

WeDecolonize: A student project about decolonization and anti-racism



Want to stand up for decolonization and social justice in higher education? Curious about how students organize around anti-racism, decolonization, and intersectional justice in Belgian academia? Ready to take action, organize events, and help build a more just university?

Then WeDecolonize is looking for you!

Who are we?

WeDecolonize is a **student project** by UCOS, a Belgian NGO with its headquarters at the Free University of Brussels (VUB).

Our mission is to strengthen **global citizenship skills** among students in higher education. For this reason, we emphasize a **critical perspective on global issues**, international solidarity, and sustainable development.

Since WeDecolonize's creation by a group of racialized students at the **VUB in 2020**, WD has served as a platform, a learning hub, a safer space, and much more to (re)center racialized communities in higher education. Since then, the project has expanded to all Flemish higher education institutions.

The project consists of three pillars, namely:

- 1) **The deconstruction of Eurocentric knowledge systems** by organizing (educational) events, awareness-building in academia, and lobby work.

- 2) **The creation of safer spaces** on university campuses. We have our decolonial library at the VUB - a growing collection of fiction and non-fiction works written exclusively by racialized authors from across the globe. This is a place where students and organizations can gather to organize, plan, and build solidarity.
- 3) **Community–building:** WeDecolonize builds community by including (student) organizations in our interuniversity network. We have collaborations with student diaspora organisations, such as UMOJA, Karibu, Dar Leuven (etc.), but also with NGO’s and academic organisations, such as BIRMM and Troubled Archives.

What’s in it for you?

A safer space

A learning and working environment where the experiences, perspectives, and identities of racialized students are centered. We aim to create space for open dialogue, vulnerability, and mutual empowerment.

Room to experiment and create

As a board member, you will have the freedom to co-develop a wide range of public-facing actions, from panel discussions and media takeovers to workshops or collaborations with grassroots groups, collectives, and museums.

Access to a wider network

You will become part of an interuniversity and international network of engaged youth working toward structural change within and beyond higher education.

Societal impact on higher education

As part of WeDecolonize, you will contribute to concrete efforts that challenge and reshape the structures, narratives, and power dynamics within higher education institutions. Your work will not only raise awareness but also actively push for institutional change — whether through policy recommendations, educational reform, or creating space for marginalized voices. This is an opportunity to be part of a broader movement that reimagines what universities can be: inclusive, critical, and accountable spaces.

Opportunities for individual and collective growth

Within the board, you will join a working group (e.g., communication, networking, event coordination, library work, or student affairs), allowing you to deepen your skills while contributing to a shared mission.

Ongoing support and guidance

Two project coordinators will guide and support you throughout the year — both in terms of content and organisation — and help you navigate the development of your campaign, actions, and internal collaboration.

What do we expect?

Consistent commitment

You are available to attend bi-weekly meetings and are willing to actively contribute to the preparation and implementation of actions, library shifts, and the broader year campaign.

Content-driven engagement

You reflect critically on the role of knowledge, power, and exclusion within higher education, and contribute to shaping a campaign rooted in the experiences, needs, and ideas of racialized students.

Willingness to collaborate

You are open to working in a collective structure based on shared responsibility, mutual respect, and horizontal decision-making.

Openness to learning

No prior experience is required. We are looking for students who are eager to grow, ask questions, listen, and actively engage in a collective learning process.

What will the program look like?

Some dates to keep in mind...

The academic year starts with **the board weekend** from **3 October 2025 until 5 October 2025**, where you will get to know each other and the project, exchange on the topics, and start planning the academic year. Throughout the year, you will be organizing different activities, and we will offer you several workshops. These dates will be decided upon during the first board weekend in October.

At the beginning of the second semester, there will be **a working day** in the week of **9/02/2026 - 13/02/2026** for collecting ideas and inspiration for the second semester.

On **21/02/2026**, the **Interuniversity Network Event** will take place, where you will meet with our partners and other students from racialized student organizations. This day is optional.

How to apply?

To apply, please fill in this [form](#). The deadline is midnight, **12 September 2025**. In this form, we will ask about your motivation to join WD, your interest in decolonization, and your skills. To decide which role you want to take on in the working groups of WD, please see the list below.

Based on the answers on this form, we will make an initial selection. Those who are selected will be invited for an introductory interview with the UCOS team in September. The meeting will be scheduled based on your availability.

Don't hesitate to get in contact if you have any questions or concerns. You can always reach out via mail WeDecolonizeVUB@ucos.be. When you do, please cc fien.portier@ucos.be.

The working groups

- **Co-Support Lead:**
 - Being the bridge between the board and the project coordinator (together with another Support Lead)
 - Prepare and chair meetings
 - Manage mailbox
 - Follow up with different working groups and maintain an overview
 - Guard over the vision and mission of WD
 - Create a safe working environment within the team
 - Point of contact for members
 - Public speaking
 - Leadership

- **Communication Social Media:**
 - Manage social media
 - Graphic design through tools such as Canva, Photoshop, etc.
 - Write texts and captions
 - Answer incoming questions via social media inbox
 - Follow up and share interesting cultural activities

- o Distribute communication about events on social media
 - o Taking photos during events
- **Communication Networking:**
 - o Lay contact with external partners
 - o This is a group combined with other working groups.
- **Communication Newsletter:**
 - o Write reports on past events and publish them on our online platforms
 - o Contribute columns reflecting on global events, written in the style of our blog posts
- **Event Coordination:**
 - o Coordinate catering arrangements for events
 - o Oversee event finances and maintain communication with Support Leads and the Project Coordinators
 - o Create a detailed roadmap for each event (including agenda and run-through)
 - o Reach out to speakers and participants, maintain regular contact, and ensure all relevant information is shared with the communications team
- **Logistics Coordination:**
 - o Identify and secure suitable locations for events
 - o Maintain ongoing communication with venue contacts and manage bookings
 - o Assess the venue to ensure it is a safe and inclusive space
 - o Monitor event-related costs and coordinate budget details with the Event Coordinator and Support Leads
- **Student Affairs:**
 - o Think about community building among the members
 - o Manage the members and volunteer group
 - o Organize monthly sofa talks
 - o Show (new) students the way around the university
 - o Help students with dealing with problems, referring them to institutions, such as study guidance
 - o Shifts in the library to stay in contact with the students/visitors and be visible

- **Library Coordination:**

- Manage time slots for study sessions and meetings
- Handle inventory, including renting out books and purchasing new titles
- Maintain and organize the library collection
- Develop and oversee an online booking system for scheduling study sessions and meetings
- Organize book talks in the library in collaboration with the event coordination team

Why do we need WeDecolonize?

Historically, universities have been shaped by white, male, and heteronormative structures that continue to reflect and reproduce global systems of **colonialism**. Despite being portrayed as neutral and universal spaces, higher educational institutions remain complicit in upholding oppressive systems that prioritize **Eurocentric knowledge**. This determines who gets to be heard, who is seen as a legitimate producer of knowledge, and whose experiences are validated.

Today, higher education continues to uphold a profound imbalance in knowledge production, where theories, histories, and practices rooted in the Global North overwhelmingly dominate curricula and campus discourse. This marginalization affects **racialized students** in tangible ways: many do not feel safe, heard, or valued within these institutions.

Institutional racism in universities remains grossly under-acknowledged. According to Professor Kehinde Andrews (2019), 56% of universities believe that all incidents of racial harassment are reported. In reality, fewer than half of staff members come forward. Racism on campus goes far beyond individual acts; it manifests in systemic issues such as disproportionately high dropout rates among racialized students, a persistent ethnic pay gap, and a stark lack of representation in both student and staff populations.

But there is hope and resistance. Across campuses, more and more racialized students are challenging these Eurocentric systems, organizing to collectively confront white imperialist ideologies embedded in academic spaces. This movement is especially urgent today, as we witness the ongoing genocide in Palestine and the violent repression of students protesting Western academia's complicity.

At WeDecolonize, we stand in solidarity with these struggles, and we are looking for new board members to join our purpose. To learn more, visit our [Instagram](#) and [website](#).

WeDecolonize is made possible thanks to

