



URGEO

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

URGE Policies for Working with Communities of Color for FAU Palaeo

This is what was found by FAU Palaeo at Friedrich-Alexander Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg on Policies for Working with Communities of Color/ethnic minorities 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.

- **Audit of previous interactions with communities of color at our organization:**
 - Assistant professor has worked in the field in cooperation with governmental agencies in Morocco and Uzbekistan. In the case of Uzbekistan, the field work was co-organized with Uzbek colleagues which went particularly smooth and was really beneficial for both parties. The highlight was an outreach event with local food, culture and presentations in the Geological Reserve. We also tried including our local colleagues in publications but they insisted they only wanted to be mentioned in the acknowledgements. We therefore named two species in their honour.

- A graduate student has worked in cooperation with Maori communities in the South Island of New Zealand (primary iwi: Ngai Tahu) and Cook Islands Maori, in a project about remote sensing in archaeology.
- A post-doc has ongoing research in Mexico with a local conservation organization and colleagues in Mexico and the southwestern United States - initiated while at another institution.
- **What worked well in these interactions?**
 - We used local names for landmarks or features. Local communities were interested and we explained our work although sometimes language was a barrier.
 - All locations in papers (unpublished) were referred to using both Maori and English names. Written permission was sought from landowners prior to any exploration, and methodology was first approved by Aotahi School of Maori and Indigenous Studies. Methodology was changed at their suggestion - i.e., all fieldwork using GPR was cancelled, and only thermal and multispectral imagery was performed. Co-author included a Maori geologist (University of Auckland) and the Aotahi School was acknowledged.
 - Clear communication about expectations for collaboration (e.g., authorship roles; covering costs) and discussing logistical issues (e.g., hiring local fishermen for transportation). Partners at the local conservation organization were interested in the type of data (i.e., death assemblages as baselines) but had no experience with the methods, so we trained them in the methods while in the field and have an ongoing exchange about the taxonomy of the fauna. This work is motivated by the objectives of the conservation organization, which is to establish an engineered estuary. The death assemblage data is intended to help gauge the success of this effort.
- **What did not work well, and how can this be better addressed in future plans?**
 - Initially, we only contacted authorities or regional colleagues in advance of expeditions. We would like to address this by involving community members and local colleagues in earlier stages of proposal planning and involve them in publications as collaborators.
 - As a local working in Mauritius, it was quite disconcerting when non-local conservation biologists and researchers would come work with us but then completely ignore us and disregarded our knowledge in the field. There was sometimes a clear segregation between locals and non-locals in terms of socialising. Locals were not encouraged to pursue research (disseminating the data that we were collecting) but rather were data mules, who would go out in the field every day and record data. "Research" was left to the non-locals and publications usually included the names of the directors only.

- The timing of field work and meals was an issue, based on differences between our US and Mexico participants as to the timing and size of meals (i.e., when is the largest meal of the day). Some of this was unavoidable because sampling is determined by the tidal cycle, but we resolved to have the large meal immediately upon returning from field work rather than waiting. We did not have local partnerships initially and were very much “parachuting” into an area with interesting research questions. This has now been improved with the ongoing development of collaborations with the conservation organization and local colleagues.
- **Are there ways to improve the outcome of projects already undertaken?**
 - We are currently building a website for a book project where we asked authors to translate the abstract in their mother language. We are considering to add summaries in additional languages.
 - There are huge social/environmental justice issues where we are working and a need for more awareness of these issues throughout the Colorado River basin. There are ongoing binational efforts around restoration and equity in the Colorado River delta, but nowhere near enough. All of this is made by climate change and worsening drought projections in the SW United States and NW Mexico.
- **Are there specific resources or guidelines that are needed to improve the process for planning ahead and working with communities of color?**
 - Many aspects fall in our hands to plan ahead and work with local communities. It would be beneficial to add formal guidelines and incentives to funding applications as well as provide funding activities to locally support museums and train communities to protect outcrops and store research objects.