

Preamble

UNESCO attaches the highest priority to the maintenance of high standards of integrity, responsibility and accountability in the research it supports. This applies to all aspects of that research from collection, recording, citing and reporting to the retention of scientific material.

As UNESCO fosters international, interdisciplinary, comparative and policy-relevant social science research, network and research activities will take place in many parts of the world, and within a variety of economic, cultural, legal and political settings. Researchers may therefore inevitably face ethical, sometimes legal, dilemmas from competing obligations and conflicts of interest.

For the most part, researchers will be aware of the potential difficulties arising from their work. However, UNESCO is concerned to draw the attention of all researchers to certain areas in which conflicts between ethical principles and aims of the research might arise, and to stress the need for their resolution.

Therefore, a set of Ethical Guidelines has been developed to provide a framework to guide research practice. They are intended to act as signposts rather than detailed prescriptions or regulations. They are not intended to be a substitute for the scientific and professional judgement of the individual researcher.

UNESCO encourages the participating institutions and networks to develop policies and promote information sessions for awareness-raising concerning ethical issues in social research.

Code of Conduct and Ethical Guidelines

Researchers should be fully aware of the ethical issues involved in their work and adhere to the following basic principles:

- 1** Responsibility for all procedures and ethical issues related to the project rests with the principal investigators.
- 2** Research should be conducted in such a way that the integrity of the research enterprise is maintained, and negative after-effects which might diminish the potential for future research should be avoided.

- 3** The choice of research issues should be based on the best scientific judgement and on an assessment of the potential benefit to the participants and society in relation to the risk to be borne by the participants. Studies should relate to an important intellectual issue.
- 4** The researcher should consider the effects of his/her work, including the consequences or misuse, both for the individuals and groups among whom they do their fieldwork, and for their colleagues and for the wider society.
- 5** The researcher should be aware of any potential harmful effects; in such circumstances, the chosen method should be used only if no alternative methods can be found after consultation with colleagues and other experts. Full justification for the method chosen should be given.
- 6** The research should be conducted in a competent fashion, as an objective scientific project and without bias. All research personnel should be qualified to use all of the procedures employed by them.
- 7** The research should be carried out in full compliance with, and awareness of, local customs, standards, laws and regulations.
- 8** All researchers should be familiar with, and respect, the host culture. Researchers undertaking research on cultures, countries and ethnic groups other than their own should make their research objectives particularly clear and remain aware of the concerns and welfare of the individuals or communities to be studied.
- 9** The principal investigators' own ethical principles should be made clear to all those involved in the research to allow informed collaboration with other researchers. Potential conflicts should be resolved before the research begins.
- 10** The research should avoid undue intrusion into the lives of the individuals or communities they study. The welfare of the informants should have the highest priority; their dignity, privacy and interests should be protected at all times.
- 11** Freely given informed consent should be obtained from all human subjects. Potential participants should be informed, in a manner and in language they can understand, of the context, purpose, nature, methods, procedures, and sponsors of the research. Research teams should be identified and contactable during and after the research activity.
- 12** There should be no coercion. Participants should be fully informed of their right to refuse, and to withdraw at any time during the research.

13 Potential participants should be protected against any and all potentially harmful effects and should be informed of any potential consequences of their participation.

14 Full confidentiality of all information and the anonymity of participants should be maintained. Participants should be informed of any potential limitations to the confidentiality of any information supplied. Procedures should be put in place to protect the confidentiality of information and the anonymity of the participants in all research materials.

15 Participants should be offered access to research results, presented in a manner and language they can understand.

16 All research should be reported widely, with objectivity and integrity.

17 Researchers should provide adequate information in all publications and to colleagues to permit their methods and findings to be properly assessed. Limits of reliability and applicability should be made clear.

18 Researchers are responsible for properly acknowledging the unpublished as well as published work of other scholars.

19 All research materials should be preserved in a manner that respects the agreements made with participants.

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