



PRINCIPLES OF PARTICIPATION

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

July 2021

Overview

The International Network of Scholars and Activists for Afrikan Reparations (INOSAAR) is a reparations consultancy and advocacy group. It is sponsored by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), as part of the UN International Decade for People of African Descent (2015–24).

Our work is dedicated to advancing the struggle for 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.

This network is jointly facilitated by Joyce Hope Scott (Boston University, USA), Nicola Frith (University of Edinburgh, UK) and Esther Stanford-Xosei (Pan-Afrikan Reparations Coalition in Europe, PARCOE) in collaboration and consultation with grassroots activists, NGOs and government-linked groups engaged in the struggle for reparatory justice.

Background

On 5–7 November 2015, Professor Joyce Hope Scott (Wheelock College School of Education and Human Development/Boston University, USA) and Dr Nicola Frith (University of Edinburgh, UK) 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 the INOSAAR’s desire 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 and knowledge exchange 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 set out to provide spaces in which to learn from the cross-fertilization of scholarship (academic and community-led), as well as different principles, strategies and tactics, and from the common and diverse experiences which shape our various constituencies, thinking and practices as pro-reparations forces.¹ This document outlines

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

our shared principles of participation and a working framework of ethical scholarship and Afrikan heritage community-centred collaboration that will seek to address some of the failings and oversights of Euro-centric (academic) endeavours and ensure the longevity of our partnerships going forward.

Aims

The central purpose of the INOSAAR is to advocate for, and provide consultancy on, reparations and reparatory justice for Afrikan enslavement in collaboration with activists, scholars and Afrikan heritage communities of reparatory justice interest.

Our advocacy is conducted through the creation of forums in which different voices from around the world are brought into conversation, for example through workshops, seminars and international conferences. The work conducted in these spaces is part of our collective action-based learning. Scholars, scholar-activists, activists, artists, political leaders, community leaders and many others engage in knowledge exchange and mutual education, rooted in our Principles of Participation and its emphasis on cognitive justice, or the equity of all knowledges. Collectively, we seek to provide education on the need for reparatory justice from Afrikan heritage perspectives and challenge political and media disinformation about the meaning of reparation.

In terms of consultancy, we provide strategic advice on key issues relating to reparations and reparatory justice pertaining to its meaning, history and necessity. We have been called upon to write supporting papers for political parties, contribute to high-level reports, set up community-based consultations and assist with activist-led campaigns. This work is based on our collaborations with, and commitment to, the voices and perspectives of Afrikan Heritage Communities of Reparatory Justice Interest and related campaigns, such as the Stop the Maangamizi: We Charge Genocide/Ecocide campaign.²

Our work aims to assist in the consolidation of a growing global Afrikan 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 of Afrikan heritage 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’.

We have nine stated aims and objectives:

1. To establish a recognisable network consisting of registered participants with a commitment to adhering to its rules, principles and obligations;
2. To advocate for reparations by providing global legitimacy and visibility to the broad spectrum of viewpoints relating to reparations and reparatory justice, and the diversity of their exponents;
3. To act as a consultancy for international bodies, parties, public institutions, community groups and others on matters relating the reparatory justice for Afrikan enslavement and its legacies today;

inflicted; and rehabilitate the victims in the process of effecting and securing the anti-systemic objectives of reparations.

² <https://stopthemaangamizi.com/>

4. To challenge public and political misconceptions and disinformation about reparations and reparatory justice for Afrikan enslavement, which are too often reduced to a 'pay cheque', by providing academically rigorous outputs and materials for public and specialist consumption (such as reports, articles, podcasts etc.);
5. To build and expand our knowledge-production partnerships with individuals and groups committed to Afrikan reparations by establishing equitable, enduring and international partnerships;
6. To provide opportunities for bilateral knowledge exchange rooted in cognitive justice and shaped by our respect for the multiplicity of knowledges, 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;
7. To ensure that the structure, space and themes of our events, workshops, meetings, conferences, fora etc. always respect the needs and requirements of Afrikan Heritage Communities;
8. To support the development of youth and student engagement, involvement and proactivity through the creation of a youth-led auxiliary fellowship, popularly known as RepAfrika, and the establishment of a related mentorship scheme;
9. To support the struggle for the voluntary rematriation/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;

Principles of participation

Principles relating to workshops or event participation

1. Participants attending our events/workshops must be prepared to engage in respectful **cross-community and cross-disciplinary dialogue** with other reparations knowledge-producers;
2. Participants must be prepared to **submit their work and ideas to intellectual scrutiny** in recognition of the fact that we all have partial knowledge;
3. 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;
4. Participants must be willing to take part in any follow-up work resulting from these events/workshops;
5. **No racism or xenophobia, including Afriphobia, will be tolerated.**

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. 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 is based on 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;³

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 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;⁴
- 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. Linked 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. For more information, see the INOSAAR's 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'

³ 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.

⁴ 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.

(UNESCO, 1960). Wherever possible, INOSAAR events and workshops will begin with prayers and libations led by an appropriate 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 and humanities as valuable forms of (embodied) knowledge and their potential in terms of therapy, healing and repair;
- Recognize the interconnectedness of all we do as part of this network, while understanding that the goals of activists and academics are often different;
- Recognize and minimize power dynamics among and between network participants.

Roles, Responsibilities and Decision-Making

The Co-Facilitators (Joyce Hope Scott, Nicki Frith, Esther Stanford-Xosei) operate on a horizontal, rather than vertical structure, each with specific portfolios and responsibilities. The co-facilitators are responsible for (social) media and communication, responding to membership enquires, writing consultation reports/articles as needed, organizing events/roundtables/workshops and having oversight of and managing funding grants and related projects.

The **Steering Committee** (co-facilitators as well as Kofi Mawuli Klu, Jerry Amokwandoh for RepAfrika and our honorary member, Professor/Elder Gus John) is responsible for developing links with higher education institutions, activists, artists and NGOs, and overseeing the work of the other working groups.

The **Policy and Advocacy Team** (Esther Stanford-Xosei, Athol Williams, Kofi Mawuli Klu, Dr Marlene Ellis and Priya Lukka) is responsible for consulting on, and suggesting policy related to, the implementation of reparatory justice initiatives in various organizations, parties, institution, unions etc at local, national and international levels. The team will also engage in drafting policy reform linked to reparatory initiatives for political organizations and bodies.

The **Fund-Raising Team** (Nicola Frith, Esther Stanford-Xosei and Mawuse Yao Agorkor) is responsible for identifying relevant funding call and submitting grant applications for specific reparatory justice projects.

The **Community and Youth Liaison Team** (Kofi Mawuli Klu, Kafui Yao Dade and Aura Carreno Caicedo) is responsible for contacting and liaising with community and youth groups of reparations interest with the aim of building links between communities and encouraging youth engagement in reparations issues. A key part of this role will involve setting up training initiatives and events to support movement building and ensure its succession.

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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