

IAF SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Space for All: Decolonial Practices in Space (2)

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DECOLONIZING SPACE: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF COLONIAL LANGUAGE IN THE
NAMING OF THE COLUMBUS MODULE**Abstract**

This abstract critically examines the utilization of colonial language in the nomenclature of the Columbus space lab, a prominent module within the International Space Station (ISS) developed by the European Space Agency (ESA). While the Columbus module stands as a remarkable achievement in the pursuit of multidisciplinary research under space conditions, it also serves as a poignant example of the inadvertent perpetuation of colonial narratives within the realm of space exploration.

ESA's stated mission of "peaceful exploration and use of space for the benefit of everyone" prompts a fundamental inquiry into the meaning of "everyone" within the context of naming a scientific module after Christopher Columbus. Columbus, historically celebrated for his voyages to the Americas, is indelibly associated with the exploitation, violence, and subjugation inflicted upon indigenous populations, including murder, rape, enslavement, and looting. In an era characterized by a growing recognition of diversity and the imperative of reckoning with historical injustices, the choice to commemorate figures such as Columbus in the naming of space installations underscores the need for a paradigm shift toward decolonized language and commemoration.

This abstract posits that the use of colonial language in space exploration not only perpetuates historical injustices but also serves as a barrier to fostering inclusivity and diversity within the scientific community. By embracing decolonized language and engaging in critical reflection on the legacy of colonialism, the space exploration community can take meaningful strides toward creating a more equitable and inclusive space for all, honoring the legacy of Indigenous peoples and fostering a future of collaboration and mutual respect.

Grounded in practical experimentation and collaborative learning, this research has been actively shared and discussed within educational settings, including sessions with groups of students and Indigenous community members. Dedicated to my beloved daughter and all Indigenous peoples of the Americas, it stands as a testament to the ongoing struggle for recognition, justice, and reconciliation.