisation. Whereas these recommendations are based on learnings from the findings of this report, they are applicable to other institutions and spaces.

We recognise the danger of offering a "to-do list" which can become a "tick-box" exercise that does not challenge the structural powers that are in place which allow inequalities to exist in the first place. We acknowledge the limitations of our recommendations, and these should not be taken as exhaustive. This report hopes to reflect antiracist and decolonial praxis. This will look and feel differently depending on your positionality.

Institutional level

1. Reparations in the form of scholarships (tuition, maintenance, mentorship and mental health support) across the university for undergraduate, Masters and PhD Black students.

2. Free access to university spaces and small bursaries to support community, grassroot-led projects and initiatives in West Yorkshire addressing racial, colonial and social inequalities.

3. Recognise alumna who have contributed to the fields of decolonising such as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (Kenyan author and academic) and Nina Gualinga (Ecuadorian environmental and indigenous rights activist) beyond honorary degrees. What is the university actively doing to collaboratively work with them and their communities?

4. Commit to campaigns such as those led by People & Planet (student-led UK organisation) Fossil Free Careers, Fossil Free, and Divest Borders campaigns.

5. Actively oppose Hostile Environment policies which disproportionately effect racially minoritised communities.

6. Recognise racial trauma as mitigating circumstances for students (this is already implemented at Goldsmith University) and compassionate leave based on racial trauma for staff (Loughborough University has done this since 2020).

7. Increase access to mental health services, especially for staff and students from marginalised backgrounds.

8. Increase support for students from a wider participation (WP) background who are having to work full or part time to

Institutional level

provide for basic needs such as food and shelter while studying. While the Plus Programme is a good start, we suggest the need for a maintenance allowance for students from WP. This is particularly pertinent during the current living crisis.

9 Academic related, professional service, catering, cleaning, library, IT and security staff should be invited to attend graduations. They are a key part of student experience and should equally be valued as academic staff.

10 Graduation gowns for staff should all be the same regardless of where staff obtained their degree. This can create elitism amongst staff; as colleagues working in the same institution this facilitates community building.

11 Allow flexibility in workplace. Provide permanent desks for staff and PGRs who want and/or need it. Hot desking can make some staff feel they do not have a space in the university and can hinder efforts to build a sense of belonging.

12 Acknowledge and support staff and students who are having to go to food banks because of the ongoing living crisis and fall in wages.

13 End the race, gender and disability pay gaps in our institution. The university needs to produce the data of the existent pay gaps and commit to a strategy on ways in which the gaps will be ended.

14 Do not assume everyone in the university wants to 'decolonise', question privilege and/or change the status quo.

Faculty level

1. Create at least one scholarship per school in the faculty for Black students. These scholarships are to include tuition, maintenance allowance as well as mentorship and mental health support. This is a form of reparation.

2. Fund initiatives which support networks and spaces created for marginalised students and staff within the faculty.

3. Acknowledge the unpaid physical and emotional labour carried out by staff and students to 'decolonise' the curriculum and pedagogies as well as carrying out anti-racist and EDI work in the form of work allowance, career progression, and other forms of recognition.

4. Encourage and include more initiatives like communal shared sustainable gardens which will allow staff and students to connect with the land, provide a space to decompress as well as food which can be shared among the university community.

5. Provide resources (finances, time, space, among others) for the ongoing work around 'decolonising' within the faculty to organise workshops, seminars, and other resources for staff and students.

6. Question the type of images and videos the Faculty uses when promoting itself. What, who and how are people, land, natural resources, biodiversity, objects depicted? How are we referencing them? Do we use language that (re)produces colonial structures? Who is centered in the images and videos? Do we have permission to use them?

School level

1. Allocate time in workload models for this type of work.
2. Fund initiatives which support networks and spaces created for marginalised students and staff within the school.
3. Invest in community building events and activities for staff and students.
4. Support student-led initiatives such as Buyers Remorse (Fine Art and History of Art at University of Leeds) which help students report racial incidents in the school.
5. Encourage away days for staff to get to know each other in a professional and personal way. This should also be included in the workload.
6. Motivate staff to collaborate on teaching and research in a non-competitive and individualistic way.
7. Re-evaluate hiring and interview practices to address unconscious biases and expanding the representation of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour staff and students within the School.
8. Question the type of images and videos the school uses when promoting itself. What, who and how are people, land, natural resources, biodiversity, objects depicted? How are we referencing them? Do we use language that (re)produces colonial structures? Who is centered in the images and videos? Do we have permission to use them?

Individual level

1. Embed the way in which colonialism has influenced your research, teaching, module and/or carrying out your job at the university.

2. Consider your positionality and privilege. This is something that needs to be consistently questioned and reflected on.

3. The burden to talk about representation, inclusivity, marginalisation or to educate colleagues on forms of discrimination, racism and other forms of violence should not fall on students and staff who belong to marginalised groups, particularly when discussing trauma.

4. Sit with the uncomfortableness and reflect. Educate yourself and search the internet. Look out for information already out there. Be honest with what and how you can enact change.

5. Use inclusive language. It costs nothing and can make a huge difference in how students and staff feel in our university.

6. Move away from replacing reading lists. While this is important, there is a fixation on this partly because it represents the easiest step in 'decolonising' the curriculum and often does not lead to bigger questions on pedagogy and challenging structural inequalities in our university.

7. Before classes, learning and/or student related activities start, email students on inclusive steps you take in your teaching but leave door open for feedback.

8. Introduce comfort breaks during teaching and/or student activities. For many, it is very uncomfortable to be still in one position for periods of time. Allowing student movement without asking for permission can help to establish trust and is an inclusive practice.

Individual level

9 Use content and trigger warnings in your classes and/or student activities.

10 Ask yourself: who is more likely to speak or asked to speak in tutorials, field activities, lab activities?

11 Increase use of multimedia sources in teaching and research practices such as social media, podcasts, videos and blogs. People can process information differently; therefore, having multiple options aside from text is helpful. Offering different knowledge sources also helps break the dichotomy between knowledge producers (often only giving academic journals and books space) versus alternative forms of knowledge which is often more accessible and available in non-academic sources.

12 Question the type of images and videos we use in our research and teaching. What, who and how are people, land, natural resources, biodiversity, objects depicted? How are we referencing them? Do we use language that (re)produces colonial structures? Who is centered in the images and videos? If it is of our fieldwork, how are local people and landscapes depicted versus the 'researcher'? Do we have permission to use them?

13 Don't be afraid to use resources in other languages and encourage students to do so. Often non-native English speakers are made to feel ashamed and have to whitewash forms of knowledge that are non-Eurocentric, this includes using languages other than English. Being multilingual is a powerful advantage as it gives increased access to other epistemologies, research and knowledge produced in other geopolitical landscapes.

3 Comfort break: self & collective care

Please take some time to engage in an activity of self or collective care. We encourage everyone to go outside and feel their connection to the land and their surroundings. Whether you want to sit and open a window, enjoy a walk, go running, cycling or whatever activity you enjoy doing by yourself and/or with a loved one.

Thank you for spending time reading this report. We hope that you are able to reflect on the learnings and recommendations and implement change.

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Appendix 1

Faculty of Environment: Decolonising Survey

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Page 1: Information page

This survey is being carried out to understand the impact of decolonising the curriculum initiatives and practices in the Faculty of Environment. This survey is intended to be completed by all staff within our faculty and should take you between 5-10 minutes to answer.

The anonymity of your responses will be ensured through no specific characteristics, such as your name, module names, or funding projects being collected. We want you to be able to answer as honestly as possible. Only Dr. Arjan Gosal and Dr. Laura Loyola-Hernández will have access to individual anonymised responses, with any results being reported in aggregated form. Survey data will be stored in password protected files and information will be deleted immediately after producing the final report.

The results of this survey will be used to write a report and present the results to the Faculty of Environment (and corresponding schools and institutes) and resultant knowledge shared more widely through a planned open access article. This is part of the wider decolonising institutional initiatives.

It is at your discretion whether you wish to complete this survey. If you decide to take part, **by clicking the button below to continue, you are consenting to take part in this anonymous survey**.

In case you have any questions or comments please contact Dr. Arjan Gosal a.gosal@leeds.ac.uk (Decolonisation Academic Lead) or Dr. Laura Loyola-Hernández l.t.loyolaherhandez@leeds.ac.uk (Lecturer in Human Geography).

Next >

Page 2: About you

1. What is your gender? * *Required*

Please select

2. What is your race? * *Required*

3. What is your school? * *Required*

Please select

4. What is your role in your school? (please choose the most relevant) * *Required*

- Academic related staff
- Professional support staff
- PGR (with teaching duties, e.g. demonstrating)
- Postdoctoral Fellow
- Research Fellow/staff
- Research Assistant
- University Academic Fellow
- Teaching Fellow
- Lecturer
- Senior Lecturer
- Associate Professor
- Chair
- Professor

5. What type of teaching are you involved with? (Multiple choice) * *Required*

- Tutorials
- Seminars
- Lectures
- Fieldtrips
- Practical sessions (including laboratory sessions)
- Dissertation supervision
- Academic Personal Tutor
- Module leader
- Student Education Support
- Year in industry
- Year abroad
- I am not involved in any teaching activities

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Page 3: Decolonising initiatives and practices

6. Are you familiar with the term colonialism? * *Required*

- ○ No
- ○ Yes
- ○ Other

7. What does decolonising mean to you? * *Required*

8. Do you think decolonisation applies to your research, teaching and/or job? * *Required*

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

9. Please explain your previous answer in a sentence or two. * *Required*

10. How much does your teaching and/or student-related activities reflect diversity in voices including ethnic minorities, Global South, LGTBQ+ and other marginalised groups? * *Required*

- ○ None
- ○ To some extent
- ○ I make an active effort to include these voices in my teaching, research and/or student related activities (year abroad, year in industry, SES, career talks, etc.)

11. Do modules and/or programs in your school enable the use of non-English sources in the curriculum and activities? * *Required*

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

12. How strongly do you agree/disagree that the following are challenges you face when thinking about decolonising your research, teaching and/or job? (select one option regarding how strongly you agree or disagree for each row) * *Required*

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

Please select at least 8 answer(s).

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Not knowing where to start	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It doesn't apply to me or my teaching/research/job specification	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It is not my responsibility to address this issue	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of time	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Not enough resources available	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fear of getting it wrong	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Stress and/or anxiety to challenge existing power structures within the university	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Stress, anxiety and/or fear of being the only one in the room bringing up the subject	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

a. Are there any other challenges you face?

13. Have you heard of decolonising initiatives and/or practices in your school, faculty and/or university, or in other institutions/ community groups: * *Required*

- ○ No
- ○ Yes, within the University
- ○ Yes, other instutions/community groups

14. Have you read the University of Leeds Decolonising Key Principles?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

15. How strongly do you agree/disagree that the following are **types of support you need to implement decolonising initiatives in your teaching, research and/or job?** (select one option regarding how strongly you agree or disagree for each row) *Required*

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

Please select at least 9 answer(s).

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Time allocated to do this work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Recommended reading lists	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
School-led spaces for staff to discuss issues related to this initiative	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
School-led spaces for students to discuss issues related to this initiative	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Collaboration with community-led projects outside the university	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Workshops	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Resources such as money, for individual and/or school level initiatives	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student-staff forums	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Annual symposium of staff and student decolonising initiatives in the Faculty of Environment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

16. Please add any further comments you have using the box below.

‹ Previous Finish ✔

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Questions? Comments? Contact us.

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