



PRINCIPLES OF PARTICIPATION

International Network of Scholars and Activists for Afrikan Reparations (INOSAAR)

1 November 2017

Overview

The International Network of Activists and Scholars for Afrikan Reparations (INOSAAR) is a collaborative project that is being coordinated by the University of Edinburgh (UK) and Wheelock College (Boston, US). This work is being funded through the Arts and Humanities Research Council's (AHRC) Research Networking Grant and falls under their highlight notice relating to the UN International Decade for People of African Descent (2015–24). Its purpose is to create an international network dedicated to reparations and other forms of transitional justice for the enslavement and genocide of peoples of Afrikan descent, the invasion of the Afrikan continent by colonial powers (notably France and Britain) in the quest for new areas of political and cultural influence and economic expansion, and the subsequent oppression and deformation of Afrikan identity that arose from this. The network will seek to explore this subject through the rich variety of research specialisms within both the arts and humanities and the social sciences, and will do so in collaboration and consultation with grassroots activist groups engaged in the struggle for reparations and government-linked groups capable of influencing social change.

Background and Rationale

On 5–7 November 2015, Professor Joyce Hope Scott (Wheelock College) and Dr Nicola Frith (University of Edinburgh) coordinated a major international conference entitled 'Repairing the Past, Imagining the Future: Reparations and Beyond...'. The conference marked two important dates in the abolitionist calendar: the two-hundred-year anniversary of the first international agreement to abolish slavery during the Congress of Vienna of 1815; and the 150th anniversary of the Thirteenth Amendment through which slavery was formally abolished in the US. These two anniversaries provided an important socio-political context in which to discuss the subject of reparations from a range of disciplinary backgrounds, while exploring the different national contexts in which social movements linked to reparations are operating. Importantly, the conference also included a number of UK-based activist groups who voiced concerns about the asymmetrical power relations at work when academics, operating within elite institutions, engage with reparations. They called upon academics to acknowledge these power imbalances and pay attention to what Choudry explains as the tendency of 'professionalized "experts" or university-based intellectuals' to ignore, render invisible or overwrite 'the voices, ideas, and indeed theories produced by those engaged in social struggles' (Choudry, 2015). As such, they called for the promotion of a more egalitarian space for knowledge exchange and collaboration that would set out 'to recognize how power and inequality shape context' and understand how 'academics situated within powerful institutions are inevitably implicated in the social inequalities that result' (Croteau, Hoynes and Ryan, 2005).

These calls lie at the root of our current project to unite the efforts of scholars and activists in a combined quest to contribute positively to advancing the question of reparations for Afrikan enslavement. We are committed to a non-extractive process of ethical scholarship that recognizes the existence of a grassroots International Social Movement for Afrikan Reparations (ISMAR) to which we are accountable. We also recognize the inextricable links between the ISMAR and the Peoples Reparations International Movement (PRIM), and are willing to learn from the cross-fertilization of scholarship, principles, strategies and tactics, and from the common and diverse experiences which shape their various constituencies, thinking and practices as pro-reparations forces.¹ This document outlines our shared principles of participation and a working framework of ethical scholarship that will

¹ The People's Reparations International Movement (PRIM) refers to the collectivity of a broad alliance of social forces among peoples all over the world, consisting of a broad array of constituencies, with a range of ideological orientations, working in diverse ways, and acting with some degree of organization and continuity to: obtain redress for historical atrocities and injustices, which have contemporary consequences; repair the harms inflicted; and rehabilitate the victims in the process of effecting and securing the anti-systemic objectives of reparations.

seek to address some of the failings and oversights of Euro-centric academic endeavours and ensure the longevity of our partnership going forward.

Building the INOSAAR: Aims and Objectives

The central purpose of the INOSAAR is to assist in the consolidation of a growing Afrikan global reparations movement by uniting activists and scholars, and developing a strong youth-led base to ensure the sustainability of this movement. We do so in full cognisance of the history of these movements, most notably with reference to the pan-Afrikanist struggle and its desire to unite the Afrikan continent, to unify Black people and to bring an end to racism, as well as the Abuja Proclamation of 1993 which calls 'upon the international community to recognize that there is a unique and unprecedented moral debt owed to the Afrikan peoples which has yet to be paid'.

Our nine stated aims and objectives are as follows:

1. To develop a more coherent research agenda for understanding reparations across disciplinary boundaries and address the inadequacy of scholarship outside of Afrikan-American and nation-centred contexts;
2. To improve the recognition of knowledge-production partnerships between scholars and activists working on Afrikan reparations and to establish a partnership that is enduring and international;
3. To provide opportunities for researchers and activists to engage in a process of bilateral knowledge exchange, with the longer-term view of contributing positively to the work of grassroots and activist organisations and the building of the ISMAR in link with the PRIM;
4. To support the development of youth and student engagement, involvement and proactivity, notably through the creation of a youth-led auxiliary fellowship of the INOSAAR, popularly named in short as RepAfrika, and through the establishment of a related mentorship scheme;
5. To build the INOSAAR in order to support the work of activists and scholars by providing global legitimacy and visibility to the broad spectrum of viewpoints in the reparations debate and the diversity of their exponents, particularly as state and non-state actors;
6. To support the struggle for the voluntary repatriation/repatriation for peoples of Afrikan descent to any Afrikan country of their choice, with due respect for indigenous communities and their own reparations interests, through the granting of citizenship, the removal of visa and customs requirements, and the creation of socio-economic, political and cultural reinsertion programmes in harmony with those already domiciled in such countries;
7. To establish a recognisable network consisting of registered participants with a commitment to adhering to its rules, principles and obligations;
8. To impact positively upon public and political (mis)conceptions about reparations (for example, the false idea that reparations are some kind of 'paycheque') by providing academically rigorous outputs of use to academic and non-academic audiences, and by supporting the development of decolonizing curricula of reparatory justice;
9. To ensure that each of the four inaugural events organized through INOSAAR and its partners, starting in London, then Birmingham and Paris, and finally Porto Novo in Benin, form one continuum in our collective efforts to advance the question of reparations.

To assist with the process of building this network, we are working with different academic and activist partners based in Europe, Afrika, India, the Caribbean, Latin America and the US (see below). Network members and other participants will engage in a series of four workshops and conferences to stimulate discussion, with emphasis being placed on bilateral knowledge exchange between activists and scholars operating within different national contexts. Events will be organized in collaboration with our partners in London (21 October 2017) with the Pan-Afrikan Reparations Coalition in Europe (PARCOE), in Birmingham (17 March 2018) with Birmingham City University, and in Porto Novo in Benin

(19–21 September 2018) with the Association pour une réparation globale de l'esclavage (APRGE) and the Musée da Silva. An INOSAAR networking trip to visit partners in the Caribbean will take place in May 2018 ahead of the Porto-Novo conference. These events are designed to impact positively on academic–activist working relations and to lay the groundwork for future collective action. They aim to work through, and acknowledge areas of tension, while working towards shared and more expansive definitions of reparations that are inclusive of cultural and transnational approaches. Calls for papers and other forms of participation will be circulated through the network prior to each event. Funds have been put aside to assist with the transportation and accommodation costs for a limited number of those without institutional support.

Principles of participation

Principles relating to participants

1. The events being organized are specifically designed for people who are already part of a social movement or researchers invested in related fields. As such, participants should have a **track record in reparations-related activism and/or research** (for example, by engaging in attempts to stop contemporary manifestations of the *Maangamizi* and other forms of external reparations or internal self-repair), and/or independence struggles, the pan-Africanist movement and/or anti-racism campaigns;
2. Participants must be **committed to** taking part in any necessary **follow-up work**;
3. Participants must be prepared to engage in **cross-community and cross-disciplinary dialogue** with other reparations knowledge-producers;
4. Participants need to be prepared to **submit their work to intellectual scrutiny** in recognition of the fact that we all have partial knowledge;
5. The network and its participants need to show their **commitment to accountability and transparency, and to be accountable according to these principles** to ensure that everyone is working from a shared basis of understanding.

Principles relating to shared values

- **Mutual respect and reciprocity**: participants will be open to, and interested in learning from, each other. They will recognize the value of each other's knowledge and experience in order to meet the aims of the project. This will include offering people a range of incentives to engage, which will enable us to work in reciprocal relationships with professionals and with each other, where there are mutual responsibilities and expectations;
- **Equality**: everyone has assets. Co-production starts from the idea that no one group or person is more important than any other group or person. Everyone is equal and everyone has assets to bring to the process, such as skills, abilities, time and other qualities;
- **Equity in collaboration**: the INOSAAR will develop a culture of equal value and respect for all disciplines. For shared learning to truly be effective, all those contributing knowledge must feel valued and respected as equals at the table;
- **Cognitive justice**: the INOSAAR will uphold justice of equity in all knowledges, with no one form of knowledge privileged over another;
- **Politics of resourcefulness to develop solidarity**: the INOSAAR will adhere to the ethical principle of resourcefulness, meaning that we will purposefully channel resources available to different members (such as time, research funds, technology, expertise, networks etc.)

with a shared aim of designing and answering questions of importance and direct benefit to academic and activist participants;²

- **No racism or xenophobia, including Afriphobia, will be tolerated.**

Principles relating to recognition

- Recognize that there is a social movement/s for reparations and this requires certain ethics that are expected when working and researching this movement/s. Referred to here as the ISMAR, in link with the PRIM, such movements are viewed as a generators of concepts, analyses, theories and inquiries. Researchers must acknowledge and take seriously the ethical responsibility to respect the ontological and epistemological frameworks of knowledge production that emerge from the ISMAR, in link with the PRIM;
- Recognize the existence of historical (and contemporary) reparations work, research and other initiatives at regional, national and transnational levels and that reparations scholarship and action is informed by intergenerational knowledge;³
- Recognize that research and theorizing are fundamental components of many social struggles and movements for change, and that these movements are significant sites of knowledge production. Link to this, there is a need to recognize the intellectual labour that underpins reparations organizing and activism. We also need to recognize the importance of learning not just about the experiences and actions of activists, but also about their ideas, knowledge and theoretical outlooks;
- Recognize that knowledge production is being advanced by diverse sections of grassroots academia and others from the global academic commons, and has its own institutional formations, such as the Afrikan Reparations Transnational Community of Practice (ARTCoP), grassroots reparations education and outreach teams of the Stop the Maangamizi Campaign in partnership with the Afrikan Emancipation Day Reparations March Committee, etc.;
- Recognize and respect the role of grassroots researchers and scholar-activists, and avoid the imposition of researcher-led categories by seeking to understand the ISMAR and other reparations movements according to their own analytic or descriptive terms. As such, respect the capacity for people to speak for themselves, to posit their own vocabularies, cartographies and concepts of the world, and to articulate their own categories of analysis. To support this, the INOSAAR will develop an annotated lexicon of (in)acceptable terms;
- Recognize and respect endogenous and Afrikan knowledge systems, the elders and the ancestors, while being mindful of the fact that such knowledge is often transmitted orally. As such, respect Hampâté Bâ's adage that in Afrika, 'when an old person dies, a library burns' (UNESCO, 1960). Wherever possible, INOSAAR events will begin with prayers and libations led by a spiritual leader;
- Recognize the existence of multiple forms of knowledge, the benefits of co-producing knowledge as an interactive rather than extractive process, and the value of different methods of knowledge dissemination, presentation and use;
- Recognize the importance of the arts as valuable forms of (embodied) knowledge and their potential in terms of therapy, healing and repair;

² See, in particular, Kate Driscoll Derickson and Paul Routledge, 'Resourcing Scholar-Activism: Collaboration, Transformation, and the Production of Knowledge', *The Professional Geographer*, 67 (2015), 1–7.

³ For example, in the UK, it is important to recognize the foundational work and frameworks of the Sons of Africa, the Garveyite Movement, the Pan-African Movement and its Congresses, anti-colonial activism, the Rastafari Movement through to the Africa Reparations Movement UK, and the 10-point platform that was advanced by the Black Quest for Justice Campaign in 2003 as part of the legal action and extra-legal strategy adopted to implement the 2001 Durban Declaration, as well as other follow-ups, such as the programmes of action arising from the 2002 African & African Descendants World Conference Against Racism and the UN Decade for People of African Descent, the Afrikan Emancipation Day Reparations March etc.

- Recognize the interconnectedness of all we do as part of this network, including the various workshops, while understanding that the goals of activists and academics are often different;
- Recognize and minimize power dynamics among and between network participants.

By adhering to these principles, we aim to reflect on the following questions:

1. How should we define the following terms: knowledge-production; co-production; reparations; scholar; activist; scholar-activist; social movement-building?
2. How best do activists and academics work together?
3. What are the potential benefits that result from successful collaborative efforts?
4. What are the barriers to meaningful collaboration between academics and activists?
5. How do we overcome the obstacles that make collaborative work difficult?
6. How do we as theorists and practitioners establish mutually beneficial collaborative relationships?
7. What does 'good practice' in a co-production project look like?
8. What does co-production in relationship building look like?
9. How do we value knowledge across disciplines and across domains of practice?
10. How do we harmonise our distinct understandings of what it means to make a contribution?
11. How do we minimise the possible harmful impacts of resource and status differentials, among prospective network members?
12. What lessons can we learn from existing efforts to bridge the academic-activist divide?

Roles, Responsibilities and Decision-Making

Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator

Dr Nicola Frith (University of Edinburgh) is the principal investigator (PI) and Professor Joyce Hope Scott (Wheelock College) is the co-investigator (Co-I). The PI and Co-I will be responsible for the general running of the network. The PI is specifically responsible for the overall management of the project and its budget, while both will assist in the following tasks: organizing the workshops and conferences; liaising with network members, project partners, activist groups, and other interested persons and institutions; assisting with website design and content; collating information to update the website, including the online curatorial project; preparing summary documents and the public report; writing a book proposal for a co-edited volume; and co-writing any academic publications.

Activist, Research Institutions and Other Partners

The first workshop in London is being coordinated in collaboration with PARCOE through which engagement is being developed with the ARTCoP as a special grassroots academic interest network of the ISMAR. In this initiative PARCOE is represented by its co-vice chairs Kofi Mawuli Klu and Esther Stanford-Xosei.

The second workshop in Birmingham is being coordinated with our institutional partner, Birmingham City University (BCU) (Kehinde Andrews and Lisa Palmer). BCU has just launched the first undergraduate degree programme in Black Studies in the UK.⁴ Both institutions are providing meeting venues free of charge and are contributing by devoting their time to assisting with the organization of the respective workshops.

The final conference is being held in Porto-Novo in Benin and being organized in collaboration with the APRGE, and with the support of the Musée da Silva and King Kpoto-Zounme Hakpon III of Porto-Novo, who in 2013 made a public apology for the role his ancestors played in the slave trade.

⁴ See the BCU website: <http://www.bcu.ac.uk/courses/black-studies-ba-hons-2017-18>.

The Bight of Benin was a primary site for the transatlantic slave trade and is home to an important UNESCO world heritage site, the 'Porte de Non-Retour' ('The Door of No Return') at Ouidah. Significantly, the government of Benin has a division in the Ministry of Culture for the 'Return and Reconciliation of the Diaspora', which has facilitated the repatriation of peoples from Brazil, Haiti, Guadeloupe and Martinique, many of whom will be participating in our conference alongside dignitaries, notably the Kings of Oyo, Bè and Accra. On 3 June 2017, the APRGE and the Musée da Silva hosted a pre-colloquium in Porto-Novu, generously funded by Karim da Silva, which resulted in the collation of demands linked to reparations.

Network Members

The INOSAAR is intended to be a growing network and we are seeking to expand our membership with active participants who adhere to our mutually agreed 'Principles of Participation'. During the initial grant-writing phase, the PI and Co-I approached activists and academics based in the UK, France, West Afrika, the Caribbean, US, Latin America and India who are known to be engaged in the struggle for reparations. After winning the AHRC Research Networking Grant, additional members and interested parties were added to the distribution list. The construction of the website map (see below) will lead to the addition for further contributors to the INOSAAR.

Research assistant and webteam

We currently employ one research assistant, Lucie Madranges, who is funded through the University of Edinburgh Knowledge Exchange and Impact scheme. Lucie is collating important information for the website and is assisting with the translation (English to French; French to English) of key documents. The website is being constructed by a team based at the University of Edinburgh under the leadership of our website designer, David Oulton. Lucie and David both have prior experience of working on this subject having been involved in the construction of a website dedicated to memories of enslavement and activist groups based in the French Republic.⁵

Decision-Making Processes and Consultation

As noted above, each of the workshops are collaborative efforts between different partners. At each stage of the organization, decisions are made either through face-to-face or interactive meetings (minutes are available). Smaller decisions in terms of the daily running of the network are managed through regular telephone meetings between the PI, Co-I, research assistant and webteam. Wider consultations with the INOSAAR are conducted through a dedicated email address (inosaar@ed.ac.uk) to which the PI, Co-I and research assistant have access. Key items for consultation with partners and/or the INOSAAR include: principles of participation; website content and construction; workshop content and creative ideas for presentation; written outputs, notably the reports that will follow each of the four events and the final report summarizing our collective findings. Centrally, we are concerned with building relationships and a community that is based on cooperation, empowerment and the alleviation of power differences among parties, that engages in creative and innovative ways to solve problems, and that give equal weight to the voices of all participants.⁶ To that end, decision-making is a shared responsibility among the INOSAAR. The global expansion of the network will require the development of other supporting organs for effective steering and decision-making at various levels, conducive to the achievement of the aims and objectives of the INOSAAR.

Communicating and Disseminating Our Collective Work

⁵ The website is entitled *Cartographie des mémoires d'esclavage*, <http://www.mmoe.llc.ed.ac.uk/fr>.

⁶ Elmar Weitekamp, 'Reparative Justice: Towards a Victim-Oriented System', *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*, 1 (1992), 70–93 (p. 86).

In order to produce work that is of use to activist and grassroots organizations, and also contribute to changing public perceptions about reparations, we are creating a website and will be compiling a downloadable public report.

The website will provide an important virtual space in which communities and members can actively participate in discussions and upload presentations prior to, during and after the events. More broadly, it will serve as an educational tool to combat public and political misconceptions about reparations, and an archival space to showcase past and present reparation movements across the world. It will also include a fully searchable map with information about researchers and centres, and activist organizations in operation today.

A public report will be written up towards the end of the project and will present a historical overview of the diversity of reparation movements and outline practical strategies for moving beyond theory and towards the implementation of reparative strategies and solidarity building. Based on rigorous academic research, it will broaden the case for reparations, and will be developed in collaboration with activists and government-linked groups to support their social and educational work and political campaigning at national and transnational levels.

Data Co-Ownership

Importantly, data produced through the collaborative efforts of the INOSAAR is co-owned by its members. Through the website, we will be developing an archival repository documenting our efforts, which will include materials that have been developed in consultation with, and are for use by, the INOSAAR and its members. The website and its related documents will clearly state the co-produced and co-owned nature of this work.

Useful Contacts

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