

Community-Engaged Research Ethics: A set of guidelines for research and practice

Project Report

The project began with two workshops designed to generate dialogue on the topic of research ethics in community-engaged research and, in this way, enhance the competence and effectiveness of participants interested in conducting community-engaged research. The first workshop featured three guest speakers (one from McMaster, one from a Community Ethics Office, and a third from Ryerson). It was well attended by faculty and graduate students, and the facilitated discussion at that workshop informed the content of the following workshop. These two events then informed the resulting website, which is less a “set of guidelines” and more resource kit for faculty and graduate students who are considering developing a community-engaged research project. We expect it will also be helpful for members of the Research Ethics Board required to assess ethics applications for community-engaged research projects.

The workshops and resulting guidelines contribute to the Faculty of Social Sciences’ goal to build capacity for community-engaged research. An important part of capacity-building, we believe, is an enriched and thoughtful engagement with the questions and challenges associated with doing community-engaged research ethically.

The workshops and website are the primary means by which we have communicated insights with peers. A link to the project website will be available on the Research Ethics Office site so that researcher wishing to apply for ethics clearance can access it easily. This will enable the outcome of the project to be sustained.

The project has already been expanded. A second phase, also FWI funded, launched in May 2016. This second phase will see the production of a parallel product, this one oriented to community, the Community Research Toolkit.

Making resources for community-engaged research ethics easily accessible in one online location will be of value to the McMaster community as we expand our research relationships with other communities, locally and globally.