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Introduction

In April and May 2021, EuroClio hosted a webinar series titled “Decolonising History”, over a five-week period. Sessions took place once a week either on a Friday or on a Tuesday. The webinar series included a keynote lecture, four active workshops, and a final feed forward and exchange session. Mid-series, an additional panel discussion was organised on Saturday 15 May. The webinar series was based on acknowledging our colonial past, examining how it is present in the current curricula, and what role it plays in history and citizenship education.

Structure

The webinar series followed this programme:

- Friday 16 April, 16:30 – 18:30 Decolonising History – Keynote Lecture on “Decolonising the Curriculum: an introduction”;
- Friday 23 April, 16:30 – 18:30 Workshop on “How do you decolonise history? The example of CARGO movement”;
- Friday 30 April, 16:30 – 18:30 Workshop on “Making a difference: Learning to Recognise and Interrupt Personal Biases in the Curriculum and Classroom”;
- Tuesday 4 May, 16:30 – 18:30 Workshop on “Contested Histories in Public Spaces” ;
- Tuesday 11 May, 16:30 – 18:30 Workshop on “Tackling the textbook: recognising and rethinking colonial narratives”;
- Saturday 15 May, 14:00 – 15:30 Panel Discussion on Decolonising History;
- Tuesday 18 May, 16:30 – 18:30 Final feed forward and exchange session.

Presentations of the webinar series

The keynote lecture was given by Professor Peter De’Sena, Associate Professor of Learning and Teaching at the University of Hertfordshire and Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Historical Research. During the session, Peter talked about decolonising the curriculum by focussing on the historical dimensions of colonialism and coloniality. An article about this session can be found on the [EuroClio website](#).

The second session, an active workshop, was held by Lawrence Hoo, David Rawling and Alison Hargreaves from CARGO, (Charting African Resilience Generating Opportunities), a collective of artists, poets and filmmakers. Their workshop explored the process of decolonising the history we teach, the challenges involved and the principles that can guide our practice. A summary about this session can be found [here](#).

The third session, an active workshop, was held by Dr. Kay Traille, an associate professor of History Education and History at Kennesaw State University. Drawing from different personal stories, Dr. Traille illustrated what implicit bias is, how they affect us, and how to tackle students’ biases in education. A summary about this session can be found [here](#).

The fourth session, an active workshop, was held by the EuroClio Contested Histories team, June Bam-Hutchison from the University of Cape Town and Dr. Joanna Burch-Brown from the University of Bristol. During this session, the Contested Histories project was presented, followed by a short lecture from June about the colonial legacy of Cecil Rhodes and the statue in Cape Town, as well as a short lecture by Joanna about the work that the 'We Are Bristol History Commission' does to inform the people of Bristol about the history of their city. A summary about this session can be found [here](#).

The fifth session, an active workshop, was held by Tom Allen, Head of History at a comprehensive school in Bath, UK. During this session, the focus was put on history textbooks, how they portray the colonial past, and thus contribute to a one-sided narrative of history education. A summary about this session can be found [here](#).

For the sixth session, a panel discussion was organized. The panelists were Dr. Marlon Moncrieffe, a Senior Lecturer at the School of Education, University of Brighton, Dr. Heloise Sathorar, Head of Department for Secondary School Education at the School of Education, Nelson Mandela University and Dr. Laura van Broekhoven, Director at the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford. During this session, the panelists had an opportunity to share their views of colonialism in education, how this is portrayed, and how to teach about colonial history through multiperspectivity and multiple narratives. A summary about this session can be found [here](#).

The final session was an interactive session, where participants could share their views on decolonising history, share reflections about sessions past, and provide others with good practices. The discussions were led by Eugenie Khatschatrian, and Ned Riley and Stefania Gargioni, both of whom are history teachers. A summary about this session can be found [here](#).

Alicia, a former EuroClio trainee, drafted a resource booklet, which has been shared with participants. It can be found [here](#).

Evaluation of the event

Profile of Participants

In total, 205 people registered for the event, to either one session or more. Out of these, 123 people participated in at least one session. On a geographical scale, participants from European countries were most prominent. Most participants in Europe came from Western, Eastern and Southern Europe, while participants from Northern Europe were few and far between.. In addition, a few participants attended from Asia, Africa and North- and South America. While more females than males attended, a significant amount of participants did not state their gender, making the gender distribution imperfect. Most participants that attended at least a single session, attended the first keynote lecture. Further during the webinar series, attendance decreased and there were, on average, 28 participants per session. Most of the participants did not have to pay a fee for participation, which makes it more likely that they will register.

Positive outcomes

The webinar series was successful and was produced as planned. Each session had at least 15 participants, and the online implementation did not cause issues. During the hosts presentations, there were no interruptions, and they were able to present successfully. The hosts that were a part of the webinar series, were clearly knowledgeable of the topic, and had suitable information to share. There were no situations in which someone would have to think about the relevance of the presentations. In this regard, we gained great new contacts that are useful for future activities. In addition, many participants were completely new to EuroClio, concluding that the webinar series attracted a wide audience. The chat box was very active, with discussions and comments about the session at hand, as well as sharing of suitable resources. During breakout sessions, participants were eager to share their backgrounds, opinions and thoughts about decolonising history and history education. Many interesting conversations were sparked, and participants clearly wanted to actively take part in discussions. It is clear that decolonising history is a topic that educators are interested in, and want to learn more about.

Once the webinar series was over, a thank you message was sent to the participants. This produced movement on our website, which further notes that educators are very keen on finding more information about decolonising history, and trust us to provide resources. In addition, the promotional material shared by the outreach team was successful, and social media representation was strong.

Evaluation form

Once the webinar series was over, participants were provided with an evaluation form. Unfortunately, only 18 replies were received, so this feedback does not reflect the views of everyone. Most participants rated the organizational matters either excellent or very good, and found the frequency of the sessions to be suitable. While for most the timing was fine, some had to move around their schedules a bit to be able to attend. 10 per cent could not attend due to the timing. For the most part, communication was organized well and clearly, but a few struggled with finding information on our website.

The speakers were held in high regard, and a majority enjoyed the presentations and felt that their questions were being acknowledged and answered. All participants were satisfied with the keynote lecture given by Peter D'Sena. The first workshop, focused on the CARGO -movement, did not satisfy all participants. Some found it difficult to follow and chaotic. The feedback for the third session was that while most found it satisfying, there was a longing for a more practical approach for educators to take to the classroom. Participants found the mentioned literature beneficial.

Written feedback for the third workshop on Contested Histories was minor, but participants found the session interesting and were satisfied. The workshop on Tackling the Textbook received good ratings, with one participant being dissatisfied with the schedule for the session, and another participant missing the session due to its irrelevance to the influence a history teacher has in choosing textbooks. The panel discussion gained a satisfied audience, with no criticism expressed. Participants were satisfied with the final exchange and feed forward session, with most rating it fully satisfactory.

In the evaluation form, it was possible for participants to set some learning goals they wished to achieve during the webinar series. While nearly two thirds of the participants achieved their goals, around one-third achieved them partially. One person stated not having achieved their learning goals. Most participants gained at least one new contact for their professional network, and felt that they got out of their comfort zone at least a bit. Moving forward, participants hope to have more content around decolonising history, especially in a defined geographical context and with more practical tips and tricks to implement in the classroom. One participant hopes for a future focus on conflict, resolution of that, and peace building in education.

Padlet take-aways

During the keynote lecture, a Padlet was introduced. In this Padlet, participants could write about practical steps one can take to decolonise the curriculum. The contents of the Padlet can be categorized into four subgroups:

- *Resources*
 - In order to teach about colonisation and its effects diversely, resources are needed. For example, a database from which educators can pick specific topics, would be helpful. Finding resources from multiple sources is time consuming, and often one does not know where to start;
 - Using primary sources of colonised societies;
 - Creating a glossary of decolonisation definitions;
 - Using maps that are not eurocentric;
 - Discover and include non-European pedagogies in education.
- *Practice what you preach*
 - Decolonising the curriculum is about multiperspectivity. In order to show how this is important, it has to be a part of the whole lesson. Providing multilingual resources for multilingual classrooms, and encouraging students to show their differences, is crucial.
- *Engaging with students*
 - Discuss with students about current education, and see how they feel about it. Does it fulfill their needs? Are there topics that should be covered, but are currently not focused upon? How does education promote eurocentrism?;
 - Promote critical thinking in the classroom. Make it known that this is only one perspective, and discuss with students how it affects the content.
- *Promote locality*
 - Discuss and educate about colonisation on a local level. What is our local history and how has colonisation shaped and affected it?;
 - Acknowledging one's role in colonialism and discussing its implications.

