

Deliverable - Policies for Working with Communities of Color

Education is essential but action is also imperative for achieving the objectives of URGE. Therefore, each topic is paired with concrete deliverables for the individual pods to develop, draft, and share. This deliverable is *policies and plans for working with communities of color*.

Geosciences has strong roots in colonialism, with targeted expeditions that leverage local knowledge to accumulate valuable observations to be later analyzed and disseminated at home institutions with little to no collaboration or follow up with those previous contacts. The western approach continues in present day science; it will take recognition and commitment to change. Examples in the Session 4 readings include Indigenous, Arctic, and/or other international communities, but exploitation can also occur in non-Indigenous domestic communities of color.

Building productive relationships takes time. Laying a foundation of awareness, feedback, and buy-in is a start, but true inclusion goes beyond a “seat at the table.” Approaching an issue from different perspectives, not just the western or academic standard, acknowledges that there are multiple ways of knowing. The time and effort invested upfront can lead to more meaningful and impactful results, for example considering language barriers to earthquake shaking accounts, including perspectives of Indigenous communities in climate assessments and reports, and addressing environmental racism through environmental justice .

The discussion questions below may not all be relevant or applicable to your pod, but we encourage you to think about how these can be addressed in the organizations or institutions you interact with as well as the broader geoscience field.

If you are involved in research with communities of color, in the US or abroad, have you...

- Actively sought out local collaborators / liaisons / guides? Why or why not?

Most of our work is lab- based so we have not thought about finding locals to collaborate with. We will keep this in mind if and when field work presents itself in the future.

- Were they included in the early development and/or proposal of the research or project itself, or added at a later stage?

In a new project, a collaborator from Brazil was incorporated in a very early stage of the research (idea processing for proposal submission) and will continue to be involved throughout the research.

- Were any local collaborators included as authors on presentations and/or Papers?

We have not had any local collaborators as described, but in the future when we do, all collaborators that contribute to research projects are included in presentations and papers. This would be no different.

- Actively sought to include local students in your research? Why or why not?

At the university level, we included graduate and undergraduate students of all backgrounds that are interested in research. We have not had any local students included that were not in higher education, but have discussed this and plan to improve this in the future.

- 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?

***Since our work is lab based, we are using “local” here as the community we are located in.**

***Up until this point we have not worked with any local schools or institutions. To address this, we are thinking about getting involved with local K-12 schools to teach them about marine biology and the projects we have going on in the lab currently. This would allow students at a young age to better understand the ecosystem that they are surrounded by.**

- Were previous negative interactions, whether from inside or outside of your organization, addressed in the plans for building these connections and trust?

Thus far we have not had such negative interactions in these specific situations.

- 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?

In the past, any of our community outreach deliverables have been distributed to the local and affected communities in both english and spanish (the dominant languages in our area.) We also publish all of our data as accessible to the public through free and online databases so that everyone can use the data and have knowledge of it. We want our community to know about the data we are producing and for other communities with researchers to build off of it.

- 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?

Throughout the URGE program our pod has touched on the general history of race in America and colonialism during our weekly discussions. We plan to spend a meeting discussing history, culture, and current and past politics of the Galveston area to be as well informed as possible about the region in which we work.

Additionally, with our recent collaboration in Brazil, one of our researcher's will be traveling there. They have been funded to learn the language of the area and will be learning the customs, culture, and history of colonialism in Brazil as a means to be a better collaborator.

- Was sufficient time allocated to the process of working within the community's governance, customs, and priorities?

This is something we have not had needed to do with our past work, but will be discussing it and planning how this would be done.

- Is respecting culture and customs included as part of your code of conduct? *This will be addressed in Session 6 as well.*

For TAMUG as a whole: not that could be easily found. It is not included in the ethics of TAMU or the student code of conduct through TAMUG. We will be considering creating one for our lab in our next meeting and publizing that to others within the department and to the university.

- Acknowledged local communities / Indigenous tribes in your research results?

We have not done this yet, but will include a land acknowledgement in our future presentations and have taken the steps to educate all laboratory members on the current lands we are on. Galveston land acknowledgement: Akokisa, Atakapa, and Karankawa land. We will include recognition of this for all of our Galveston work in the future.

- Included local communities in your broader impacts in a meaningful way that builds on the community's identified needs and concerns?

In recent research we have not done this, but in a new research project we will be connecting with local communities to educate through social media and we plan to work with the local schools for scientific demonstrations and science projects in the near future.

- Did these efforts leverage community members, and was that work compensated appropriately? **n/a**
- Considered and prioritized research questions and research locations based on needs of local communities, in addition to how impactful they are seen within academia?

We have considered this in the past and will continue to. This will become even more valued in our lab in the near future as we become more active and involved with the local community.

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.

Pods should upload a summary document of previous interactions with communities of color as well as plans for an improved process to the URGE website by 3/19/2021. We also encourage pods to post on their organization's website, and share over social media (#URGEoscience and @URGEoscience). Sharing deliverables will propagate ideas, foster discussion, and ensure accountability.