UNIVERSITÄT BIELEFELD

School of Public Health

Descriptions of illustrations to support their use in discussions and training related to Advancing a decolonial lens in global health research

As part of this project, we developed illustrations that capture some of the main issues and challenges related to decoloniality in global health, which were discussed throughout our training. For this, we collaborated with the illustrator Zeynep Alpay.

We hope the illustrations can help global health professionals and students engage more deeply with complex topics around coloniality while also challenging hegemonic/mainstream notions of what knowledge is and looks like.

The 11 illustrations can be downloaded from the Bielefeld University website and may be used freely for non-commercial purposes under license CC-BY-ND, ensuring that the proper citation indicated for each illustration is cited/included.

The below descriptions are provided to support use of the illustrations to foster reflection, discussion and training related to advancing decolonial approaches in global health research.

Illustration: Colonial continuities through bureaucracy (snakes & ladders)

This illustration derives from the game “Snakes and Ladders” to depict colonial continuities upheld by bureaucracy in research and funding institutions. It showcases differing experiences between researchers from Majority and Minority Worlds, with the former facing bureaucratic hurdles that resemble a complex game with unpredictable rules. Researchers owning a passport from a Minority World country or being affiliated with well-funded institutions may not understand their privileges as well as how heavy this burden of administration and bureaucracy is. This illustration may be used to highlight the structural hurdles and inequities encountered by Majority World researchers in global health. Even if allies strive for more equitable partnerships, they may be unable to remove the barriers. The allegory of the board game reveals the arbitrariness, unpredictability, and unfairness of the current structures. (This illustration is on page 50 of the Facilitators’ Manual.)

Illustration: Colonial continuities through norms (Vitruvian man)

The illustration presents the Vitruvian Man to symbolise the prevailing "normative" standard in global health. The colonial and patriarchal patterns within global health continue to convey the understanding of a dominant shape that is considered the norm against which everyone else is categorised and compared. This narrow perspective, neglecting diversity and intersectionality, leads to problems of bias and marginalisation. When a dominant norm, typically embodied by the White male, is upheld, it results in reinforcing systemic inequalities and hindering equitable healthcare access and outcomes. The figures surrounding the Vitruvian man symbolise progress towards diversity and greater representation and inclusion of different people. This illustration can be used to transfer the importance of challenging

prevailing norms and to embrace decolonial perspectives for genuine inclusion and diversity in global health. (This illustration is on page 4 of the Facilitators' Manual.)

Illustration: Decolonial lens (pluriversality)

This illustration visually depicts the idea of "Moving towards pluriversality and decoloniality", i.e. a departure from Eurocentric research methods and ideas towards incorporating nuance, pattern, shade, and colour to our understandings of culture, health, and research. The illustration shows diverse people doing different research-related activities that contribute to human knowledge and understanding. It focuses on Indigenous research traditions as they are often overlooked or undervalued in other (Western, positivist) framings. With the focus on pluriversality, a concept that emphasizes the coexistence of multiple worlds, perspectives, and realities, the illustration can contribute to challenge the idea of a single, universal narrative or truth, advocating instead for the recognition and validation of diverse knowledge systems, cultures, and ways of being. (This illustration is on page 18 of the Facilitators' Manual.)

Illustration: Seeds – Doing what you can (planting seeds & pollination)

This illustration transfers the message that everybody has the ability to enact positive change by planting a seed wherever they are and thereby helping to make the world a more diverse and colourful place. Change can start at individual level, from where knowledge gained on decolonisation blossoms to the interpersonal level. Exchange and collaboration coalesce into collective efforts capable of altering the institutional level. The illustration visualises that small steps can lead to something meaningful. It can be employed to emphasise the transformative power of incremental action and to encourage researchers to embrace their agency and actively participate within their spheres of influence. (This illustration is the cover page of Facilitators' Manual.)

Illustrations: Standing out (person in colour amidst other people)

The illustration depicts how Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) often feel in a White majority society and in academia. (This illustration is on page 10 of the Facilitators' Manual.)

Illustration: Suggested entry points to advance decolonisation (R&R)

This illustration is an output of the training initiative. Developed as a bottom-up and innovative approach during group discussions, the "Suggestion box" presents suggestions by training participants for entry points to address structural and systematic challenges of decolonising global health research, especially in terms of transnational cooperation aspects. It can be used to develop a similar exercise, to facilitate discussion among participants or to provide examples of entry points for action.

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Portraits of speakers and quotes

This set of five illustrations aim to inspire researchers, especially at early career level, who think they lack the power or legitimacy to change how things are done in the global health realm. The speaker portraits and inspirational quotes derive from the training to highlight the importance of working from where they are, taking small steps towards positive change, and collectively contributing to a more equitable and inclusive global health landscape. The set includes portraits and quotes are from the following speakers:

- ***Themrise Khan***, Independent researcher and policy analyst in the field of international development, gender and global migration (see profile)

- ***Dr. Catherine Kyobutungi***, Executive Director at the African Population and Health Research APHRC); Editor-in-Chief of PLOS Global Public Health journal (see profile)

- ***Ceporah Mearns***, Director of the Nunavut NEIHR (Network Environment for Indigenous Health Research) (see profile)

- ***Muneera A. Rasheed***, Senior Consultant, World Vision (see profile)

- ***Dr. Emma Rhule***, Independent Consultant; Co-editor, Advancing gender equality in health: Expanding voices, evidence & time horizons for change, United Nations University – IIGH (see profile).

(These illustrations are respectively on pages 31, 49, 40, 60 and 1 in the Facilitators' Manual.)