

DECOLONIZING LABOUR

What is decolonization?

Decolonization is rooted in the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples. It aims to dismantle the dynamics and effects of settler colonialism — which dispossessed Indigenous peoples of their lands, resources, traditions and culture — to build fairer social, political, and economic structures.

To effectively decolonize, it is essential to deconstruct the perceived superiority of Euro-Western knowledge and ways of life. In Canada, decolonization calls for an understanding and recognition of Indigenous history, including the acknowledgement that this country has been built on the legacy of colonization, displacement, and erasure of Indigenous peoples.

Why is it important?

Decolonization is a critical step towards building a society that recognizes and values the contributions of Indigenous peoples in Canada. We can't have reconciliation without first understanding the past and recognizing the untruths in the settler's perspective that we've accepted as facts. That's why this work is closely linked to the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#), which lays out concrete steps for how to repair harm and move forward with healing.

What is Indigenization?

Indigenization means recognizing Indigenous knowledge and practices as equal. It's the practice of viewing situations critically through an Indigenous or decolonial lens and considering what the Indigenous viewpoint or perspective is. Indigenization must be led by Indigenous peoples and occur at all levels of society, including our behaviors, values, institutions, and systems.

How do we unlearn?

The process is as much about learning as it is about unlearning. We need to question and, in some cases, forget what we've been taught for centuries and learn a new perspective and way of thinking. This is a healing process in many ways and will be different for each of us. Through the individual process of decolonizing, you will go through the grieving process as you let go of your old beliefs and unlearn colonial history. You will be exposed to the unimaginable as you learn about the true and complete history of this country. Self-care during your journey is important.

Opening our eyes to the effects of colonization and unlearning centuries of colonial history and practices isn't easy. It requires deep self-analysis and reflection, and ongoing work to consciously think differently. But dismissing the perceived superiority of Euro-Western ways and centering Indigenous peoples' perspectives and knowledge in all institutions and structures in society is a natural and necessary step toward reconciliation.



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NATIONAL *Indigenous* HISTORY MONTH

How can I support this work?

- Start learning more about the history of Indigenous Peoples with the resources below.
- Dispel any perceived biases or dated stereotypes you may have towards Indigenous Peoples and cultures.
- Take any opportunity you can to amplify the voices of Indigenous Peoples.
- Create a safe and inclusive working environment for all.
- Advocate for fairer hiring practices and equal pay for all.
- Request accountability from your managers, HR and organization.

What is PSAC doing?

- Putting Indigenous issues at the forefront of our collective bargaining to remove barriers and exclusions experienced by Indigenous workers, including calling for an Indigenous languages allowance and leave for Indigenous cultural practices.
- Supporting Indigenous members who are pursuing a class action lawsuit against the federal government for systemic racism.
- Developing national campaigns to raise awareness about issues affecting Indigenous and northern communities, including our [Still Thirsty for Justice](#) campaign for clean water, the [Illunnata](#) northern food insecurity campaign, and the [Red Dress](#) campaign for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.
- Consulting with our National Indigenous Peoples Circle — which was created in 2003 — to help elevate Indigenous Peoples' voices.

Learn More

- ▶ RESOURCES: [Decolonization and Indigenous Issues](#)
- ▶ COURSE: [Indigenous Canada](#) (Offered by the University of Alberta)
- ▶ TOOLKIT: [Indigenous Allies](#)
- ▶ ARTICLE: [Imagining a Better Future: An Introduction to Teaching and Learning About Settler Colonialism in Canada](#)

Scan for more resources



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