Deliverable - Policies for Working with Communities of Color

- **Audit of previous interactions with communities of color at our organization:**
  - E.g. How many research projects were undertaken in countries or regions with communities of color, how many of those included meaningful interactions with those communities of color? Briefly describe one or more example projects to provide context for the following questions.

Collectively, we have had numerous projects in which we have interacted with communities of color. These include several domestic locations (e.g., California, Louisiana, Arkansas, Georgia) and abroad (e.g., Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Pakistan, China, S. Korea, India, the Caucasus, Portugal, Czech Republic). With these interactions, we typically work with local colleagues and/or students, who serve as collaborators on research projects, transport facilitators, translators, drivers, and cultural liaisons. In some instances, we are the "overseas collaborators" supporting PIs from the local community. In general, we have all found our interactions with the local communities of color to be very meaningful, and a two-way street of knowledge and cultural exchange. For example, GZ's work in Nepal and China led to engaging interactions whereby his designated driver became interested in the science and wanted to assist in the field collections and work. Carol's work in Bangladesh involves students from local universities, some of whom have continued academic careers in the US and elsewhere. She also has gotten to know the villagers at several locations, and it's almost like a "second family" going to visit them year after year. Such collaborations also extend to planetary applications, even as joint project involving data from planets like Mars (e.g., one collaborator from Sri Lanka was admitted to a doctoral program in the US mostly because the admissions committee noticed his co-authorship in a paper with LSU's Geology & Geophysics)

- **What worked well in these interactions?**

We have a robust history of interacting well with the local expertise and their students, and these **successful interactions seem to hinge on respect**. For instance, it is imperative to treat the local research partners as equals, fostering opportunities for co-authored peer-reviewed works, and building social connections with them instead of socializing with expatriates. When we are interacting, it is important to compensate our colleagues and the local communities for their time and effort in a way that is most meaningful to them. It is important (though many times not easy) to try to figure out what local communities want early on, which collaborators are relevant, what collaborators want to get out of the experience(s), and to carve out/prioritize time and resources to foster collaborations. We also find that attempting to learn the local language, even just a few key phrases, is important as it shows respect for local customs. Capacity building is ideal, but going into a community and realizing that we can learn from local knowledge and approaches is also imperative. We should also try to seek out ways to "give back" to the local communities, such as translating research into local language (targeting various audiences: K-12; public; professionals), or creating educational videos.

  - E.g. Using local names for landmarks or features, adhering to restrictions and customs such as not scheduling outreach meetings/events during hunting season

Collectively, we try to utilize the local geographic names for locations. This becomes complex as locations typically have several names based on geopolitical history. However, we

do our best to use the local name, and perhaps in publications or presentations use parentheses to include other historical options (e.g., “Mtkvari River (also called the Kura River)”). It is also important to be sensitive to local customs (secular and religious). For example, Carol’s group in Bangladesh has been trying to be more cognizant and accommodating of religious holidays (i.e., holy Friday and Ramadan held by Muslims) when making field plans. As researchers working in other communities, we should realize that our academic or personal holiday schedule is not the only one that is important.

- **What did not work well, and how can this be better addressed in future plans?**

Sometimes the interests of our local collaborators or students were not clear prior to interactions in the field, and research work was challenging as a result. Having better communication prior to field campaigns and 100% transparency what each person wanted to get out of the experience would help prevent this. However, this may not be a “sure-fire solution”. For instance, sometimes our interests may not 100% overlie, and we need to be aware and accepting of those limitations. In addition, many communities/collaborators are more interested in applied science, as opposed to our (sometimes) empirical or basic science projects; therefore, we should make conscious efforts to craft our scientific questions and projects that would be more meaningful to these communities/collaborators. Finally, when concerning students from other countries that want to pursue education in the US and elsewhere, establishing where the student’s true interests lie will ensure a better success in graduate school.

It is important to try to include the priorities of the local communities of color when developing proposals, but if possible, we should compensate their time and effort (and not overburden already full schedules/teaching/other responsibilities).

- **Are there ways to improve the outcome of projects already undertaken?**
    - E.g., Work with and compensate community members to translate research results and outreach materials into local language, include acknowledgements in forthcoming publications and presentations

We agree that the above examples are great suggestions. We also believe we should use the phrase “observer accounts” as opposed to “anecdotal evidence”, which has a negative connotation of being unreliable as it is based on personal narratives as opposed to scientific measurement. Ultimately we should be willing to be flexible in our research, based on the local community’s concerns and interests. For example, due to water rights or environmental concerns, a local community may not want or give permission for water or soil sampling. We must be respectful and accept their concerns as legitimate and adjust accordingly. We should also be cognizant of time commitments of community members while in the field. Finally, we should make efforts to continue communication with locals (i.e., share final results with local communities in meaningful ways).

- **Are there specific resources or guidelines that are needed to improve the process for planning ahead and working with communities of color?**
    - E.g., Additional support/funding for early planning process of projects to include forming productive and mutually beneficial connections with communities, establish a point of contact for

interfacing with communities so as not to overwhelm with individual requests from researchers and collaborators

We agree that the above examples are great suggestions. In addition, we find when planning on working with a new community, try to be as respectful as possible: do your homework and learn as much as possible about the history, geopolitical situation, cultures, socioeconomic differences, land-ownership rights, existing racial situations (e.g., endemic racism), and/or environmental concerns. Make strides to understand the local communities, what's important to them, and what triggers them. Do not go into the situation with "top down control" expectations. Use "bottom up" approaches and ask permissions. Transparency is key. Realize and discuss there may be concerns about data ownership. Finally, it is important to try to translate research findings into local language, using appropriate target audiences (K-12; public; professionals).

- **A note on the responsibilities of people using remotely gathered data**

Many of us use data (both remotely obtained and remotely sensed) that was collected by others, either by our personal collaborators on a project, or by a large organization (e.g., IODP, IRIS, NASA etc.). In such cases, though our work is separated from the field operations, we as "consumers" of these data nonetheless bear collective responsibility for the integrity of those operations, particularly when they involve work with communities of color. First, we can become informed about what went into the collection of the data we use (e.g., meteorites collected in Africa), asking questions about the ethical and cultural context in which it was collected along with the scientific metadata we typically use. Second, we can leverage our influence as collaborators or constituents to encourage the persons who *are* involved in field operations to adopt best practices for working with communities of color, as outlined above.