URGE Policies for Working with Communities of Color for URGE DNH ROM/U of T Pod

- **Audit of previous interactions with communities of color at our organization:**
  - As the ROM and U of T have extensive field work campaigns across the world, we'll focus on the personal experiences of members of our Pod.

**Canada**

**Northwest Territories**
- Field research performing geological mapping and sediment sampling for geochemical and micropalaeontological analysis along the Horton River on the Bathurst Peninsula. Field research was approved by local government and indigenous communities, but when contacted, regional indigenous communities indicated that they had no interest in collaboration (or in our research generally).

**Northern Ontario**
- Field course for students. Accommodation in booked lodgings with mapping project on Indigenous lands with permission from land owners. Unfortunately land owners felt disrespected by the land treatment of some students and land access was denied for a few years. No interaction happened on the trip between course attendees and land owners.
- Science outreach program (Science Travels). Group of graduate students travelled to Migisi Sahgaigan (Eagle Lake) First Nation, an Ojibwe community in northwestern Ontario, near the border with Manitoba, and presented multiple hands-on workshops for the students there, while also being asked to participate in discussions focused on barriers to success and the importance of community/family (our visit coincided with an annual ‘addictions awareness week’ organized by their local council).
- Field research in the Moose River Basin, north of Cochrane, ON. Research involved assessing area for sedimentary outcrop exposure and potential for preservation of vertebrate, invertebrate, and plant fossils. Work was performed on land owned by Ontario Power Generation, but on traditional territory of the Moose River Cree and the Taykwa Tagamou Nation. We reached out to both communities prior to our fieldwork to discuss our planned fieldwork and obtain consent (not a legal requirement in this case). The COVID-19 pandemic delayed our plans for additional fieldwork, but when we are able to return, we have sought out funding to facilitate student research opportunities for members of those communities, and are reaching out to form collaborative partnerships with them.

**Nunavut**
- Palaeontological field research on Devon Island, Nunavut. Field team was in contact with regional government and indigenous communities, but had no direct contact/collaboration during the fieldwork itself. Multi-year collaborations were developed with members of the Inuit community of Grise Fiord (on nearby Ellesmere Island), and outreach performed in their community. During a visit by members of their community to Ottawa, they were also shown the collections facility and research labs at the Canadian...
Museum of Nature, where we were studying the fossils collected from near their community (and where all Nunavut fossils recently collected are being reposited and held in trust for the people of Nunavut while they make plans to construct their own permanent collection facility in Iqaluit).

Northern BC
- Field research in the Spatsizi Plateau, near Dease Lake, BC, prospecting for fossils in Cretaceous sedimentary deposits. The government of the Tahltan Nation were contacted to obtain permission to perform fieldwork and scientific research in their traditional territory. This field program is still in relatively early stages, and little contact exists with local communities. Our goal is to form longer term and collaborative/reciprocal partnerships with the Tahltan Nation and their members of their constituent Bands, though this field program is currently on hold due to the pandemic.

South America
Guianas
- Work in the capital areas with local subsistence fishermen, government, and local academics to assess impacts of land use change and mining on biodiversity and subsistence fishing. Work in remote areas of heavily forested regions with local villages to assess impacts of regional mining practices on aquatic biodiversity and water quality, which relates to but did not directly assess subsistence fishing, village safety and quality of life. Research team led by University of Toronto/Royal Ontario Museum Researchers.

Argentina
- Work in Neuquén and Río Negro provinces in Patagonia, specifically in desert/badland areas south of El Chocón. Our team was a collaboration between our American-Canadian team and two Argentine colleagues (and their students). We primarily worked in remote areas, but also stayed on a farm owned by local people in the village of Cerro Policía, who have previously worked with one of our Argentine colleagues (and he has some established outreach collaborations in and around that community). We also worked briefly with colleagues at the local museum in El Chocón.

Europe
Hungary
- Field course for palaeoanthropology students in northeastern Hungary. While we did not work directly with locals in excavations, we hired locals for food, housing, and transportation. There was a relatively large population of Romani people in the area, who we interacted with on occasion. Research team led by a University of Toronto researcher.

Africa
Madagascar
- Remote exploration camp a 3 day drive or flight to the capital in a semi-desert. Local village land was sold by the government to the mining company. The local village would have to be relocated if a mine was developed, but would also mean upgrading the
village schools and services. Exploration camp had large air conditioned buildings with on demand hot water. Local village had public toilets and one room mud huts.

Each person who has examples above should write down at least 1-2 points for each of the bullets below

● What worked well in these interactions?
  ● Have a local person as part of the team to guide in the area, facilitate working with local communities, provide valuable insight in the area. This person must be fairly compensated.
    ○ Examples:
      ■ Guianas - We asked local fishermen and village members to inform us about their observations and experiences, how they have been impacted by mining, what they hope would change, what they wanted us to communicate to the government about their struggle and incorporated their knowledge of local biodiversity by hiring them as guides, and inviting village members to participate in our activities
      ■ Guianas - Hired local students/professionals to assist in communicating with remote communities, to educate us on culture practices and to facilitate asking permission to work within local lands and waters. We also asked the local students/professionals to facilitate learning some phrases and names of the village languages.
      ■ Asking and involving local geologists for help with communicating with local communities when looking for specific features/areas of interest
      ■ Northern Canada - field teams have hired community members as summer students to assist in fieldwork. When possible, the local team members may act as a bridge to further collaborations and communication with the local community in the future.
  ● In addition to hiring local workers, for long or semipermanent programs, have a dedicated member of the visiting team to engage the community.
    ○ Example: Camp cook acted as a community builder, bridging the locals and the Canadians. She encouraged visitors to “sponsor” local children. Because of that, I paid for a local girl to go to school for 6 years.
  ● Foster a sense of involvement or pride in the community by sharing knowledge of the research program
    ○ Example: In Hungary, the project leads worked with the local villagers to install a small exhibit on the fossils found in the area at the local museum.
    ○ Example: In Argentina, our colleagues named dinosaur species in honour of the community and assisted in making exhibits for a local museum / cultural centre that discussed this research
Example: In Nunavut, project research on Devon Island resulted in the discovery of fossils from early relatives of seals. These fossils were used in outreach with the local community in Grise Fiord, and members of the community assisted in deciding what to name the new species described from these specimens.

- **What did not work well, and how can this be better addressed in future plans?**
  - Power imbalance resulted in data and information being extracted from the community resulting in an exploitative situation, as opposed to one of mutual respect and sharing of knowledge.
  - If a long term project, the community needs to be invested in, instead of exploited (Education, water and food availability, medical services etc.). That way, once the project is finished, a power imbalance is not artificially created in the community, resulting in conflict afterwards.
    - **Examples:**
      - Camp workers who had relationships with the locals, causing one to become pregnant and abandoning her at the end of the field season. She was then unable to support her child and the little girl was abandoned. The Canadian camp cook ended up adopting the child.
      - Locals were paid substantially less than Canadians performing the same work. E.g. local geologists were paid $15 per day, while Canadians several hundred dollars/day. When asked why, the camp manager said the locals were attacked by other members of the village and robbed if they were seen as too wealthy after the Canadians left for the season (the income disparity in the village was too high).
      - Guianas - often local researchers and village members were treated as less educated, and therefore less aware of their surroundings as compared to Western educated researchers (professors). Training prior to the trip or knowledge of local community interests and how it can be incorporated into the research plan.
      - Guianas - Research team was targeted for a robbery, which caused local disagreement and strife within the village. More generally, a strange dynamic develops between researchers coming in as an authority/money resource and locals who defer to this incoming group often causing abuse of financial power. A better balance of local and incoming researchers would create more interaction and community support. Some resources could be directed to the general community rather than only the individuals hired.
      - Hungary - Students were not given specific advice or guidelines about cultural differences prior to embarking on the field trip; we
were also not informed about any of the discriminatory practices that the Romani people typically experience.

- Northern Canada - in many cases, fieldwork was fairly short-term, and so little to no longer-term collaborations or respectful exchanges could be performed with local communities, besides obtaining access to the land for our research. In areas where we would return over multiple years, greater efforts were made to engage with local communities.

- Northern Canada - in some cases, local communities would not respond for many months to any attempts at communication / contact, or would be very sporadic in returning calls/emails. The conversations typically ended up being pleasant and supportive, but long delays were difficult at times to reconcile with tighter schedules required for grants, government permits, air travel booking, etc. In future, having all communication performed much earlier if possible, so that more time-sensitive actions can be performed separately. Also, ideally, furthering more formal collaborations based on mutual benefit with local communities and the building of more outreach and exchange will create more frequent and consistent lines of communication.

- Are there ways to improve the outcome of projects already undertaken?
  - Guiana - Very little seemed to go back to the community, so having research projects that incorporate more local knowledge to determine new knowledge or outcomes that could benefit the community
  - Guiana - Follow up visits to share what communications had been successfully made to the government, and any indication that the situation would be better for the local community
  - Include briefings on cultural differences and/or issues in field manuals
  - Reach out to communities to share results of research and offer opportunities for educational outreach

- Are there specific resources or guidelines that are needed to improve the process for planning ahead and working with communities of color?
  - Prior contact with the villages of interest to build communications, direct resources and efforts, and to prevent impact on local community dynamics should be required.
  - Additional resources to hire or include more community involvement in research/collection/compensation for knowledge or other items
  - Consider setting aside a set percentage of the budget of the planned research program for dedicated outreach and community involvement
○ Codes of conduct need to include a section dedicated to interactions with local communities.

Some things to think about while we fill this out:

● Actively sought out local collaborators / liaisons / guides? Why or why not?
  ○ Were they included in the early development and/or proposal of the research or project itself, or added at a later stage?
  ○ Were any local collaborators included as authors on presentations and/or papers?
● Actively sought to include local students in your research? Why or why not?
● Sought to build trust and form long-term connections and collaborations with local institutions if your project is multi-year / ongoing? Why or why not?
  ○ Were previous negative interactions, whether from inside or outside of your organization, addressed in the plans for building these connections and trust?
● Shared data and findings with the local/regional community in a way that is more accessible? (i.e., translating into different languages). Why or why not?
● Educated yourself and your group/team about local politics, culture, customs, and knowledge, including the history of colonialism / settler colonialism in the region? Why or why not?
  ○ Was sufficient time allocated to the process of working within the community’s governance, customs, and priorities?
  ○ Is respecting culture and customs included as part of your code of conduct? This will be addressed in Session 6 as well.
● Acknowledged local communities / Indigenous tribes in your research results?
● Included local communities in your broader impacts in a meaningful way that builds on the community’s identified needs and concerns?
  ○ Did these efforts leverage community members, and was that work compensated appropriately?
● Considered and prioritized research questions and research locations based on needs of local communities, in addition to how impactful they are seen within academia?
● Do codes of conduct include sections on interacting with local community members? Disciplinary actions for breaking conduct codes?

Guiana - It appeared that local collaborators were included early on and many had long term relationships with Canadian researchers. Local collaborators then invited students and staff to assist in site selection and field preparations. Local collaborators were also on publications. No village members appeared to be included in the early developments (there may have been some early contact via a local student in some cases) and none were invited as authors in any communications. Data and specimens were shared between local institutions and Canadian institutions, and findings were submitted to local governments. There was very little training received prior to the trip about local politics, customs, culture, knowledge and learned as we worked. Students receive Travel Abroad Training which included being aware and respectful of local customs, but there was no specific code of conduct for our expeditions. As far as I am
aware, villagers were not acknowledged in an published work. On a particular trip, I was told by a village member that was hired, he was not happy because the village locals were not paid as well as the South African man (living in Guyana) and certain staff who ran the ecotourism company that assisted in our expedition logistics, and that his knowledge and skills were constantly undermined by these people. I personally tried to only interact with the village members and use their expertise and share my knowledge because of this power dynamic within the “local” team members. Many villagers were unhappy with this treatment and said this ecotourism company was damaging to their local communities. Questions from the village communities were not considered, however research questions of local researchers/students were valued and sometimes regarded as equal in value. However, Canadian students were not involved in much of the planning and development, so this is all outside perspective.

**Pod Member Approval**
Please add your initials in the right column to signal your final approval

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