



Health In Harmony

Anti-Colonial Statement

August 2021

An anti-colonial ethic has always been fundamental to Health In Harmony, particularly through the Radical Listening process, which entails not just listening to rainforest communities but, radically, implementing their solutions. Our understanding of anti-colonialism and how to embody this principle has grown and will continue to grow through our commitment to continuous learning and unlearning, and we recognize this statement will change in that process.

At this time, for Health In Harmony, having an anti-colonial mindset means:

1. We recognize the intrinsic value and rights of the Earth and all life. We embrace all beings in our anti-colonial practices - justice, equity, diversity, respect, and inclusion - including, but not limited to air, water, soil, trees, and animals.
2. Upholding the values of the communities we work with foremost, respecting both their knowledge and their boundaries (recognizing that not all needs to be known), and compensating them for their time and contributions in ways that they deem appropriate.
 - a. We seek holistic solutions to complex issues. Health In Harmony does not have the authority to empower communities, they already have their own power. Rather than empowering communities, we instead work to empower ourselves to explore, understand, and radically readjust how we operate within colonial systems and worldviews.
 - a. Rather than asserting authority, we follow the lead and wisdom of the Indigenous, traditional, and local rainforest communities that we work alongside.
3. Respect and love and centering of relationships with people and places.
4. A commitment to continuous learning and re-learning, quick recognition of when we cause misunderstanding or harm, as well as continuously checking our own assumptions - constant commitment to Radical Listening as a principle.
 - a. Instead of seeking to center ourselves, we will continue the work of re-education, supporting and empowering each other to show up, and remove ourselves as a barrier, when necessary, in achieving an anti-colonial vision that involves justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.
5. Holding and respecting multiple perspectives at the same time and bridging the gaps between diverse ways of thinking and perceiving the world.
 - a. Recognizing the ways in which our own worldview can be influenced by linearity, singularity, objectivity, specificity, permanence, and a static mindset.
 - b. Valuing complexity and nuance over monolithic, hierarchical, and binary thinking.

6. Seeking to understand the ways in which Indigenous, traditional, and local people in the places we work have been dispossessed from their ancestral, historical, ecological, culturally, and socially relevant lands through capitalism, colonialism, and other forms of oppression, and grounding our work in this understanding of intertwined injustices.
 - a. Recognizing also that not all Indigenous People who have encountered foreigners have been colonized and that not all who have encountered 'others' and/or have been colonized are Indigenous.
 - b. Recognizing especially the role that the development industry, the Scientific Method, and different Academies have played in the history of colonialism and neocolonialism.
 - c. Recognizing and seeking to change the lack of diverse perspectives and leadership through an anti-racist lens in the NGO landscape globally and within Health In Harmony's own history.
 - d. Acknowledging the racist history and present of the United States, as the place where HIH is headquartered, and continuing to learn and undo the ways racist systems we are embedded in influence HIH policies, culture, attitudes, and actions individually and collectively.
 - e. Intentionally facilitating a global transfer of wealth from those that have historically benefited from extractive and oppressive systems to those who have historically been disadvantaged by those systems in order to grow regenerative systems.
7. Acknowledging multiple definitions of being "Indigenous", particularly in-group definitions that are shared by our Indigenous partners. Following international conventions, we employ a working definition of "Indigenous" peoples to refer to peoples who are primarily defined by their relationship to a specific place, while also recognizing that people and place are co-constituted.
8. Using the pre-existing categories, names, practices, and tools for measurement and analysis in use by the people of each place.
9. We bring these principles and practices to all agreements and partnerships with actors and organizations external to the rainforest communities we work with. Recognizing our relative power to encourage anti-racist and anti-colonial ideas and actions in a global audience, we use our voice to center the rainforest communities that we work with instead of ourselves.