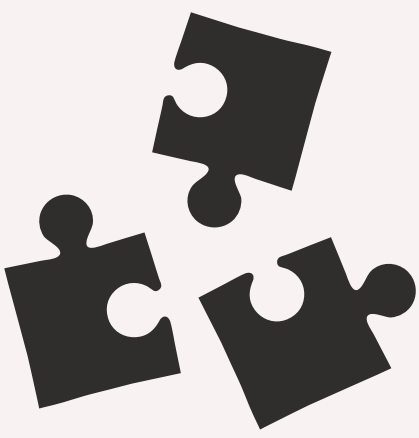
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

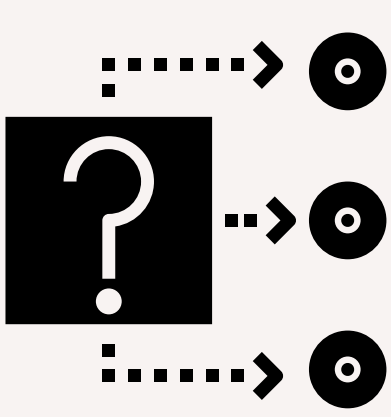


1 ACKNOWLEDGE COMPLEXITY

Even though we might be motivated by a desire to have a positive impact, it is not as straightforward as it seems; don't assume that all service or community engagement brings positive outcomes. Sometimes short fixes to deeper problems are not effective or can cause more harm.

To Learn More:
Watch the TedTalk "What happens when an NGO admits failure"

Read about the problem with the "buy one, give one" approach.

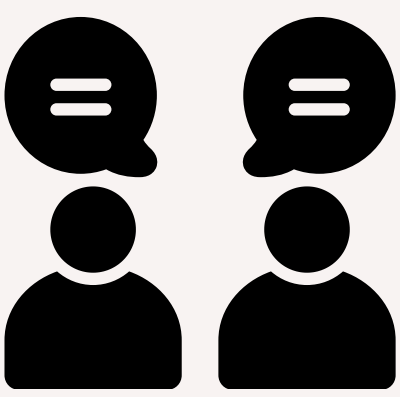


2 THINK ABOUT ROOT CAUSES

Understanding why things are the way they are is an important part of developing community-driven solutions. Not just from research, but also from listening to community members talk about their experiences.

3 BUILD TRUST

Being up front about why you are participating in community engagement or collaborating with the organization is essential to building trust with the community. Just because you may be 'required' to do this for a course, doesn't mean that you can't step into the moment and be authentic, responsible, and productive. Share information on availability, start/finish dates and anything else that may impact your work. See Tips for Positive and Effective Collaboration



4 DISCUSS EXPECTATIONS

As you create relationships with community members, ask about and listen to previous experiences they may have had with college students or volunteers. See Tips for Positive and Effective Collaboration