

# URGE

## Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

*Unlearning Racism in Geoscience (URGE; [www.urgeoscience.org](http://www.urgeoscience.org)) is a community-wide journal-reading and policy-design curriculum to help Geoscientists unlearn racism and improve accessibility, justice, equity, and inclusion (AJEDI) in our discipline. URGE's primary objectives are to (1) deepen the community's knowledge of the effects of racism on the participation and retention of black, brown, and indigenous people in Geoscience<sup>1</sup>, (2) use the existing literature, expert opinion, and personal experiences to develop anti-racist policies and strategies<sup>2,3</sup>, and (3) share, discuss, and modify anti-racist policies and strategies within a dynamic community network and on a national stage. By meeting these objectives, we hope that Geoscience departments and societies will be able to implement a well-researched crowdsourced group of anti-racist policies.*

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### **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<sup>4</sup>, including perspectives of Indigenous communities in climate assessments and reports<sup>5</sup>, and addressing environmental racism through environmental justice<sup>6</sup>.

*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?
  - 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?

<sup>1</sup> R. E. Bernard, E. H. G. Cooperdock, No progress on diversity in 40 years. Nature Publishing Group. 11, 1–5 (2018).

<sup>2</sup> <https://notimeforsilence.org/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.change.org/p/geoscientists-call-for-a-robust-anti-racism-plan-for-the-geosciences>

<sup>4</sup> S. E. Hough, S. S. Martin, Which Earthquake Accounts Matter? Seismological Research Letters (2021).

<sup>5</sup> V. Gewin, Respect and Representation. Nature Publishing Group. 589, 315-317 (2021).

<sup>6</sup> R. D. Bullard, Anatomy of environmental racism and the environmental justice movement. 15-39 (1993).

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- 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?

*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.