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Decolonization of global health summer school

University of Groningen, Campus Fryslan

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Description summer school

General information

The summer school on decolonization of global health, conducted from the 11.07.2022 to 16.07.2022 via Google Meet, offered a six-day program. The first five days consisted of three to five lectures per day. The last day was reserved for student presentations on their learning experiences. The online format allowed for a diverse range of voices from participants and lecturers, spanning across different geographical locations.

The overarching goal of the summer school was to allow the participants to gain a comprehensive understanding of colonialism and its impact on the shaping of health and the knowledge creation in global public health. Specifically, the program aimed to situate decoloniality within the field of global health and to examine in which ways colonialism has made an impact, and how its influence spans to the current day. This exploration included discussions on, and the problematization of definitions, conceptions of health, and the distribution of knowledge on health practices. The program also highlighted the coloniality of health interventions in low and middle-income countries and explored alternatives to these interventions. Through critical reflection, the summer school aimed to provide nuanced perspectives on a diverse range of situations across the globe, emphasizing the unique nuances and differentiations of each situation, whilst pointing out global patterns of coloniality and oppression. To achieve this aim, the program featured lecturers from diverse backgrounds who offered multifaceted viewpoints on decolonization in global health.

The summer school targeted a diverse group of participants, including students, academics, practitioners, NGO and field workers, with an interest in decolonizing knowledge, approaches, and interventions in health and medicine. The program was designed to cater to individuals of all levels, including professionals in the field, as well as beginners to the topic. While the majority of the program was conducted in English, efforts were made to accommodate individuals with varying levels of proficiency in the language. In recognition of this, the program featured one lecture conducted in Spanish to ensure inclusivity for those lecturers not fluent in English.

Content of summer school

The summer school was conducted in a decentralized manner, inviting a speaker on each topic of importance to the topic of coloniality within global health. The lecturers, coming from various regions of the world, were practitioners, NGO workers, and academics. The schedule can be seen in appendix 1. The forthcoming section will present concise summaries of the lectures that were delivered during the summer school.

Day 1

On day one, The first lecture was led by Muneera Rasheed. In this lecture she highlighted how local practices are rarely accurately and respectfully integrated in hospital workings. She further brought up the ethical implication of projects and studies, questioning who it mostly benefits, and the costs that might come from this.

The second lecture of the day, delivered by Kara Smythe, explored the historical impact of colonialism on sexual and reproductive health, with a particular emphasis on the lived experiences of Black communities in relation to contraception. Smythe's lecture highlighted the importance of recognizing the colonial legacy within the context of sexual and reproductive health and promoting culturally sensitive approaches to address the disparities in access to reproductive health services.

In the last lecture, Valentina Campos delved into Andean conceptions of health, which emphasize holistic well-being and do not recognize disease as a distinct entity. Campos's lecture focused on the use of art in healing and self-expression, particularly during childbirth, in Indigenous communities. The lecture emphasized the need to incorporate traditional healing practices in healthcare, promoting the use of art as a tool for healing and self-expression.

Day 2

The day started with a student-led lecture, delivered by Amelia Langeloh and myself, which provided the students perspective on decolonization in higher education. The lecture emphasized the prevalence of racism, discrimination, and marginalization of diverse perspectives within academia, specifically of the university both of the students attended. It highlighted the retraumatizing effect of the academic system on marginalized groups, calling for the need to incorporate decolonial perspectives and practices in higher education.

In the second lecture, Seye Abimbola discussed the impact of the global north's gaze on every region, not just the global north. Abimbola highlighted how Western standards have led to the alteration of the production of knowledge and called for a need to recognize the cultural diversity in global health research and practice.

The third lecture, delivered by Shirish Darak, focused on the impact of colonization on sexuality in India. Darak explored alternative conceptions of gender and sexuality that have been systematically oppressed and eliminated through British colonial rule. Darak examined the criminalization of marginalized groups, such as hijaras, kothi, and eunuchs, and emphasized the need to recognize diverse gender identities and expressions.

The final lecture, delivered by Zulma M. Cucunubá, centered on epidemiology and proposed a shift from individual to population-level determinants of health. The lecture distinguished between sick individuals and sick populations and emphasized the need for a population-level approach to public health interventions. Cucunubá's lecture highlighted the importance of considering the social determinants of health in epidemiological research and practice.

Day 3

Kara Smythe and Mayra Salazar's lecture on Sexual Health and Contraception explored the impact of coloniality within family planning. They examined how colonial laws have influenced the current discourse surrounding abortion and contraception. The lecture also emphasized the potential harm caused by the use of quantitative data, which may ignore individual experiences and lead to routinal silencing and epistemic injustices.

Cristian Montenegro's lecture focused on the colonial legacies in mental health diagnosis, highlighting the ways in which standards of good and bad health are inherently colonial. This link was explored in the context of expectations of gender and social roles, which may further reinforce colonial norms.

Tim van Zutphen's lecture examined the multidimensionality of health inequalities, emphasizing the clustering of health risks and introducing the capabilities approach. The lecture also explored the role of migration and how it may increase vulnerability to specific diseases.

Laura Mkumba's lecture on research and decoloniality highlighted the highly colonial nature of global health as a successor to "tropical medicine." The lecture emphasized the importance of critical analysis of ethical guidelines, and called for a shift in leadership, knowledge, and paradigm in order to advance decoloniality.

Jacqueline Quinless's lecture on the decolonization of data explored the historical tendency to conduct research "on" rather than "with" POC. The lecture emphasized the importance of considering what constitutes a "good life" for each community, and how data can be used to advance decolonial goals.

Day 4

The first lecture of the day was given by Ajay Bailey. His lecture focused on the topic of migration and aging, examining how racialized migration has led to differentiation in concepts

such as expat, immigrant, and racialized conceptions. The lecture also delves into the institutionalized selective mobility in relation to migration and aging.

Nick Emlen's lecture centered around different cultural perspectives on illness, health, and healing, using the Matsigenka community as an example. The lecture explored the lived experiences of different ontologies on health and other conceptions of diseases, highlighting the need for collaboration in finding solutions.

Sepideh Yousefzadeh's lecture addresses the pedagogy of discomfort, emphasizing the importance of emotions, especially those considered taboo, in the learning process. The lecture examined how an emotionally sterile classroom is an expression of colonialism. Furthermore she addressed the emotional responses that can arise in response to coloniality and the emotional labor that decolonization brings forth.

Dan Henhawk's lecture focuses on racialized aspects of sports and leisure teaching, specifically using indigenous residential schools as an example. The lecture examines the role of sports in perpetuating racialized hierarchies and the need for a more inclusive approach.

With the last lecture of the day, Monica Mukerjee explored health and international development, examining ideological, institutional, interpersonal, and internalized oppression in health. The lecture raised the question of how to resist these forms of oppression, drawing on the speaker's experiences in big aid institutions.

Day 5

To start off the last day, Marco Antonio de Carvalho drew on Pulo freires critical pedagogy to highlight the consequences of underrepresentation of marginalized identities in the classroom. Thereby he explored the concept of decolonizing teaching, emphasizing the need for personal education, as well as the need to reconceptualize what is considered knowledge in education.

Valentina Gallo focused on research and belonging. She pointed out how epidemiology emerged from a history of slavery, where the field was mostly about exploring the survival of marginalized populations in the face of diseases. She further discusses the role of embodiment and belonging, as well as the impact of epigenetics on experiences of marginalization.

Eliza Chandler gave the last lecture of the day and the whole course. In this lecture she talked about the task of decolonizing disability through activist art. She highlighted the issue of medical

racism towards disabled people, as well as the misconception of disability as a phenomenon that only affects white individuals. Additionally, she explored the role of art as a tool for cathartic change.

Task allocation

Preparation Work

The team consisted of one professor and five students, comprising a blend of graduate and undergraduate students. The internship involved a range of tasks that encompassed organizational, as well as creative matters, that the six of us divided. My assigned tasks were the following:

Designing and writing the website As part of the internship, I was responsible for creating a website for the summer school program. This involved designing the layout of the website and writing the content to be displayed on it. I worked on the website for several weeks, making sure that it was user-friendly, visually appealing, and provided all the necessary information about the program

Attending practical meetings for summer schools in Groningen: To ensure that our summer school program was successful, I attended practical meetings in Groningen with other summer school coordinators.

Contacting lecturers: As part of my internship responsibilities, I was tasked with contacting certain lecturers who would be teaching at the summer school. This involved sending emails and discussing the availability of people possibly interested.

Preparing and organizing the schedule: Another important task that I was responsible for was preparing and organizing the schedule of lectures and activities for the summer school. This involved making sure that their presentations were scheduled at appropriate times, and arranging other activities such as group discussions and social events.

Creating a promotional video: To promote the summer school program, I was responsible for creating a promotional video. This involved writing the script for the video and coordinating the filming and editing process. I also appeared in the video and delivered some of the lines., see link for promotional video in appendix 2

Attending weekly meetings: To stay on top of the progress and make sure that everyone was on the same page, I attended weekly hour-long meetings with the other interns and the program supervisor. During these meetings, we discussed the progress of each task and allocated new ones as needed

The tasks for the preparation of the summer school were conducted over a period of 24 weeks, which amounted to a total of 96 hours in total.

Work during summer school

During the week of the summer school, we dedicated a total of 48 hours to supervising and moderating the program, which included 8 hours of work per day for 6 days. In addition to the supervisory duties during the summer school, we also allocated approximately 1 hour meetings each day, twice a day, before and after the day, for meetings in order to plan for upcoming sessions, reflect on completed lectures, and ensure smooth organization and execution of the program, amounting to 12 hours.

Additionally, I acted as a live translator for one of the sessions, which was conducted fully in Spanish. This was done so that non english speaking voices could be included, and to ensure that all participants (spanish or non spanish speakers) could fully engage and participate in the session. Furthermore, I had the opportunity to deliver a lecture together with a peer on the students' perspective regarding the topic of decolonization(see slides in appendix 3). This provided an opportunity for me to share my insights and perspective on the subject matter. This session was deeply important to create rapport between students, and organizers, allowing us to open up about the struggles we went through, and connecting all of us through such a complex topic.

The total amount of hours invested during the week therefore were 60 hours. Attached in appendix 1 is the schedule for the days of the summer school, excluding the time we took to reflect and organize.

Reflection and conclusion

When it came to deciding whether I wanted to be a part of the summer school as an organizer, the answer was immediately clear to me. I had many frustrations accumulated, because I perceived an immense neglect of decolonial approaches in most of the education I had received up to that point. Therefore, this project represented a great opportunity for me to tend to those frustrations. This was especially the case as I would not only take part as a passive participant, but rather would be there as an organizer.

Overall I found the experience highly enriching. Academically, I learned a lot about the topic of decolonization but also about the processes that go with organizing an event that aims at teaching about decolonization. Furthermore I found myself also learning on a level of emotional intelligence. Over the course of the week, several emotions arose because of the fact that the topic is one close to my heart. In certain instances I felt a feeling of overwhelm take over me, but

through heartfelt conversation and guidance, It was shown to me that it is possible that if one tries to understand what they are feeling, gather those thoughts, and communicates them with respect and wisdom, then even emotions that are usually considerate negative, can help expand everyone's understanding of each other's perspectives, and improve the quality of the interaction. What was also of great value to me is that throughout the whole process, I saw my contributions appreciated and was even encouraged to take on more control and responsibilities. In this way, I learned to take value in my work and my voice. Which serves me to foster great motivation to keep improving and learning about this area of work. Furthermore, we developed a sense of community with organizers as well as participants which enriched our journey in the goal towards decolonization (see appendix 4 for a collective drawing on this)

Where I learned that I still need to grow is in not hesitating to take initiative to assume more responsibilities, to independently gather information where knowledge gaps of mine might exist, and to communicate and open up as soon as stronger feelings start to arise, all this in a responsible, considerate, and mature manner. I highly appreciated the opportunity to participate in the organization of the summer school, and to acquire the experience and knowledge that was given to me through it, and hope to continue investing time in work like this in the future

As an organizer of the summer school, I am deeply grateful for the experience and knowledge I gained throughout the process. I am thankful for the small community that emerged, as well as for the positive feedback that we received from the participants (and lecturers). Overall, I am grateful for the opportunity to have contributed to this summer school and to have been part of an experience of collective growth.

Appendix

Appendix 1 Schedule and tentative plan

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	11.7	12.7	13.7	14.7	15.7	16.7
2	09:30-11:00 welcome - Introduction - goals - expectation	09:30-10:30 Medicine and representation (Chidiebere Ibe)	09:30-10:30 Sexual health and contraception (Kara Smythe and Mayra Salazar)	09:30-10:30:00 Migratin and mobility (Ajay Bailey)	free	09:30-10:30 (participants' presentation)
3	Julia + Sepideh	Amelia + Sepideh	Sepideh + Mayra	Daria + Sepideh	Sepideh + Daria	
4	Break 11:00-11:30	Break 10:30-11:00	Break 10:30-11:00	Break 10:30-11:00	Break 10:30-11:00	Break 10:30-11:00
5	11:00-12:00 Decolonization and Global health (Muneera Rasheed)	11:30-12:30 Gaze (Seye Abimbola)	11:00-12:00 Mental health (Christian Montenegro)	11:00 - 12:00 Cultura and language (Nick Emien)	11:00-12:00 Decolonizing teaching for medical students (Marco Decarvalho)	11:00-12:00 (participants' presentation)
6	Mayra + Amelia	Julia + Daria	Julia + Sepideh	Julia + Amelia	Amelia + Sepideh	
7	Break 12:30-13:30	Break 12:00-13:00	Break 12:00-13:00	Break 12:00-13:00	Break 12:00-13:00	Break 12:00-13:00
8	13:30-14:30 Introduction to decolonization (Kara Smythe)	13:00-14:00 Sexuality and colonialism (Shirish Darak)	13:00-14:00 Migrents' initiatives (Tim van Zutphen)	13:00-14:00 Pedagogy of discomfort and embodiment (Sepideh Yousefzadeh)	13:00-14:00 Research and belonging (Valentina Gallo)	13:00-14:00 (Ableism, sexuality, and decoloniality)
9	Daria + Julia	Mayra + Julia	Amelia + Daria	Mayra + Julia		
10	Break 14:30-15:00	Break 14:30-15:00	Break 14:30-15:00	Break 14:30-15:00	Break 14:30-15:00	Break 14:30-15:00
11	15:00 - 16:00 Healing and art (Valentina Campos)	15:00 - 16:00 Epidemiology (Zulma Milena Cucunuba Perez)	15:00 - 16:00 Research and decoloniality (Laura Mkumba)	15:00 - 16:00 Indigenous Peoples, Decolonizing Leisure and Land-based Education (Dan Henhawk)	15:00-16:00 Health and international development (Monica)	15:00 - 16:00 Students' perspectives (Julia Gabriela Strack Diaz, Amelia Langenohl)
12	Julia + Amelia	Valentina + Amelia	Sepideh + Julia	Mayra + Daria	Julia + Daria	Sepideh + Mayra
13			18:00-19:00 Decolonizing data (Jacqueline M. Quinless)			
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Appendix 2

Link promotional video <https://youtu.be/WXPsvNop1q4>

Appendix 3 Slides on presentation about students perspectives



Decolonization and Storytelling

- Decolonising the mind, body and internalised humiliation
- To create spaces for different experiences and perspectives for a united understanding and learning.
- Storytelling as a tool to analyse and uncover individuals' lived racialized experience, recentering the voices of those directly impacted.

Two Journey one destination

How did our interest in the topic of decolonization grow?
Fighting a fight alone, but not really.

Julia

Bolivia

High School

University



Amelia

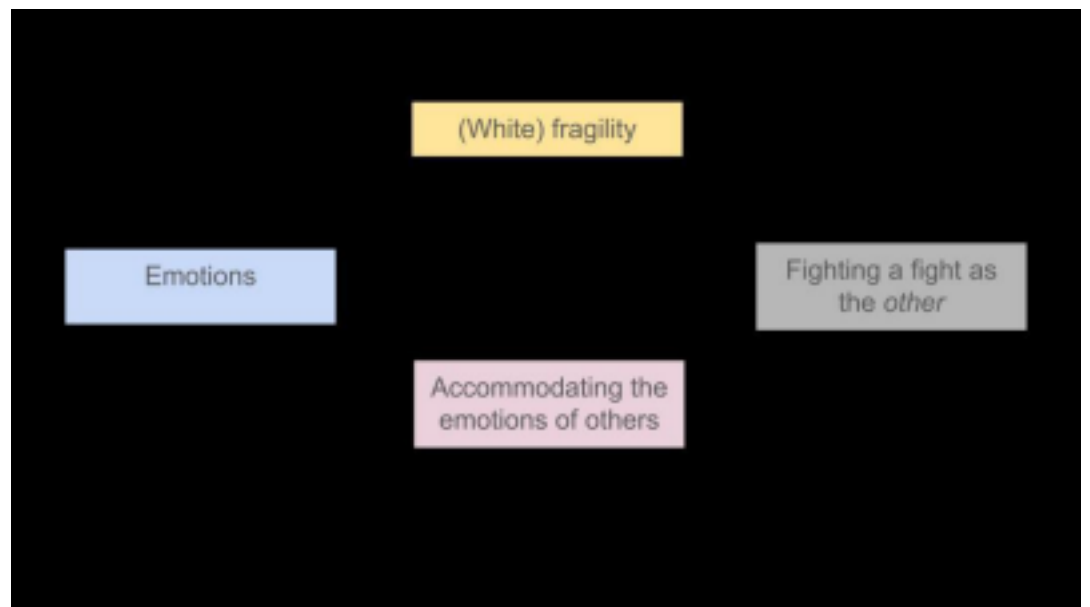
Germany

High School

University



Student voices heard or simply silenced?



Appendix 4 Reflection images on Community feeling of summer school



Takeaway from the week

