



Presbyterian Mission
**Presbyterian
Disaster Assistance**

Decolonizing Volunteerism

Rev. Edwin González-Castillo
Associate for Disaster Response - LAC

Rev. James Kirk
Associate for National Disaster



GIVE

SHARE YOUR FINANCIAL BLESSINGS TO HELP DISASTER SURVIVORS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.



ACT

GET INVOLVED WITH DISASTER RECOVERY MINISTRY.



PRAY

OUR BEST RESPONSE IS PRAYER. SEEK GOD'S PRESENCE ON BEHALF OF DISASTER SURVIVORS.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

PDA has re-opened some volunteer host sites, plan your volunteer work trip today!

[CLICK HERE!](#)

Supporting Afghan Refugees

Hurricane Ida

Haiti Earthquake

Volunteer Opportunities

Hurricane Iota

CONNECT WITH US:



HOW WE WORK

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance enables congregations and mission partners of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to witness to the healing love of Christ through caring for communities adversely affected by crises and catastrophic events.

[LEARN MORE](#)

What do we mean by
Colonization?



What do we mean by Colonization in volunteerism?



When it

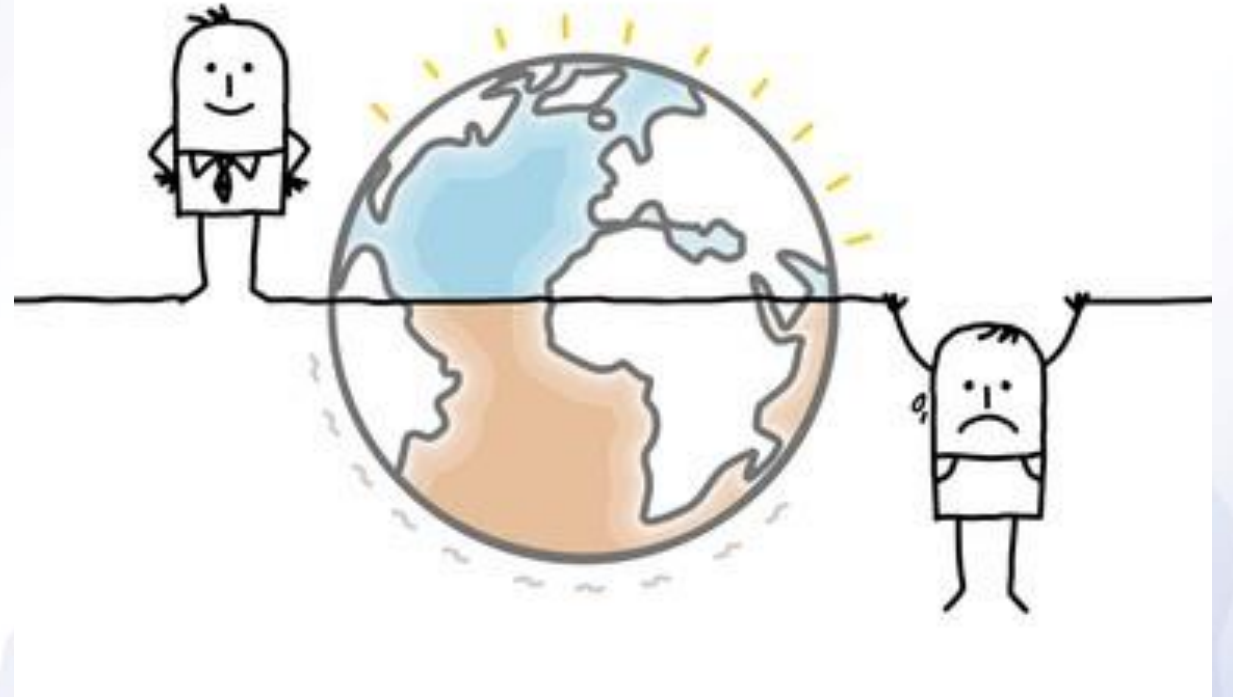
- “advances neocolonial relationships built on power dynamics based on wealth and color of skin.” - Yetta Rose Stein
- “does little more than reinforce unequal power relationships and cultural stereotypes between tourists and hosts” by “continuing impacts on the political, economic, and social development of both the former colonizer and colonized” – Sasha Pastran

Colonialism...

- Divide
- Control
- Exploit

Divide

- When we polarize between the volunteers and the “helpless” locals
- When volunteers are seen as active givers, whereas local people are stigmatized as passive receivers
- When we induce dependencies and vulnerabilities
- When we establish a us and them idea





Control

- When volunteer tourists inappropriately take on roles of ‘expert’ or ‘teacher’ regardless of their experience or qualifications” - *The Development of Cross-Cultural (Mis)Understanding Through Volunteer Tourism*
- When inappropriate power relationship form between volunteer and host in which the giver has all the power over the receiver.

Control



- When the group of volunteers believes it's their responsibility to fix the lives and communities of another
- When there is a lack of humility and thoughtfulness that acknowledges that they don't know anything about the culture and language of their host country, and what's been tried there before or who's leading the changes.
- It's all about the volunteer, with the pretense of helping someone



Exploit

- When volunteering organizations from industrial countries enrich themselves on the back of the people in developing countries
- When it is used to improve the CV and gaining adventurous experiences through their volunteering program
- Wealthy tourists prevent local workers from getting much-needed jobs, especially when they pay to volunteer

Exploit

- Taking pictures to show the “poor helpless people”
- Salving our own consciences without fully examining the consequences for the people we seek to help
- going without building skills, which poses the question of whether someone in that local community could do a better job.
- Host communities may be exploited when volunteers are a burden to the community



"They sell the best and are the most tearjerking projects to pitch to the media. Volunteers come away with the classic picture with an orphan and tell all their friends about their experience – as a business person I loved this."

Decolonize...

Connect

Relate

Belong



Connect

- Make an effort to connect with your community
- Invite people to your group/church
- Allocate enough time to learn, learn, learn
- Take time to listen to the stories
- Connect with the community



Relate

- Create relationships and not just memories
- Take time to understand the root causes
- Understand what is the priority
- Learn the rhythm
- We are equals

Relate

- The current situation doesn't define them
- Understand that is not about you
- Community focus – working WITH the people not FOR them
- Think about what are the alliances you need to build and how can you best support the work already happening



Belong

- Continue the conversations and relationships
- Connect or reconnect with people in your community
- Advocate
- Establish next steps
- Empower
- Bring back stories of hope and encouragement
- Long-term impact – projects last even after volunteers are gone



Q & A Time

