

DECOLONIALITY AND REGENERATION





OVERVIEW

This publication shares the course design and highlights from Forever Sabah Institute's (FSI) Mountaintop (MT) at KampOng, Tenghilan on 12th to 14th September 2022.

The programme explores the legacies of colonialism and the patterns of disconnection, division, devaluation, and inequity that have emerged as a result. Through an interplay of curious conversations, embodied practices and thoughtful exercises, we unpack how coloniality is still threaded into our lives today and explore ways of shifting ourselves out of it. Considering our present-day constructions of knowledge, racialisation, rank and power, the programme invites participants to reflect on decoloniality, and imagine processes and practices of regeneration and solidarity.

Acknowledgements

FS | Forever Sabah is a 25 year programme to support Sabah's transition to a diversified, equitable, circular economy. As a civil society entity, FS serves as a collaborative social movement rather than a bureaucracy or NGO. We are an initiative rooted in local aspirations, built by an enthusiastic team who believe we can make our state better by utilising Sabahan knowledge and experience and working with others and across sectors.

FSI | Forever Sabah Institute is an integral part of Forever Sabah (FS): the transition towards a diversified, equitable circular economy in the Malaysian Borneo state of Sabah. A significant suite of activities for FSI is "Forever Sabah Institute For Forever Sabah" (FSI4FS), under which FSI designs and offers learning activities for staff, teams and partners from the Forever Sabah web. Other programs are generated through formal and informal partnerships, requests or relevance for specific learning and offers of teaching/sharing.

While "Decoloniality & Regeneration" was an activity designed to connect the experiences, challenges and needs across the Forever Sabah web, we hope this publication can spark conversations, as well as inform larger discussions about sustainability, community and livelihoods. In honour of co-creation spaces, the programme's design is viewed as a living process, interweaving wisdom from knowledge bearers from local to global, combining what we know of, and what we're learning from multiple sources. If you find yourself missing from this conversation and would like to be named, please let us know. Meanwhile, where unnamed, videos in this publication were recorded in-session.

Programme co-designed by: Forever Sabah Institute (FSI) in collaboration with Brooke Lavelle, Wangūi Wa Kamonji, Rosalie Corpuz, Trixie Tangit and Hannah Moujing.

Videos filmed and edited by: Third Rice Culture Media Productions

Published by: Forever Sabah Institute (FSI)

Do you have any questions or reflections? Do get in touch.

E-mail: fsi@foreversabah.org

Updated: 6 June 2023

How to Use this Coursebook?

This coursebook and facilitation manual is published with the intention of it being a free resource for sharing, learning and training.

It can be used as guidance to allow you to facilitate your own programme on Decoloniality & Regeneration within your community or setting, while sessions and activities listed here are intentionally designed to allow for flexibility when adapting the content for both personal and non-commercial use.

Setting Your Intentions

Intention setting is a ritual of commitment and saying it aloud allows participants to form an understanding of why they have shown up, as well as a reciprocal relationship within the circle.

At the start of the programme, welcome participants by asking each and every one to set their intention for the programme. As a facilitator, ask participants the following:

- Their names
- One main reason for being at the programme



▶ [Setting Your Intention](#)

Decoloniality & Building Relational Cultures of Practice

with Brooke Lavelle, PhD

In Brooke's session, she shares some of the framing and thinking behind her work, grounded in the CourageRISE model that guides communities in **(R)**evealing the causes and logic of systems of oppression, **(I)**nvesting in transformative and reparative healing, **(S)**ensing that new ways of being are possible, and **(E)**mbodying commitments to building beloved community.

The session also touches on the Target/Agent Model, created by Dr Leticia Nieto, that recognises society as being divided into two categories: agents or targets. These classifications are socially constructed based on criteria such as gender, ethnicity, physical appearance, and so on, with the former referring to people in positions of power and privilege, and the latter to those more frequently subject to oppression.

Brooke is the Co-Founder and President of Courage of Care Coalition, a non-profit dedicated to building relational culture through leveraging spiritual, contemplative, psychological, philosophical, and somatic lineages. Informing us on the power of inner transformation, she is a facilitator of compassion training, systems and community organising tools, anti-oppressive pedagogies, and holds a PhD in Buddhist Studies.

For more information on Brooke's work: [CourageofCare.org](https://courageofcare.org)

For more information on Leticia's work:

A piece she wrote on the stages of awareness for both categories, [Stages of Identity Awareness: Agents & Targets](#)

A series of columns written by Leticia and Margot F. Boyer, **"Understanding Oppression: Strategies in Addressing Power & Privilege"** [Part 1](#) | [Part 2](#) | [Part 3](#)



▶ [Decoloniality & Building Relational Cultures of Practice with Brooke Lavelle](#)



Activity 1

Mapping the Threads of Power

In the first activity, participants are to combine creativity and consideration to co-create a map that illustrates the sources, dynamics, and systems of power that shape our society. By mapping the threads of power, what other threads may you unravel?

Facilitation Instructions:

1. On a large canvas, invite someone from the group to draw a map of Malaysia.
2. The next step is to present the purpose of this activity: that is to begin filling the map with images or symbols of power. I invite you to imagine what powers exist and where they might be located on the map.
3. Invite participants to create those symbols using drawing, sculpture or toys and place it anywhere on the map. The powers that you might want to include in the map can be that of a political party, an NGO, "official power" like the Parliament, the judiciary, the cabinet, the Federal Constitution, or symbols like religion, money, knowledge & education, schools, the financial system etc.
4. Then, ask participants to pin or mark those symbols on the map where they think it holds the most or least power.
5. Use string or thread to connect the different symbols of power. What powers are connected to each other? What lineages are forming in this map?
6. Finally, ask participants to place themselves on the map. Where are you in this web of power/ power structure?
7. For the final reflection and sharing, you may offer these guiding questions:
 - *Do you see how the powers connect?*
 - *Where is power centralised?*
 - *Which areas on the map are "hotspots" of power?*
 - *What kind of hierarchies are emerging?*



- ▶ [*Activity 1: Mapping the Threads of Power*](#)

PAUSE: Nap Time

Rest is Resistance is a framework created by Tricia Hersey, aka The Nap Bishop, that encourages us to connect to the liberating power of rest, daydreaming, and naps as a foundation for healing and justice.

This is a time of deep unravelling and quiet resistance, a disruption to the flow of capitalism and “grind culture” that sees bodies as tools for production and labour.

As a facilitator, you may choose to insert these rest sessions at any point in the programme, as many times as you’d like, or not at all.

Read: *The Nap Ministry*

Decoloniality, Regeneration & Embodiment

with Wangūi Wa Kamonji

How do we create “a world in which many worlds fit”? This is the question explored in Wangūi’s session where she explains coloniality, its emerging patterns, and how regeneration can serve as an antidote to it. Here, Wangūi guided us in recognising the shapes of coloniality, describing its influence both outwardly and on our visceral nervous system, and making it visible.

We moved through five different frames of coloniality through a short somatic practice to observe how the body responds to each different frame. With tender coaching, we began to embody a chosen colonial frame then shifted our bodies to a counter, regenerative shape.

The somatic practice invited us to reflect on how did we feel in our bodies when we place ourselves in a colonial shape; what thoughts or feelings arose while transitioning between colonial and regenerative shapes? What did we learn about (de)coloniality through body wisdom?



watch

- ▶ [Back to the Roots with Wangūi Wa Kamonji](#) is a short film by Climates Austria recorded at the close of COP25 (2019 United Nations Climate Change Conference) in Madrid, Spain and is a reflection on violence at the COP.



Motivated by the question of how to heal colonial trauma, Wangūi describes herself as a regeneration practitioner, a retriever and bearer of new life, a weaver of magic, a honey-jar carrier, a midwife of sovereign beings for the co-creation of generative just worlds, and an inventor and facilitator through passageways to life. She is based in East Afrika where she dances and weaves movement in, through, and toward environmental and social justice, health, food practices, sovereignty, and African indigenous knowledge systems.

Activity 3

Listening to the Body

Here is a short meditation practice to harness a more open and connected state of awareness by allowing the body to lead the mind's way. Deepen your connection between mind and body through a few rounds of guided meditation that bring you through time to meet and embody the different facets of your inner self.

Listening to the Body is adapted from "20 Minute Dance", a mindfulness practice part of the Social Presencing Theatre method within Theory U.

► **Read more:** *Sensing the future with the Theory U model*

The purpose of the exercise is to become more present and grounded in our bodies in order to access the "holistic intelligence" when mind and body are synchronised.

► **Learn more:** *FSI Module - Theory U*

Facilitation Instructions:

1. Before beginning, encourage participants to dress comfortably for the exercise.
2. Have a gong or bell at the ready to indicate the start and end of practice.
3. Make sure that the activity is done in a room with a clean wooden or carpeted floor, with sufficient space for everyone to lie down on the floor without feeling crowded.
4. The next steps are to guide participants through a series of movements. *For this next session, I will bring you into a guided meditation of listening to our body. Feel free to close your eyes if you need to, and feel free also to sit.*
5. Begin with an abdominal breathing exercise. *Breathe in, and as you breathe out, look into your vessel, and bring your focus to how you breathe, as well as to your heartbeat, blood flow, contractions, and relaxations.*
6. Guide participants into practice through visualisation. *Imagine yourselves going back in time, back to your childhood. What do you see? How do you feel?*
7. Let movement begin through a gentle invitation. *Find curiosity in your body to move. Which part of your body wants to move? How does your body want to move?*
8. Allow participants to spend a few moments in this relaxed, fluid and moving state and take care to remind them to pay attention to the sensations arising in their bodies. *Some might find objects of power appearing in your space, patterns of experiences you had in the past wanting to move your physical body. You may feel contractions of your body, and emotions in yourself, try not to ignore that, discover. Feel how your body reacts as you discover this phase.*

9. Then, pause and feel the body as it is resting in a shape or a posture.
10. Then begin to move again, paying attention to the feeling of the body moving. Continue in this way, alternating between resting and moving, paying attention to the feeling of the body. The attention can be on a part of the body (we feel our lower back or knee or shoulder) or on a sense of the whole body.
11. Guide participants from their childhood back to the present day. Move slowly and mindfully, stopping at certain points in time to repeat the previous steps, giving them enough time to settle in and explore each point and movement.
12. Once everyone has arrived back to present day and is ready to close the session, guide participants through a series of inhales and exhales and allow them to return to seated positions. *Notice that once you feel embodied, there is a natural sense of being and of presence.*



► [Activity 3: Listening to the Body](#)

Activity 4

Theatre of the Oppressed

A form of forum theatre built on collaboration between actors and audience members (aka spect-actors), this activity invites participants to embody and play out situations and narratives to collectively find solutions to issues of oppression.

With actors creating and roleplaying a scene describing a shared issue or concern, the spect-actors are able to intervene and make changes to the flow of the scene to explore possibilities of creating meaningful shifts in the outcome.

Facilitation Instructions:

1. To begin, invite participants to make suggestions on what the roleplay scene could be. This could be taken
- from real life experiences of the participants or a completely made up situation. Encourage participants to agree on something that is relatable and close to the heart of everyone involved.
2. Once the scene has been mapped out, ask participants to divide themselves into actors and spect-actors.
3. The actors are then to perform the scene as discussed while the spect-actors watch.
4. After the first round of performance, invite the spect-actors to take part in the scene themselves. They may choose to replace a character in the scene or create a whole new additional character. Some ground rules for spect-actors:

- The protagonist has options
 - The antagonist can be changed
 - There is no such thing as magic – only real world solutions
5. Once the spect-actor has played out their idea, discuss as a group how the intervention affected the scene. What did you observe in this intervention? How did it shift the situation? What possibilities have emerged in this shift? What are some concerns about it? What other interventions could we explore?
 6. Repeat the process a few times, with new or improved interventions each time, encouraging all spect-actors to discuss, make suggestions, and take part in the scene.
 7. In closing the activity, invite participants to share their thoughts on the experience. *How did you feel in your roles as an actor or spect-actor?*

Was there a particular intervention that struck you the most? What are you taking away from this experience? How can this process be applied to other situations in your home, work, and environment?

See how others have facilitated Theatre of the Oppressed (TO):

Forum theatre performance by Shannon Ivey and STATE of Reality at TEDxColumbiaSC on [YouTube](#)

The Housing Works Forum Theatre Troupe performance on [YouTube](#)

The Activist Group of the Theatre of the Oppressed on [YouTube](#)



- ▶ [Activity 4: Theatre of the Oppressed](#)

Colonials & Claimants – Decolonising an ‘Ancient Curse’

with Rosalie Corpuz

“History doesn’t move you more than when it’s in the iron of your veins.” - J.R. Tonkins

In this session, Rosalie takes you on a journey through lands and time, beginning in the early 15th century with the birth of the Sulu Sultanate. The session guides you through their reign and decline as colonial powers grew, the overlapping treaties that lead to Philippines’ claim over Sabah, and the violence and division that has been created in the process.

What is the Sulu Sultanate? Why does Malaysia owe them billions? How has the establishment of Malaysia’s borders in the last few decades impacted the identity, culture, and community of its once fluid regions?

Here, we attempt to trace the roots of various disputes, examining the interwoven history and links between these two Southeast Asian regions to build a picture of how this ‘ancient curse’ came to be.

Learn more about the Sulu Cession fee:

- ▶ Philippine senator’s ‘we own Sabah’ remark rekindles US\$15b lawsuit row with Malaysia on [South China Morning Post](#)
- ▶ How Malaysia ended up owing \$15 billion to a sultan’s heirs on [Reuters](#)
- ▶ Historical discoveries of the agreement of cessation on [The Daily Express](#)

Read more on the Jabidah Massacre:

- ▶ Jabidah and Merdeka: The inside story on [Rappler](#)

 **watch**

- ▶ [Colonials & Claimants, Decolonising an ‘Ancient Curse’ with Rosalie Corpuz](#)



Rosalie is a writer and editor, holistic researcher and consultant with a background as a freelance applied anthropologist. Determined to uncover hidden and diverse histories of Borneo, Rosalie has researched and written about her family’s ancestry and connections intertwined with the founding of colonial North Borneo in “The Pryers, the Priest & the Pongholo: A Sandakan Story”. Currently, she’s studying the Jews of North Borneo.

Decolonising Knowledge

with Trixie Tangit

While coloniality requires knowledge to be observable, traceable, and debatable in order to be defined as such, Trixie believes that knowledge is relational and oscillating, able to be given and received by any human or other sentient being – animals, plants, mountains, and so on.

In decolonising knowledge, other forms of knowledge, i.e. local or indigenous, take prominence over more Westernised knowledge systems. Here, science and technology take a backseat to humanity and spirituality, opening us up to a new lens on the world and the information that surrounds us.

 **watch**

- ▶ *Decolonising Knowledge with Trixie Tangit*

Trixie is a Senior Lecturer of Sociology and Social Anthropology at University Malaysia Sabah (UMS), trained in linguistics, anthropology and education. She brings to the table years of experience working alongside Indigenous minorities in Malaysia, while her work resides at the intersections of ethnicity and belonging, sense of place, labels, interplay between languages, kinship, border identities, and multiple realities.



Activity 5

Connecting with Your Inner Rhythm

with Hannah Moujing

In this activity, you will be introduced to 5Rhythms – a movement practice that facilitates deep exploration of self, creativity, and connection through a guided process of meditation and dance.

The process involves the transition through five states of being – Flowing, Staccato, Chaos, Lyrical, and Stillness – that invites memory, perception, instinct, and intuition to guide participants in releasing themselves from socially conditioned notions of people, places, and ideas.

Connecting with your Inner Rhythm was adapted from Gabrielle Roth's 5Rhythms.

Learn more about the practice:
[*5Rhythms*](#)

 **watch**

- ▶ *Activity 5: Connecting with Your Inner Rhythm with Hannah Moujing*

Hannah is a Sabahan dance and movement practitioner who has taught across institutions from local schools to mental hospitals. She has experience facilitating nationwide profiles for the Malaysian Performing Art Scene, and also founded Work in Progress Kota Kinabalu to showcase emerging creatives. In her latest work, *Sesi Tikar Mengkuang*, she facilitated a dance circle embodying Malaysian culture and mindfulness



Activity 6

Regeneration & Reclaiming Sovereignty

In the last activity of the programme, Open Space Technology (OST) is used to unpack some of the learnings of the programme by addressing specific issues related to coloniality and collectively harnessing ideas or ways forward that can open doors to more regenerative and autonomous systems and ways of being.

For instructions on how to facilitate an OST session, refer to our coursebook: *The Spirit & Practice of Facilitative Leadership*

OST is a method of organising that was founded on the idea that a meeting can be one “large coffee break.” In OST, groups convene around a central theme, but with no agenda. Instead, groups are made to set the agenda, then organise parallel working sessions to bring all concerns and insights to the fore.

To help the group decide on what topics they would like to convene and discuss, some guiding questions you could ask are:

- *What patterns of coloniality have you begun to recognise in your own life and history?*
- *What are some systems and structures in place that require reconstruction?*
- *What would reclaiming your own sovereignty look like?*
- *How can we create more regenerative systems and culture?*



- ▶ ***Activity 6: Regeneration & Reclaiming Sovereignty***



**FOREVER
SABAH
INSTITUTE**