



GLOSSARY

****Note:** these are working definitions. By reading this you will get a basic understanding of what these terms mean, but as you continue to organize and take action you will see that most terms have a huge history and lots of debate surrounding them, and that there are multiple meanings behind everything. It is up to you to make your own definitions...*

Able-bodied: someone without a disability.

Ableism: defines people without a disability (a mental, physical or emotional impairment) as being normal, and in this way marginalizes those with a disability.

Accessibility: means having meaningful inclusion and participation of everyone, especially those from marginalized backgrounds (e.g. people of colour, elderly, low-income). It requires the elimination of barriers (such as high tuition, poor public transportation) and of limits to participation (academic language, Eurocentric curriculum). Sometimes it refers specifically to meeting the needs of people with disabilities not only through things like wheelchair friendly buildings, sign language interpretation and Braille resources but also by having an anti-ableist environment.

Activist: a person who takes action in some way in order to challenge inequality or injustice.

Adult Education: similar to popular education. A way of helping people learn that assumes that the individual is responsible for and capable of their own learning. An adult educator does not teach, but facilitates the learning process.

Adulthood: when youth or children are marginalized and discriminated against based on their age.

Ageism: discrimination based on a person's age.

Anti-Globalization: movement and set of theories to counter the expansion of corporations in such a way that they produce unfair working conditions, economic inequalities, environmental degradation, loss of cultural traditions and other problems.

Anti-Oppression: strategies, theories and actions that challenge illegitimate power structures.

Anti-Racism: strategies, theories and action that aim to challenge and counter the inequalities, misconceptions, prejudices and discrimination produced through a system that has historically developed to favour white people while marginalizing people of colour.

Anti-Racist Environmental Justice: actions and ideas resulting from the belief that all people are entitled to: a healthy environment, the right to develop, implement and enforce environmental

laws, regulations and policies (especially marginalized communities) and an environmental movement to protect communities of colour, First Nations, immigrant/refugee and low income communities. Anti-racist environmental justice sees the social, economic and political dimensions of environmental issues and challenges inequities to create a new agenda for change.

Bisexual: someone who is attracted to both males and females.

Charitable Registration Number: a number given to established organizations by the government which recognizes that organization's ability to run itself and manage finances. When applying for large amounts of money from government agencies and charitable foundations, you need a charitable registration number.

Class: a person's position in society based on income-level, education, or employment.

Classism: belief that those belonging to a higher class are deserving of better services, living conditions and opportunities and are more cultured, less dangerous and refined because of their wealth while poorer people are seen as worthless and as responsible for their poverty. In this way, those from higher classes dominate the political, education, economic, cultural and even activist scene. Class oppression and marginalization is affected by factors such as race, gender, sexuality and ability. Classism also refers to the use of academic or activist language that most people do not understand, having access to jobs/education/other opportunities, and having the choice to be an activist or take risks.

Coalition: a network of groups that have a common interest, goal or mandate and who come together to take action on a specific issue/issues.

Colonialism: means entering into a foreign place proceeding to steal land and resources while killing off or reducing the people living there to third class citizens.

Commodification: when something is made to seem like an object or thing that can be controlled and manipulated. For example, cultural traditions are often commodified in our society, reduced to objects that can be bought and sold.

Conflict Mediation: finding a way to sort out a problem or conflict between two or more people or groups with the help of a person or group who can listen and suggest a compromise without being biased or judgmental.

Consensus: reaching a decision with everyone's agreement. It means that, even if people have different opinions or ideas on a topic, they can come to some sort of understanding and make a decision.

Cross-Cultural Conflict Mediation: finding a way to sort out a problem or conflict between two or more people or groups that was either caused by cultural differences, or is more difficult to resolve because of cultural differences. A cross-cultural mediator is from a





different cultural background from the people in the dispute and can listen and suggest a compromise without being biased or judgmental.

Cultural Appropriation: knowingly or unknowingly using or commodifying elements of another culture that would not necessarily be acceptable if used by a person belonging to that culture- e.g. symbols, art, language, customs, clothing etc. - without always understanding the value of these elements. Grows out of the assumption of a dominant (white/western) culture's right to take from other cultures.

Direct Action: protests, rallies, street theatre, defacing property, and other activities that are highly visible and that challenge a person/group of people causing injustice and/or raise general awareness.

Disability: a highly debated term. Generally refers to a mental, physical or emotional impairment. As a result of the disability, people face social, economic, physical, attitudinal and systemic barriers when accessing services, resources, rights and freedoms.

Discrimination: actions or behaviours carried out based on generalizations about a group of people (e.g. people of colour, women, queer etc) that negatively affect that group of people.

Environmental Justice: see **anti-racist environmental justice**

Environmental Racism: refers to the way that wealthy, mainly white communities have been protected by the systemic racism that allows them to dominate and control the environmental movement whereas communities of colour, First Nations, immigrant/refugee and low-income communities bear disproportionate environmental burdens. These communities face: racial discrimination in environmental policy making and the enforcement of regulations and laws; deliberate targeting for toxic waste facilities; life threatening presence of poisons and pollutants in communities; and a history of exclusion from meaningful participation and leadership in the environmental movement.

Evaluation: following a workshop, meeting or other event, a discussion, written form or other activity to determine how well the workshop/meeting/event went.

Facilitation: *Guiding* the group discussion in a meeting or workshop so that you accomplish what you set out to do and everyone feels safe and comfortable.

Feminism: refers to the theories, movements, and actions that aim to challenge and eliminate sexism.

First Nations: the people living in the Americas and Australia before colonization, and their descendants. This term is generally preferred over 'Native' or 'Indian'.

Gay: males who are attracted to males only (sometimes includes females who are attracted to females as well).

Globalization: the process through which corporations and economies are expanding globally, with the help of global agreements and institutions like the World Trade Organization (WTO) and International Monetary Fund (IMF). Globalization is happening in a very unequal fashion, producing unfair working conditions, economic inequalities, environmental degradation, loss of cultural traditions and other problems.

Grant: a fairly large sum of money given to a group to run a project. Requires an application, usually in the form of a proposal.

Group Dynamics: balancing the two elements of a group: getting work done and getting along as a group.

Heterosexism: the belief that heterosexuality is natural/superior.

Homophobia: the fear of and discrimination against those who are/who are thought to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual and intersexed (LGBTI).

HTML: Hyper-text mark-up language. The main computer language used to design websites.

In-Kind: a non-financial donation – for example, volunteer work, office equipment and supplies, meeting space, etc.

Institution: a broad word referring to any sort of organized/ established structures, systems or processes. For example, an educational institution is a school, college or university, while the institution of marriage refers to the ideas, rules and processes of getting married. *Institutionalized* means formally established (e.g. the education system became institutionalized at some point with formal rules and regulations about learning) or fixed into formal structures (e.g. racism is institutionalized in North American society).

Intersexed: someone who is born with a mix of male and female sex organs.

Lesbian: females who are attracted to females only.

LGBTI: an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual and intersexed people.

Lobbying: meeting with government officials and other public officials to urge them to take action on a certain issue or to change an unjust policy or bill.

Marginalized: a word to describe people who have a less advantaged position in society because of their race, class, age, gender, sexuality, ability, or some other aspect of their identity.

Media Advisory: a brief page with the bare facts (5 W's & H) on your event: when and where it's happening, who's coming, how





many people are coming and what the event is.

NGO: non-governmental organization. An officially recognized organization that is not connected to the government.

Oppression: socially and historically built inequalities and injustices that are ingrained in our systems, institutions and process. These inequalities and injustices are supported and continued by policies, institutions, systems and processes in society and allow certain groups (e.g. wealthy people, white people) to dominate over other groups.

Organizer: a person who takes action in their community by organizing events, activities and projects.

Patriarchy: the norms, values, beliefs, structures and systems that grant power, privilege and superiority to men and thereby marginalize and subordinate women.

People of colour: a term to refer to people who are not seen by society as being white. This term is usually preferred over 'non-white', 'visible minority' or 'minority' because it suggests collectivity and empowerment rather than inferiority.

Popular Education: a way of helping people learn and empower themselves to take action. Popular education uses people's own experiences, knowledge, ideas and creativity as the basis of learning, and links this to broader processes, systems and structures. Rather than teaching people what to think or how to act, popular educators facilitate the learning process by raising questions, challenging norms and assumptions and encouraging people to reflect on their experiences and actions. It is a continual process of reflecting on our actions, taking action, and reflecting again.

Poverty: refers to a lack of wealth, resources, services, materials and/or supplies.

Power: the meaning of *power* varies depending on the specific situation. In different times and places it can mean:

- a) control over and/or access to government owned/sponsored institutions (i.e. systems, agencies, resources, processes, structures etc.)
- b) defining what is considered normal, and convincing others that this is true
- c) being able to decide what you want and take action accordingly
- d) being able to take action

Prejudice: a positive or negative assumption, generalization or pre-judgment about a group of people which may be based on stereotypes.

Press Release: a description of your event, written like a news story (in the third person) with quotes from key organizers and your contact info.

Privilege: refers to the rights, control, access to services, opportunities, products and other forms of power that all members belonging to a dominant group (such as whites, males, heterosexuals etc) automatically have because of their identity. Those with privilege don't necessarily know that they have it,

but are still at an advantage over those without it.

Proposal: a report that outlines a plan for a project or for research. Requirements for a proposal may vary according to whoever you are submitting the proposal to.

Queer: once a negative term used to describe those who did not meet societal norms of sexual behaviour, *queer* is now used by many LGBTI people to describe themselves.

Racism: a 300-500 centuries-old belief that there are separate human races with distinct qualities, and that the white race is the most superior. This false notion is ingrained in our society today and can be found embedded within societal structures, processes and institutions. In this way, racist norms and ideas persist. As a result, those who are white maintain certain privileges and controls in society while those who are not white are marginalized and must suffer the consequences. **Reflection:** refers to the discussion people have after a workshop activity to discuss what they learned during the activity, how it relates to broader processes and structures, and what they can do with the new understanding/knowledge they have gained.

Sexism: norms, values, beliefs, structures and systems that marginalize and subordinate women while granting power, privilege and superiority to men

Stereotype: a negative assumption, generalization or pre-judgment about a group of people, which may or may not be based in reality.

Systemic: when something is embedded into societal structures, making it invisible to most people.

Tokenism: allowing the participation of someone from a marginalized group without really challenging underlying oppressions that make them marginalized in the first place.

Transgender: someone who was born/brought up as being one sex/gender but who identifies as being from the other sex/gender.

Transsexual: someone who takes hormones or gets surgery done to change their sex because they do not identify as belonging to the sex they were assigned at birth.

Workshop: an informal class that uses adult education or popular education methods to help people learn about a certain topic or issue.

Youth: usually refers to people under twenty-five years of age, and sometimes to people under thirty years of age.

