URGE Policies for Working with Communities of Color for University/Organization - Example Deliverable

This is what was found by Our Union with Purpose, an unaffiliated pod on Policies for Working with Communities of Color as well as plans for improved processes and/or needed resources.

*Pods may have members from a range of career stages and involvement in the development and execution of research projects, and pod members may have different experiences or different perspectives when responding to these questions. Consider this in the summary document and focus on capturing responses that are representative of the range in your pod.*

Table of Contents:
- King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks ... pg 2
- Contribution from Emily ... pg 4
- Contribution from Emily ... pg 8
King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks

Our organization is a local government that strives to gauge our success by measuring how our work providing clean water and healthy habitats to our community advances our goals by collaborating with community leaders. While we have been engaging in monitoring our project success and impact for over 50 years, in the next 30 years we must change our practices to better measure the performance of our investments at dismantling racism and building equitable futures for our entire community.

- **Audit of previous interactions with communities of color at our organization:**
  - Previous practices interacted with communities of color at project outset.
  - Project performance measured primarily, sometimes solely, regulatory compliance.
  - The 2016-2022 Equity and Social Justice strategic plan reviews previous practices and redefines them through an equity lens.

- **What worked well in these interactions?**
  - Reviewing transit routes, the County recognized that areas underserved by transit included those communities with the highest percentages of BIPOC residents and also those most likely to use transit. Transit service is being reapportioned to serve these communities more equitably.
  - County policy requires providing translation of outreach materials for all projects and services, into Spanish and other languages upon request.
  - An example: Public Health partnered with community members to form the Equal Start Community Coalition to address social determinants that lead to inequities in birth outcomes for African American, Native American and Latino families.
  - Focus on accessibility

- **What did not work well, and how can this be better addressed in future plans?**
  - This brand new plan does not specify how to measure outcomes
  - We have had failures from poor outreach plans that result in distrust by communities and reluctance to engage in the future.
  - The Clean Water Health Habitat Strategic Plan 2020-2025 addresses equitable investments and community engagement for outcome-driven decision making and measurement in six goal areas.
  - Monitoring people that were dislocated by projects that removed them from hazardous areas is not done. We do not have ways of tracking people and their health and well-being after they have been relocated.
  - We are able to track people in home-elevation programs because they remain in the floodplain where we do our work.
  - Broken promises with local tribes and treaty rights make tribal engagement challenging at best, confrontational at worst. Lack of trust in government by tribes.
Are there ways to improve the outcome of projects already undertaken?
- Our department has developed policies to ensure community engagement and equitable access to decision making
- Monitoring that extends community engagement beyond project completion is in development. Once implemented, methods and standards can be applied to review projects already completed
- Learn from past projects about what worked and what did not. Use adaptive management to adjust future design.
- Overdeliver and underpromise on future projects
- Go beyond meeting just regulatory requirements on a project.
- Use respectful language: local tribes are partners, not stakeholders, and they have ownership in the land, water, and fishery.

Are there specific resources or guidelines that are needed to improve the process for planning ahead and working with communities of color?
- Department-level policies have been developed.
- Each program and business operation must develop community engagement strategies consistent with the ESJ strategic plan and standards
- Resources must be prioritized to sustain community partnerships.
- Identify community relationship strategies and work across divisions to minimize simultaneous engagement strategies.
- Establish a language access plan for vital documents
- Report annually on engagement opportunities, tools and methods
Emily’s Section:

- **Audit of previous interactions with communities of color at our organization:**

Working in several different parts of the Geoscience Industry: Mining, Science Communication (Science Centre) and Mining Exploration have given various degrees of interaction with Indigenous communities across Canada.

**Experiences:**

Young Davidson Mine (currently with Aurico, prior Northgate Minerals): (located within the Robinson Huron Treaty) working on a mine in pre-feasibility study, that was working with the Matachewan First Nation and Temagami First Nation Peoples. As a student contract geologist my work reflected the beginning of filing for an IBA. With the MOU (memorandum of understanding) being filed just prior. In 2008 this work was praised and being a huge pilot for change in Ontario with how Indigenous communities worked with the mining sector.

Science North: a 4th Generation Science Centre in Northern Ontario (Located in the Robinson Huron treaty) providing engaging hands-on science experiences to people of all ages. The Centre provides outreach through school programs, summer camps and day camps, and online learning. The Northern Outreach team travels to First Nations Communities across Northern Ontario to bring Science Day camps to areas that don’t normally have access. (Treaty lands included: the Robinson Huron Treaty, James Bay Treaty, Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek, Kasabonika Lake, and North-West Angle Treaty)

Consulting Exploration Geology: Through projects located on; Baffin Island, Nunavut Territory, Yukon Territory, and Northern Ontario there are varying degrees of interaction based off role, contract and project stage.

- **What worked well in these interactions?**
  - When beginning on a project having a community member help facilitate introductions.
  - Asking members of the communities what their needs are, and how they prefer interactions to take place.
  - Having regular community consultations that allow for open Q and A. Take place in a community centre that is accessible.
  - Begin setting the groundwork prior to needing to file for IBAs, reports, proposals and grants. Allows for strong communication, trust, and edits/amendments to be done in time for submissions.
● External steering committees for projects that are led by the community and ensure there is representation at the table approved by the community.

● When working on projects, have a member in the organization who can help guide the initial proposal and facilitate and initiate meetings, this person would be the go-to for stakeholder concerns as well. It is less confusing than having multiple organization members reaching out.

● Including the community early on, through the lifetime, and after ending of project.

● Allow for the community to have a presence and have them decide what that will look like.

● In recruitment plans: creating meaningful pipelines that include accessible training, professional development, mentorship programs, career path planning and succession planning. Include flexibility and time off for cultural events such as hunting season.

● Develop the internal policy “If unsure, ask”. It creates dialogue, helps to ensure that something of significance is not missed. This was really helpful during project planning and became a great learning and trust building exercise.

● What did not work well, and how can this be better addressed in future plans?
  ● Applying for grant funding for a project without consultation.
    - Allow for more project lead time with better planning,
    - Consult with the community in early conception, before proposals are created.

  ● For videos and media, not having a community member at the table during the editing stages. The editors’ bias towards western culture comes up.
    - Have copies and edits sent throughout the project for review and approval
    - Increasing workflow timelines to allow for discussion and collaboration.

  ● Project timelines too short: A project seemed rushed and made interactions with stakeholder’s tense. Timelines were based off of the organization needs and not with the stakeholders.
  ● In outreach and education: Having Non-Indigenous employees delivering the stories and teachings of Indigenous groups without training or their permission.
    - Ensure expressed consent is given and that the staff are aware.
    - Proper training and teaching given to staff, the community should have the say on who and how the message is delivered

  ● Performing outreach (employment, career days, or science programing): not adapting your messaging. If you’re in a community delivering information about careers or STEM, by having imagery and wording that isn’t welcoming does not
establish a relationship. In education it becomes limiting as it doesn’t incorporate the traditional knowledge to relate to.

- review imagery on posters, and the wording used.
- review for accessibility
- review the intentions and the outcomes for this initiative.

- Employment Recruitment that lacks supports. Without supports and development in place there is increased turn over and a leaky pipeline.
- work with communities to create hiring practices that are accessible to them
- create an anti-racism workplace
- create opportunities and foster development through training and succession planning.

- Not addressing racism within your organization.
- Anti-racism and Bias training
- Addressing microaggressions and racially charged comments early on regardless of the individual’s position.
- Senior Management who are on board and foster inclusive and accessible workspaces.

- Are there ways to improve the outcome of projects already undertaken?
  - Assess compensation: have past agreements been honoured, what is outstanding and needs to be addressed immediately.

- Building trust: If there is a project stakeholder that has been a cause of concern or violated the community’s trust in the past, it is up to the community if that stakeholder may participate, and this autonomy must be respected. The removal of disrespectful team members must be immediate. Trust has been hindered when a Senior Team Member has made disparaging comments and it has gotten back to community, this needs to be dealt with.

- Improve messaging and how communications are delivered. For example: The groups I have worked with have circular storytelling, where in science and western culture it is very linear. Ensure that if messaging is being used, it has the approval of the community, it is not impacting the structure of the timing of the information. If communications must reach the members ensure it is in the preferred format of communication, so that it is accessible (example: if you have been asked to use face to face communication, or if internet access is a concern ensure you are using channels that will be seen, with the appropriate amount of time for response).

- Adapting the Truth and Reconciliation Report recommendations to fit your organization. If there have been violations in the past it is time to own them, and
apologies with meaningful action plans to reduce the ongoing harm. The communities you serve should be consulted in this process.

https://nctr.ca/reports2.php

- Are there specific resources or guidelines that are needed to improve the process for planning ahead and working with communities of color?

- Addition time considered in timelines for applications of grants, proposals, and reports to allow review, permission and edits.

- As mining companies engage with communities and engage in outreach activities, it is important when sharing impacts that the groups are not being exploited. Be cognizant of stories being shared, photographs, and that the impact isn’t being seen as saviorism. Imagine Canada (fundraising) has great insights on this as fundraising has exploited the communities they served in the past.

https://nctr.ca/reports2.php

**Additional Resources:**

Regarding Memorandum of Young Davidson Mine and BIA

https://www.matachewanfirstnation.com/mining-lands-and-resources

Science North Annual Report 2018:

Treaties Ontario
https://www.ontario.ca/page/map-ontario-treaties-and-reserves#t34

ICMM:International Council of Mining and Metals
https://www.icmm.com

Ontario Human Rights Commissions
Sara’s Portion (narrative response):
My experience with CalNERDS at UC Berkeley was an integrative, anti-racist framework for underrepresented minorities in STEM fields to create community. One of the themes that came up in the URGE documentation that resonated strongly with me was the presence of food. NERDS always provided us food, a full meal, at every event. When engaging with individuals from differing socioeconomic backgrounds (which often overlap with race, though not exclusively so) the idea of meeting basic needs like food, shelter and sleep are often overlooked by more privileged groups.

During our session we discussed storytelling and differing information integration. From my experience in consulting there is a de-emphasis on any “wasted” time that is not billable because it does not contribute to the bottom line. In order to shift the attention to be more broadly inclusive and accommodating to a wider community there would need to be a fundamental shift in how the “valuable” of a project is time spent. Currently in my anecdotal experience there is an overwhelming cultural norm that anything beyond the strict minimum of client engagement is to be avoided. Conversations around consent need to be more widely implemented before conversations of how to navigate more nuanced social situations can be handled with sensitivity.