URGEO
Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

natural capital PROJECT

Racism and Inclusivity
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This doc was created by NatCap URGE pod at the Natural Capital Project to address fieldwork Safety and Inclusivity.

Setting of 'fieldwork'

Generally, fieldwork at The Natural Capital Project (NatCap) involves travel to foreign countries to meet and work directly with project partners based in that country. Collaboration can include partners who work in government positions, NGOs and communities where project work is focused (for example, coastal communities where green infrastructure planning projects will happen). Meetings tend to be held in urban areas but can include travel to specific locations where intended project work will be carried out.

Because travel often takes individuals to countries they are not from, it is important to understand historical context, current political climate, and cultural practices in order to be both safe and respectful as a visitor.

Beyond that fieldwork, NatCap hosts a large number of visiting scholars, interns, and other researchers each year. Supervising these is a key responsibility of all NatCap team members, and the closest we come to supervising students in the field. For our professional work and for supervision, intercultural skills and following a code of conduct are crucial.

General code of conduct

The following is a general code of conduct that could be implemented to create a safe and inclusive travel environment, as well as used in day to day interactions. A more detailed code of conduct can be found in the [Stanford University Code of Conduct](#).

- Individuals are expected to communicate with respect and use appropriate language for a professional setting. Respect applies to all identities, regardless of the presence of any particular identity.
- All communication should be constructive, non-degrading, and put downs are not tolerated.
- Be thoughtful of others' perspectives and do not interrupt or talk over others.
- Harassment or descrimination of any kind (race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, relationship status, religion, cultural practices, physical or mental ability, national origin) is not acceptable. This includes offensive language related to any of the identities noted

above, as well as physical appearance. Name calling, put downs, or negatively manipulative language is also not acceptable.
- Create an open and safe environment by reminding colleagues to speak up if they are feeling uncomfortable or unsafe at any point. Check in with colleagues about their feelings of comfort or safety in new situations.
- Conduct project work in an ethical and inclusive manner.

To report harassment of any type please follow the reporting mechanisms described here. Bystander and Upstander Intervention training can be found here.

Safeguards for travel impacts on personnel
Travel for †work can have many positive outcomes, however, some are negative. We would like to include the following suggestions to help address potential issues below in the hopes that this will create more inclusive planning and travel.
- Project Planning and Prior to Travel. Prior to a project's start and travel planning, it is important to consider what travel is necessary and who is required to travel. During the grant writing and proposal phase project leads should consult all who are expected to travel in order to understand what impact travel dates/commitments may have regarding cultural/religious holidays, personal and family commitments, or mental/physical health. For example, sitting for prolonged periods of time during international travel may be physically painful for some team members or travel schedules may interfere with cultural holidays.

- Consider current and historical contexts. Teams and project managers should carefully consider the context surrounding work in a particular country. Specifically, historical contexts, the current political climate, and cultural practices. For example, is there a history of discrimination toward individals who will be traveling to this destination? What is the current political environment, is the current government hostile toward any identities of team members who will be traveling to this destination? If so, how might you change your travel plans to keep all team members safe? What are the cultural practices where you are traveling? How might you need to change your behavior to be respectful of such practices?

- Encourage open communication. Project leads and teams should encourage and engage in open communication amongst team members. The goal is to ensure members of the team are comfortable bringing up personal/family/cultural/religious/etc. concerns or considerations that may make a particular trip more difficult for them. Project leads

should discuss potential safety risks and ask those traveling if they have particular concerns.

- Differing comfort levels. Some people may be more comfortable with international travel and navigating various official security checkpoints (such as customs). It is important to recognize that different people have different levels of comfort with domestic/international travel and it may add additional stress for that individual.

Safety and Inclusivity when Traveling

It is important to prepare before traveling to a foreign country, however, circumstances can change while abroad. The suggestions below are to help maintain a safe and inclusive environment while traveling.

- Keep open lines of communication between members of the group.
- Model good behavior. This includes checking in with others about their comfort, safety, personal life impacts, putting safety before project goals, voicing concerns, etc.
- Before traveling in a foreign setting, think and discuss with others on the team if a project might touch on issues of discrimination. Contact those working in the Natcap has an equity group for direction if needed.
- Be open to hearing voices of locals and consider carefully the socio-economic context and power dynamics.