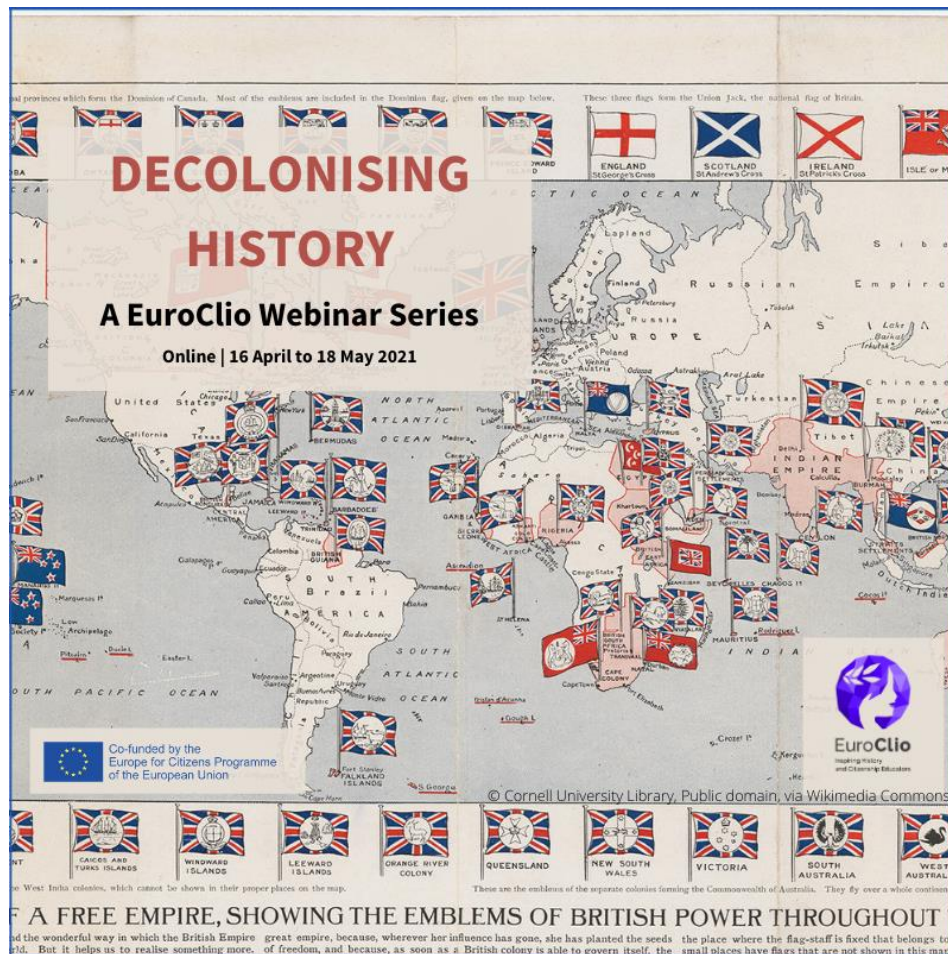




Decolonising History

Webinar Series

16 April – 18 May 2021



Concept Note

Version 10 April 2021

Have you been wondering how to teach about colonialism without resorting to a narrative of victims and perpetrators? Or how to account for the impact of colonialism on history curricula? Would you like to know more about recognising your own biases?

Following the killing of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter protests sparked across the world, we have been asking ourselves these questions.

We are proud to launch our webinar series and thematic month on ‘decolonising history’ during which we will tackle these key questions for history educators today.

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About “Decolonising History”

While calls for better education about the history of slavery and racism have been around for some time, the killing of George Floyd and the subsequent momentum gained by the “Black Lives Matter” movement have prompted mass protests and brought international attention to the problem of systemic racism and injustice.

While recent years have seen a change towards gradually accepting slavery and racism as significant topics in history education, they remain among the most contested topics. Public discussions are often emotional and highly morally judgemental. Although ideas of slavery, ‘race’, and colonialism are historically and conceptually bound, Western narratives about the past generally silence those connections. It is long overdue that the history of the transatlantic slave trade and colonialism, as well as their modern-day legacies, are properly addressed in the classroom. Understanding the history of slavery, its long term economic and ideological repercussions, illustrates the roots of contemporary racial inequalities and related racial identities.

Schools may be the most important site for examining how racial inequalities are produced: they are sites of social reproduction as well as contestation. Schools are spaces where children learn, often for the first time, the official story about their country and their national ideologies. While in some countries teaching about slavery and colonialism has become obligatory, the curriculum is often left open on how it should be taught. Silencing, trivializing, and simplifying the history of slavery are fundamental manoeuvres for the public denial of slavery in schools. Due to a lack of guidance, educators may shy away from teaching about contemporary racism as they are hesitant to use the wrong terminology or simply to overstep. This webinar series will contribute to equip teachers with insights, tools and methods to teach about this controversial and uncomfortable chapter of our past in a responsible, meaningful, and respectful way.

Key questions

The key questions that will be addressed during the training are:

1. What does “Decolonising History” mean?
2. How do we avoid victim and perpetrators narratives in the classroom?
3. How should we talk about racism and colonialism in a diverse classroom, taking into account our own biases?
4. How do you recognise the influence of colonialism on the history curriculum?

The design of the webinar series

The webinar series will take place over a six weeks period in Spring 2021 (from 16 April to 18 May 2021). The programme will open with an icebreaker on the use of popular culture to decolonise history, in which participants will have the opportunity to get to know each other and to collect ideas and resources to teach about the colonial past with popular culture. The icebreaker will be followed

by a keynote lecture. This lecture, hosted by Prof. Peter D'Sena, will help participants define what does “decolonising history” mean, as well as what kind of actions it entails. The keynote will be followed by four hands on workshop, which will provide teachers with tools to effectively talk about colonialism and its legacies in the classroom. Participants will be presented tools and methodologies to:

- Teach about racism and the colonial past of a country.
- Recognise their own biases when it comes to sensitive topics.
- Talk about contested cultural heritage and its links with the colonial past of a country.
- Find diverse, inclusive, and representative sources to bring to the classroom.

The series will close with a feed forward and exchange session, in which participants will have the opportunity to share reflections, insights, tips and tricks on decolonising history, building onto the questions raised during the keynote lecture and the knowledge acquired throughout the series.

Aims of the training

During the webinar series, you will:

- Exchange experiences on teaching about colonialism in your local/national context with other educators, as well as on how colonialism and its legacies are perceived by society.
- Understand how colonialism has influenced historical narratives and the development of the history curriculum.
- Acquire skills and knowledge on how to teach about colonialism and its long-term legacy.
- Learn how to recognise and address your and your students’ biases.
- Learn how to find and use diverse, inclusive, and representative sources.

Expected outcomes

- Increased dialogue on colonialism and its long-term legacy with the international community of history, heritage, and citizenship educators.
- Increased confidence in teaching about colonialism and slavery in the classroom.
- Access to innovative tools, practices and methodologies with a focus on teaching about colonial history.
- Increased awareness of the impact of colonialism on the history curriculum.
- Improved (English) language competence through facilitated and engaged dialogues.