

5 March 2015

Dear Friends,

Evaluation and research are important parts of learning from and strengthening out work. However, there are key ethical issues to consider when engaging in research and evaluation, particularly in community contexts. Consider the following questions for example:

- How do we reduce the burden places on families and communities due to our data collection? For example, families sometimes have to give up a few precious hours of their day to participate, often without any compensation.
- We often get parents' consent for their children's participation in our evaluation or research. Should we also be asking for children's own consent? What about for small children who are more limited in their understanding and articulation; is it possible to get their consent?
- We often gather a lot of data because we feel it would be useful information to know, but often only have the capacity to analyze a small part of it. Is it ethical to continue gathering all the data even if we are not sure we will be able to analyze it?

There are no easy answers to these questions, but it is important to continuously reflect on these matters in all of our evaluation and research activities. In this week's Newsflash, we share with you some resources that are helpful in thinking about ethics in research and evaluation.

We hope you enjoy this week's edition of the Newsflash!

Sincerely,

The Firelight Team

(Resource) Ethical Considerations in Monitoring & Evaluation - My-Peer Toolkit

(Resource) Ethical Research Involving Children

(Resource) ARECCI: A Project Ethics Community Consensus Initiative

(Opportunity for Participation) African Higher Education Summit: Revitalizing Higher Education for Africa's Future

(Accepting Letters of Intent) The Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund 2015 Grant Cycle

(Resource) Ethical Considerations in Monitoring & Evaluation - My-Peer Toolkit

The My-Peer Toolkit, developed by the Western Australian Centre for Health Promotion Research at Curtin University, is a resource aimed at supporting agencies to implement and evaluate peer-based programs for young people using good practice guidelines.

The toolkit page on ethical considerations in monitoring and evaluation discusses principles such as: informed consent, voluntary participation, do no harm, confidentiality, anonymity, and only assess relevant components.

To view the Ethical Considerations page, visit: <http://bit.ly/1GvgaFz>

(Resource) Ethical Research Involving Children

The international Ethical Research Involving Children (ERIC) project as a combination of resources as well as a forum for researchers working with children to discuss and get help with ethical issues in a range of contexts.

Included on the website is the International Charter for Ethical Research Involving Children, copied below:

As a research community working with children, we are committed to undertaking and supporting high quality ethical research that is respectful of children's human dignity, rights and wellbeing. The following seven commitments guide our work:

Ethics in research involving children is everyone's responsibility

We, the research community, including all who participate in undertaking, commissioning, funding and reviewing research, are responsible for ensuring that the highest ethical standards are met in all research involving children, regardless of research approach, focus or context.

Respecting the dignity of children is core to ethical research

Ethical research is conducted with integrity and is respectful of children, their views and their cultures. Involving children respectfully requires that researchers recognise children's status and evolving capacities and value their diverse contributions.

Research involving children must be just and equitable

Children involved in research are entitled to justice. This requires that all children are treated equally, the benefits and burdens of participating are distributed fairly, children are not unfairly excluded and that barriers to involvement based on discrimination are challenged.

Ethical research benefits children

Researchers must ensure that research maximizes benefits to children, individually

and/or as a social group. The researcher bears primary responsibility for considering whether the research should be undertaken and for assessing whether research will benefit children, during and as a consequence of the research process.

Children should never be harmed by their participation in research

Researchers must work to prevent any potential risks of harm and assess whether the need to involve the individual child is justified.

Research must always obtain children’s informed and ongoing consent

Children’s consent must always be sought, alongside parental consent and any other requirements that are necessary for the research to proceed ethically. Consent needs to be based on a balanced and fair understanding of what is involved throughout and after the research process. Indications of children’s dissent or withdrawal must always be respected.

Ethical research requires ongoing reflection

Undertaking research involving children is important. Ethical research demands that researchers continually reflect on their practice, well beyond any formal ethical review requirements. It requires ongoing attention to the assumptions, values, beliefs and practices that influence the research process and impact on children.

Visit the Ethical Research Involving Children website at: <http://childethics.com/>

(Resource) ARECCI: A Project Ethics Community Consensus Initiative

Currently, for traditional research projects, research ethics boards (REBs) review ethical issues and support researchers in working through these considerations. However, non-research projects such as Evaluation and Quality Improvement (QI) projects pose some of the same risks to participants, but do not undergo the same scrutiny as research projects.

The ARECCI conceptual framework and accompanying tools were developed to fill this gap. Resources provided include education/capacity-building resources, decision-support tools that help you recognize ethical risk in your project (including guidelines and a helpful screening tool), and a Second Opinion Review process for projects that are more than minimal risk.

Learn more at: <http://bit.ly/1woQ46S>

(Opportunity for Participation) African Higher Education Summit: Revitalizing Higher Education for Africa's Future

The three-day continental summit, whose theme is “revitalizing higher education for

Africa's future", seeks to build a movement of like-minded institutions to transform the African higher education sector. To be held at the King Fahad Palace Hotel, in Dakar, on 10-12 March 2015, the summit will be highly interactive, allowing participants to exchange experiences and views.

The summit's objectives are to:

- Build a constituency for transformation and investment in Africa's higher education.
- Create a shared vision for the future of African higher education.
- Harness and highlight exemplary efforts and initiatives in African higher education.
- Harness disparate efforts and interventions in African higher education.
- Spur and sustain innovation in African higher education.

The African higher education summit presents a unique platform for stakeholders to collectively determine the way forward for the sector. Recognizing national issues, preserving national identities and highlighting the need for regional integration. All within the context that higher education is a major driving force for improved standards of living, economic development and forging national cohesion.

For more information, visit: <http://summit.trustafrica.org/>

(Accepting Letters of Intent) The Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund 2015 Grant Cycle

VGIF (www.vgif.org) is an international women's fund based in the United States and governed by an international Board of Directors. We provide grants globally to fund locally generated projects that advance the rights of women and girls; projects that help improve the lives of women and girls by advancing women's rights and social justice.

We support women's organizations based outside of the United States by providing small grants for an array of community needs up to \$7,500 USD.

What VGIF supports:

- Economic empowerment of women
- Community development
- Health and nutritional support
- Literacy and leadership training
- Educational seminars and workshops
- Promoting education in the sciences for girls
- Women's human rights
- Organizations that are governed and directed by women.

VGIF does not consider requests for the following:

- Individual scholarships and tuition
- Political organizations
- Religious groups unless the proposed project contributes to the general good of the community
- The construction of permanent buildings or the purchase of land
- Salaries for board members and permanent staff but may include stipends/honoraria for external resource people/trainers.

VGIF will consider inclusion of an amount, not to exceed 10% of the total grant, for administration of the project to the executing organization in the country where the project is located.

Letters of Intent for the 2015 Grant Cycle are accepted from: 1 June 2014 to 31 July 2014

For information on how to apply, visit: <http://bit.ly/Sd1xmh>

As part of the Firelight Foundation's Capacity Building Program, Firelight provides "Newsflashes" to share relevant resources and information with our active grantee-partners via weekly emails and via post on a monthly basis. We hope that by facilitating access to information for grassroots, community-focused organizations, programming for children and families, as well as organizational development, is enhanced. Past editions of the Firelight Newsflash can be found on our website:

<http://www.firelightfoundation.org/resources/newsflash>

We welcome your comments, feedback and ideas for upcoming Newsflashes at newsletter@firelightfoundation.org

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