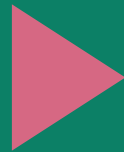




Ethical Values and Considerations when Collaborating with Stakeholders

Start here

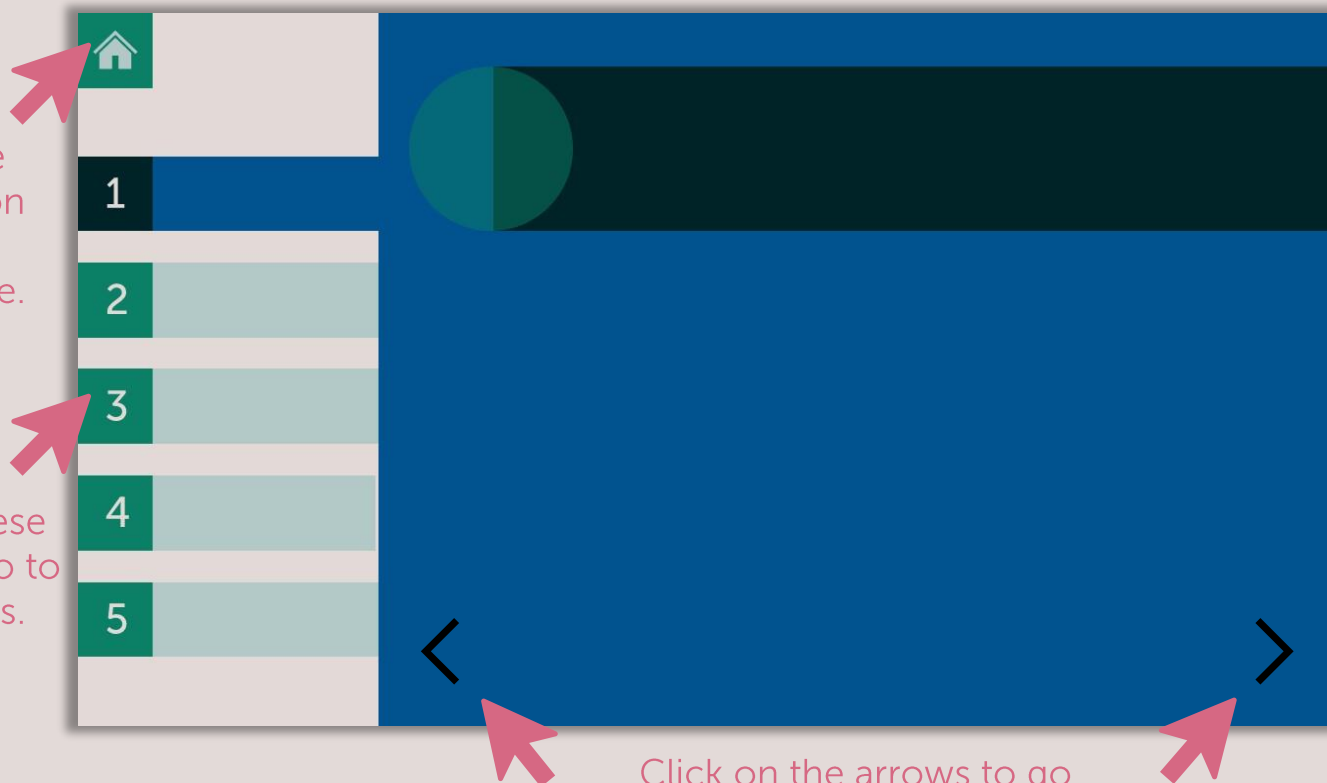




How it works



This module is presented as an interactive PDF, providing you with a seamless navigation experience. You can easily move to different topics by simply clicking on them. In addition to the visible navigation buttons on the side of each page, you will also find clickable sections within the module. These clickable sections are identified within the text.



Click on the home button to return to the first slide.

Click on these blocks to go to the chapters.

Click on the arrows to go to the previous or next page in a chapter



You also have the option to view this PDF in a continuous scrolling mode if you prefer.





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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this module, you can:

1

Explain why it is important to take **ethical considerations** into account when involving stakeholders.

2

Understand the complementary role of a **principle-based** ethics approach and a **relationship-based** approach in impact-driven education.

3

Describe five **key ethical considerations** to take into account during your project.

4

Identify different ways to **foster an ethical relationship** with stakeholders.

5

Recognize the importance of **reflexivity** for ethical engagement and distinguish several reflective questions to reflect upon during your project.





1. WHY ARE ETHICAL VALUES AND CONSIDERATIONS IMPORTANT?





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WHY ARE ETHICAL VALUES AND CONSIDERATIONS IMPORTANT?

Impact-driven education involves a special partnership between universities and society. It challenges the usual **ethical frameworks and procedures** used in research.

The goal is not only be to avoid harm during research or projects, but also to **promote fairness and caring relationships** in order to make a positive impact on society.





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WHY ARE ETHICAL VALUES AND CONSIDERATIONS IMPORTANT?

Nevertheless, in impact-driven education, it is also important to examine **'everyday ethics'** - how ethical issues are managed in day-to-day situations.

This view emphasizes that **'the right thing to do'** may depend on the situation and that responsibilities evolve during the project.





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This requires seeing oneself not only as a neutral observer, but as an involved participant with **specific relationships, responsibilities, values, and commitments** that shape how one perceives, judges, and acts in different situations. As such, ethical conduct involves both actions and **ways of being, relationships, emotions, and behavior.**

This is what we call **relationship-centered ethics**, which acknowledges our responsibilities within specific relationships.





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From a relationship-centered ethical approach, **key attributes of an ethical researcher** include:

- **Ethical sensitivity**, the capability to identify ethical challenges in situations.
- **Relational virtues**, like dependability and credibility (honoring commitments made to others).

In summary, to have a well-rounded understanding of ethics in impact-driven education, both principle-based ethics and relationship-based ethics are crucial.





2. WHAT ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT?





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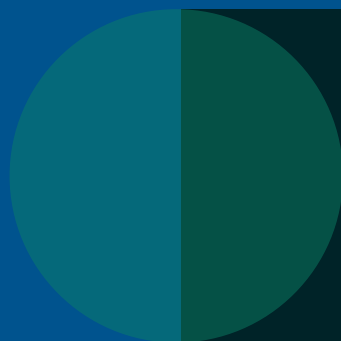
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WHAT ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT?

There are several ethical considerations that must be taken account, including:



Respect



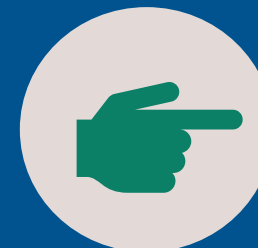
Transparency



Consent



Fairness



Accountability



Click on one of the items to learn more about it



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Respect

“The views and interests of all stakeholders should be taken seriously”

When working on a societal challenge, stakeholders should be approached on equal footing, regardless of the differences in knowledge or background. Community interests should not take a back seat to professional or academic objectives. Collaboration between you and stakeholders should involve active cooperation and shared decision-making. Project objectives should stem from a mutual exploration and balancing of stakeholders' needs, expertise, and expectations

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Respect - Example

Mutual respect involves acknowledging that contributions to a project can take various forms, while also maintaining an **open mind** about where valuable insights may emerge.

A patient's observations during a clinical trial, for example, might lead to a new use for a drug, which is how antidepressants, Viagra, and many others came to be.

Unless researchers regard participants as fellow observers, they **risk overlooking significant contributions and opportunities for building trust.**





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Transparency

“Stakeholders should be kept informed about the project, its progress and impact”

You and all stakeholders must communicate openly about project aspects that could impact each other's participation. It is important to inform stakeholders of your competencies, support requirements, potential disruptions, and available resources. Likewise, you should understand the stakeholders' values, influences, operational procedures, and accessible resources.

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Transparency - Example

Being informed is a personal threshold that varies between stakeholders on both individual and group levels. Therefore, it is important to **remain open to questioning** and explicitly state a willingness to address concerns when raised. This may require adjustments to the methods and tools utilized in the project.





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Consent

“Informed agreement to participate in the project should be obtained from participants”

Everyone involved must provide informed consent, rather than solely relying on the consent of representatives of organizations. Additional care is necessary to ensure clear information and consent procedures for vulnerable individuals. Deciding not to participate or withdrawing later should have no consequences.

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Consent - Example

Proxies may be necessary for consent; however, they should not be considered replacements for **engaging vulnerable individuals in the consent process**. While consent forms should be clear, project leads also need to individually assess how much can be understood and whether the **implications for all community members** are being addressed.

For example, research on water quality may appear to benefit the city as a whole, but if it suggests that one neighborhood is less desirable than another, it could impact property values and the livelihoods of individuals.





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Fairness

“There must be a fair balance between the benefits and burdens of the project”

Everyone involved in the project should acknowledge and agree on the project’s benefits and burdens to prevent unrealistic expectations and avoid future disappointment. Soliciting input from stakeholders is essential, while also ensuring that vulnerable participants are not burdened excessively.

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Fairness - Example

To avoid conducting extractive or exploitative projects, it is crucial to identify an **organization's needs** before engaging in a partnership.

Fairness involves more than simply avoiding harm, and benefits should be more than just monetary or gifts. Balancing also requires **considering the use of resources**, including volunteers' time and energy, for instance.

Organizations with limited resources must carefully consider how allocate them. There should be a balance between the benefits offered and the burdens requested from stakeholders.



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Accountability

“Teachers and students are accountable for their actions towards the societal stakeholders”

All stakeholder assumes accountability for their actions. Both students and teachers must be accountable for their decisions, how they use information, and their commitments to stakeholders. Additionally, stakeholders are accountable for the information they provide and their commitment to the project, research, or course.

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Accountability - Example

In the collaboration to address river pollution, a student conducts an interview without obtaining proper consent and another inadvertently shares confidential information. Upon discovery, the students acknowledge their mistakes and work with teachers to rectify the situation. They reach out to the affected participant to obtain retroactive consent and retract any shared information. Through **open communication and proactive measures**, the students demonstrate accountability, prioritizing ethical research practices and respecting participant rights.



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3. HOW TO FOSTER AN ETHICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH STAKEHOLDERS?





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HOW TO FOSTER AN ETHICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH STAKEHOLDERS?

To maintain ethical standards with stakeholders, it is crucial to establish a **reciprocal relationship**. This entails acknowledging that the project is a collaborative effort that should generate benefits for both parties involved.



Organizations and communities can benefit from tailored knowledge and having their perspectives considered.

Teachers and students can acquire skills that are valuable for both their education and future careers.





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HOW TO FOSTER AN ETHICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH STAKEHOLDERS?

Special attention should be put on **how to give back to the organization or community** in a way that's helpful to their challenges and reality. These are a few examples:

Example 1/4

Deliver a presentation of your main findings and facilitate a discussion to encourage participation.





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HOW TO FOSTER AN ETHICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH STAKEHOLDERS?

Special attention should be put on **how to give back to the organization or community** in a way that's helpful to their challenges and reality. These are a few examples:

Example 2/4

Submit a product with key findings using a language and format that is easy to comprehend. Tailor your delivery to your stakeholder's needs by incorporating infographics, videos, podcasts, blogs, or other creative means.





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Special attention should be put on **how to give back to the organization or community** in a way that's helpful to their challenges and reality. These are a few examples:

Example 3/4

Ask if there's additional ways in which you can contribute, such as assisting in an event or sharing their information in social media.





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Special attention should be put on **how to give back to the organization or community** in a way that's helpful to their challenges and reality. These are a few examples:

Example 4/4

Explore opportunities for future collaborations, such as internships, impactful theses, volunteer work, conferences or other projects.





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HOW TO FOSTER AN ETHICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH STAKEHOLDERS?

Finally, being an ethical researcher or project collaborator requires **reflexivity**, examining one's own biases, assumptions, and values at each stage of the process. Accomplishing this requires taking a step back and asking yourselves key questions to guide the project in the right direction.



Go to the next page for examples of questions that can assist in this process.





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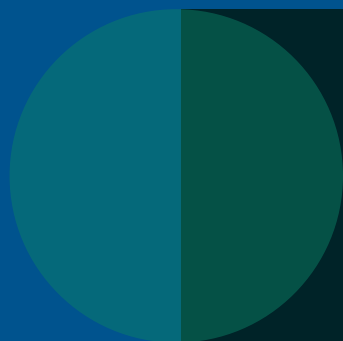
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HOW TO FOSTER AN ETHICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH STAKEHOLDERS?



Your role and ethics



Power dynamics and relationships



Cultural awareness and context



Community perspective



Long-term impact



Equity and justice



Click on one of the aspects to see some examples of questions that can assist in this process



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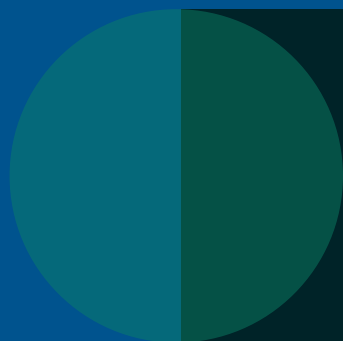
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HOW TO FOSTER AN ETHICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH STAKEHOLDERS?



Your role and ethics

- How do I fit into this collaboration?
- Am I an observer, a facilitator, a collaborator, or something else?



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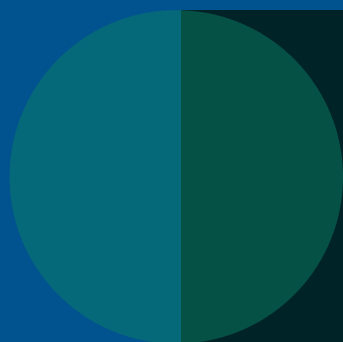
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HOW TO FOSTER AN ETHICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH STAKEHOLDERS?



Power dynamics and relationships



- How can I guarantee that the project process truly hears and values perspectives of the stakeholders?



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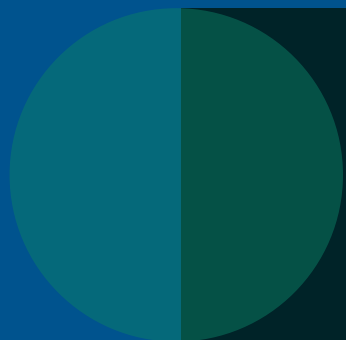
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HOW TO FOSTER AN ETHICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH STAKEHOLDERS?



Cultural awareness and context



- How well do I comprehend the norms, values, and history of the stakeholders?



- How might my lack of knowledge affect my understanding of the issue at hand?



- What can I do to learn more?



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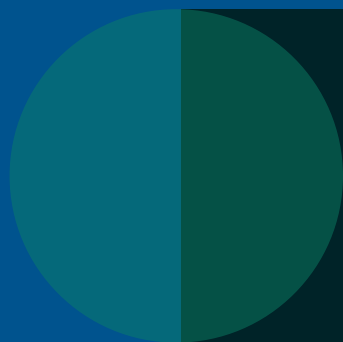
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Community perspective



- How do my societal partners perceive my role and goals?



- How can I gather their feedback to improve our collaboration?



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Long-term impact

- What steps can I take to ensure to realistic long-term impact in the organization or community?



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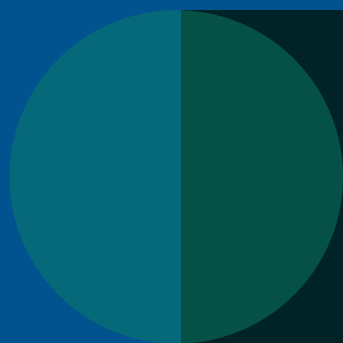
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HOW TO FOSTER AN ETHICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH STAKEHOLDERS?



Equity and justice



- How does my work impact current power structures? How can my project encourage fairness and equitable outcomes?



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4. FINAL STEPS





Literature

References

- Banks, S., et al. (2013). [*Everyday ethics in community-based participatory research.*](#)
- Maiter, S., Simich, L., Jacobson, N., & Wise, J. (2008). [*Reciprocity: An ethic for community-based participatory action research.*](#)
- Felzmann, H. (2014) [*Ethics of community-higher education: An introductory guide for higher education staff.*](#)

Reading tips

- [*Everyday ethics in community-based participatory research*](#)
- [*Reciprocity: An ethic for community-based participatory action research*](#)





About this e-module

AUTHORS

The content of this module was developed by [Dr. Crystal Smit](#), Assistant Professor at ESSB (project lead), [Denise Levy](#), Learning Innovator at Impact at the Core, both from Erasmus University Rotterdam, and [Dr. Samantha Copeland](#), Assistant Professor at TU Delft.

CONTEXT

This e-module is intended to be used in impact-driven courses where students collaborate with external stakeholders such as non-profit organizations, municipalities, health institutions, youth initiatives, schools, and others.

DESIGN

The instructional design of this e-module was developed by Akke van der Laan, Learning & Development Expert at L&D talents. The graphic design is done by [Risbo](#).

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