Chapter 4
Situationally and Relationally Guided Ethical Conduct for Researchers: A Community-Based Research Project to Design and Develop an ICT Intervention

Vera Roos, Puleng Segalo, and Ngenisiwe Ntombela

Abstract Growing discomfort with uncritical applications of generic universal ethics to community-based research, prompted us to (1) problematize a decontextualized application of ethics; (2) apply two heuristic constructs—situatedness and relationality—to a community-based project; and (3) propose revised guidelines for researchers in this field. The we-DELIVER project illustrates our processes for obtaining data from older (60+) South Africans to inform the development of a technology-based ecosystem, Yabelana, which gives them access to service information. In three phases (planning, implementation, and dissemination), we present the situatedness of researchers (including student fieldworkers) and communities. Drawing on relationality, we first expanded older participants' capacity to engage by offering choices and by involving student fieldworkers who shared the same background as the participants to facilitate the use of the technology; and, second, we facilitated optimal interactions by being clear about the nature of the data being collected and by applying social engagement strategies to relate and interact optimally. An optimal interpersonal context preceded technology introduction. The chapter concludes with a plea for reconsideration of current universalized and decontextualized ethical protocols that too often perpetuate situational and relational ignorance. We propose, instead, ethical guidelines for community-based research that engages relationally with participants and best suits their contexts.

V. Roos (✉)
Optentia Research Unit, North-West University, Vanderbijlpark, South Africa
e-mail: vera.roos@nwu.ac.za

P. Segalo
Chief Albert Luthuli Research Chair, University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa
e-mail: segalpj@unisa.ac.za

N. Ntombela
Social Work, North-West University, Mahikeng, South Africa
e-mail: ngenisiwe.ntombela@nwu.ac.za

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> Given that the idea of the person differs from culture to culture, and taking into consideration that conceptions of ethics and personhood are intertwined, it follows that principlism or any universalistic approach to ethics, for that matter, is insufficient, as it cannot account for ethical definitions and understanding across context, history and time (Mkhize, 2018, p. 28).

4.1 The Dilemma of Conducting Community-Based Research Ethically from a Universalist Perspective

Community-orientated researchers around the world increasingly advocate for the revision of ethics boards' blanket applications of universal moral guidelines drawn up and used without consideration of context (see Callaway, 2011; Hoffman, 2016; Liebenberg et al., 2018; Nafukho, 2006; Onuoha, 2007; Rakotsoane & Nicolaides, 2019). A universalist application drawing on Kantian philosophy proposes that what is morally right should be impartial and determined by abstract, universal reason (Moore, 1999). The assumption from a universalist perspective is that morally correct behaviour can be replicated from context to context (Chilisa, 2012; Liebenberg et al., 2018): what is applicable in westernized Europe, for example, can be transferred as is to rural Africa. Past harmful research practices in bio-medical research rightfully informed the development of research ethics to protect human participants from exploitative practices (Rakotsoane & Nicolaides, 2019; Segalo & Molobela, 2019; Sichel, 1990). However, when adopting a universalist perspective, treating all research generically as having the same kinds of risks and benefits is problematic. A misalignment would result if the same ethical guidelines for bio-medical research to develop a vaccine for human use, for example, were applied to social sciences research aiming to obtain information about cell phone use in different groups of older individuals in relation to their local contexts and available social networks.

We align ourselves with the sentiments expressed by Collins (2000): we have no scepticism about applying ethical guidelines (e.g. justice, respect) in conducting community-based research. Echoing Trickett (1996), however, we are critical of applying generalized research ethics to all research settings, and relating to all communities and participants as if contexts and participants were "ahistorical, acontextual, [and] acultural" (p. 212). We propose, instead, an approach to research ethics that recognizes communities' situatedness and the importance of relationships. Accordingly, this chapter (1) sets out the problem of applying decontextualized ethical guidelines to community-based research, using the example of obtaining informed consent; (2) applies, for the first time, two heuristic constructs (situatedness and relationality) in three phases of a community-based project; and (3) proposes broad ethical guidelines for use by community-based researchers.

The tension associated with applying ethical guidelines from a universalist perspective is particularly noticeable in the process of obtaining informed consent. Ethics boards that adopt a universalist perspective generally view participants as autonomous individuals who enter into a form of contractual agreement with researchers, and by extension the institution/ethics boards, when giving informed consent (Rakotsoane & Nicolaides, 2019; Singh & Wassenaar, 2016). The reasoning often used to support this approach is that involving participants who are informed about what would be expected of them and who agree to the risks and benefits associated with the proposed research should be sufficient to indemnify ethics boards, higher education institutions, and researchers (Chennells & Steenkamp, 2018; Sichel, 1990). However, communities and participants on the receiving end of research ethics practices informed by a universalist perspective could be (unintentionally) harmed.

An example, which drew a line in the sand of community-based research ethics, is that of the San people of southern Africa (San Council, 2017). They launched the San Code of Research Ethics as the first code of ethics of an indigenous community in Africa to guide researchers who intend to carry out studies among and with them (Rakotsoane & Nicolaides, 2019; Schroeder et al., 2019). One of the reasons for developing and publishing this code was to respond to the issue of informed consent (not) having been obtained in research conducted in 2010. Researchers who conducted a genomic study using the DNA of four San individuals claimed to have received ethical approval from ethics committees/institutional boards. The researchers failed, however, to commit to the five values identified by the San peoples when conducting their research: respect, honesty, justice and fairness, care, and process (Chennells & Steenkamp, 2018; Schroeder et al., 2019). The San people perceived the researchers' conduct as having disregarded their sociocultural situatedness and their unique social (relational) arrangements. The problem with the blanket application of decontextualized research ethics, as demonstrated in this example, is that the same generalist ethical guidelines may not fit all research settings. A different approach is required.

The two heuristic constructs drawn from an ethics of care perspective—situatedness and relationality—were used to inform the data collection in our we-DELIVER community-based project. Situatedness refers to the tangible physical settings of researchers and participants, their organizational or community histories, and cultural aspects that are embedded in and affected by broader systems (such as economic, social, political, cultural, and digital) (Naidoo et al., 2007; Lazarus et al., 2016; Roos, 2016). Relationality refers to the idea that whenever researchers and participants engage in research they enter into a relationship; relationships of this kind are regarded as the unidirectional dialogue—consisting of verbal and non-verbal cues—between people (Harrell, 2018; Kelly & Westoby, 2018; Roos, 2016). The we-DELIVER community-based research project and our application of the heuristic constructs are discussed in relation to researchers (including student fieldworkers) and participants. Following the example of Kelly and Westoby (2018), we present the project sequentially—planning, implementation, and dissemination—as a type of situational framework for this discussion.

4.2 we-DELIVER: Holistic Service Delivery to Older People by Local Government through ICT

The intended outcome of our we-DELIVER project was to collect data for the development of a technology artefact to enhance older persons' (60 years and older) access to information about local services and resources. The initiative aimed to begin to address, through technology, the inclusivity of marginalized older Black South Africans, whose long-term sociopolitical exclusion, digital lag, and changing intergenerational dynamics had compromised their equal inclusion as recipients of service delivery (see Durrheim et al., 2011; Hoffman & Roos, 2021; Roos et al., 2014). The project was funded by the Department of Public Service and Administration on the understanding that it would be completed in 18 months. This ambitious timeline had implications for its scope, but nevertheless presented an opportunity to demonstrate how to conduct community-based research ethically in a way that was sensitive to context and relationships. Since the onus is on researchers to create and apply appropriate conditions for the "authentic exploration of social processes and the creation of interventions of local relevance" (Trickett, 1996, p. 214), we begin our discussion in relation to the research team's situatedness and relationality.

4.2.1 Research Team

Researchers and student fieldworkers from different disciplines and campuses formed the research team. The discussion focuses here on the institutional situatedness of the researchers and the relational strategies applied to deal with group identities and to promote communicative spaces in ways that would facilitate engagement among themselves and between the research team and the participants in the project.

4.2.1.1 Researchers

Situatedness At the time the we-DELIVER project was launched, researchers—all of them affiliated to one of the three North-West University campuses (in Mahikeng, Potchefstroom and Vanderbijlpark)—had little experience of engaging in cross-campus collaborative research. To build harmonious relationships and share the benefits of the project funding received, the programme leader expressly extended an invitation to researchers and students from all three campuses to take part.

Informed by the knowledge that contexts are diverse (Trickett, 1996), different recruitment strategies were employed for setting up and conducting the research on the three NWU campuses. On the Mahikeng campus, the invitation to join we-DELIVER was accepted by the leader of a group of researchers who were

seeking a transdisciplinary community project for joint collaboration. They comprised senior and junior researchers and students from various subject disciplines: demography and population studies, development studies, social work, psychology, language studies, biokinetics, information systems, and socio-gerontology. On the Potchefstroom campus, purposive sampling (see Etikan et al., 2016) was applied to recruit researchers and students from law and public administration as well as representatives from NWU's institutional division of sustainability and community engagement. On the Vanderbijlpark campus, socio-gerontologists and student volunteers from public administration and psychology joined the project, following an invitation from their lecturers. They organized themselves under the leadership of an undergraduate public administration student with a keen interest in community empowerment. All researchers and students formally agreed to participate after considering the project proposal, actions, plans, and timelines.

Relationality A relationally focused approach was particularly relevant to deal with possible group identities associated with specific NWU campuses, and to break down preconceived ideas and stereotypes formed because of the limited contact among them (see Harrell, 2018). The project leader presented the project details in a transparent way and designed and facilitated communicative spaces for the research team. This co-constructed relational space informed decisions about selecting communities for research and ways to engage with the older participants.

Transparent Presentation of Project Details The open and transparent presentation of the research process applies to researchers to promote their engagement. In this project, a detailed budget, project timelines, and goals were presented at the initial meetings, and documents relevant to the objective of the project were stored on a shared drive to promote open and unlimited access to information. Regular emails to update research team members about changes and to confirm practical arrangements were also used to inform the researchers about the project process. We were clear about the norms that would guide our conduct in relation to co-researchers, student fieldworkers, participants, and other stakeholders. We agreed on a code of conduct that clearly expressed the value of respect for diversity and unconditional acceptance of each other, as illustrated in the first paragraph of the code:

> we-DELIVER is a research project that relies strongly on the efficient collaboration of the diverse community of people involved. We value the involvement of everyone in this project: under- and postgraduate students, postdoctoral research fellows, researchers, rural community members, local government officials, service providers, funders, and other partners. We are committed to creating a friendly and respectful place for learning, teaching and contributing. All participants in our project, as well as communications related to the project, are expected to show respect and courtesy to others.

Designing and Facilitating Communicative Spaces Communicative spaces (see also Groot et al., 2018; Harrell, 2018) were created for every phase of the project and for different purposes. During the first phase, they were used to introduce group norms of respect and of unconditional acceptance, which later would be demonstrated by acknowledging every contribution by researchers and fieldworkers and by taking these into account when making decisions. Active listening (see DeYoung,

2015; Sevenhuijsen, 2014) was introduced as a way of showing respect and applied to make sure that every response would be heard, that it mattered and was interpreted accurately. The communicative spaces in our study served as a shared framework that would, according to Kelly and Westoby (2018), inform the actions of researchers "so that when we move into action, we have a steady, shared frame of reference and we are not so readily swept away by people and events" (p.107).

4.2.1.2 Student Fieldworkers

Familiar Sociocultural Context Student fieldworkers who shared the same language and cultural background as the older persons were purposively involved in the project. The assumptions were that a pre-existing moral relationship between generational members (older persons and student fieldworkers) would be activated and that both older and younger people would act according to the standard of behaviour established by the community's culture and socializing symbols (see Chap. 3; Edwards, 2009; Hamington, 2010; Quist-Adade, 2019). Involving student fieldworkers in obtaining informed consent, in data-collection, and in disseminating the Yabelana technology artefact created what Kaplan et al. (2020, p. 4) refer to as "focus points or nodes" for intergenerational interaction. In addition to achieving research goals, the relational stance enhanced positive experiences among generational members during their participation in the research process.

Relational Engagement of Student Fieldworkers Researchers with domain-specific knowledge trained bilingual or multilingual[1] student fieldworkers in topics related to approaches to community engagement, qualitative interviews, and the use of survey analytics on electronic devices to capture participants' responses. The relationally focused approach used in the training sessions involved welcoming the students warmly, expressing gratitude for their willingness to join the project, and creating a space that invited reciprocal interaction. The student fieldworkers responded to the invitation and spontaneously shared knowledge about the situatedness of the community and their experiences of older persons and cell phones. Those who attended the training sessions and took part in the data collection were offered refreshments, and the student fieldworkers who had volunteered to transcribe interviews and focus groups after data had been collected, received remuneration according to fees set.

4.2.2 Communities

Situatedness Considering the ambitious timeline set for project completion, and being especially aware of the importance of building trusting relationships with

[1] South Africa has 11 official languages

communities (see also Kelly & Westoby, 2018; Theron, 2013), the project team decided to identify communities with whom the researchers had existing relationships and ask if they would be interested in participating in the we-DELIVER project. Three distinctly different communities, ranging from rural to more resourced settings, were identified: Lokaleng (a rural area with Setswana-speaking residents), situated next to the Mahikeng campus; Ikageng (a large town with Setswana-speaking residents), close to the Potchefstroom campus; and Sharpeville (a large town with Sesotho and isiZulu-speaking residents), near the Vanderbijlpark campus. Setswana, Sesotho, and isiZulu are among South Africa's official languages. To obtain an insider perspective, researchers, student fieldworkers, community gatekeepers, and an older person, all of whom were knowledgeable about the contexts of the different communities and issues affecting older individuals, were consulted for input in designing context-specific recruitment and sampling older participants.

Acknowledging Multiple Positionalities We recognized that we, as researchers and students, have multiple positionalities, as noted by Blazek, Smith, Lemešova and Hricová (2015), in relation to older members of the research communities. We were aware that we represented academic institutions steeped in westernized approaches to education. Regarding the involvement of student fieldworkers, we knew that implicit hierarchical relational structures would be activated when young student fieldworkers and older participants interacted in the research setting. We therefore aligned ourselves with the sentiments expressed by Collins (2000) that researchers enter into contexts with their own histories and values and should acknowledge this fact and reflect on it.

4.3 Project Phases Guided by Situatedness and Relationality

The discussion is presented here in a time framework consisting of three phases—planning, implementation, and dissemination—and draws on situatedness and relationality as guiding heuristic constructs.

4.3.1 Planning Phase

Situatedness Older Black South Africans were identified as the we-DELIVER target group. As marginalized people, often excluded from research, they have continued to suffer the consequences of lifelong structural exclusion resulting from the country's pre-1994 sociopolitical dispensation. The Apartheid regime of the time excluded many Black people from obtaining a proper education, and for the majority this resulted in persistent low literacy levels that increase their dependence on external support (Durrheim et al., 2011; Hoffman & Roos, 2021).

Two issues illustrate how the situatedness of the communities differed and how this informed ethical research conduct: gaining access and multiple versions of a vernacular.

Gaining Access The differing contexts of the three communities required a pluralistic approach to gain access to them. We identified gatekeepers and briefed them about the aims of the project and its expected outcomes so that they could decide if they wanted to extend the invitation to project participation to the relevant decision makers and the older participants.

In Lokaleng, a ward councillor, acting in this capacity, introduced the project to the *kgosikgolo* (the traditional leader of the rural community), who gave consent after consultations had been held with the King's elders/advisers (*baeletsi*) (Roets & Molapo, 2019) (see Fig. 4.1). The appropriate protocol was followed to ensure that the research team engaged respectfully with the *kgosikgolo*. On the day the project was presented to the rural Lokaleng community, the women researchers covered their heads as a sign of respect. The introduction was followed by the formal launch of the project and the commencement of data collection.

In Ikageng and Sharpeville, councillors gave permission for researchers to approach older persons in their wards. In Ikageng, the chairperson of one of the luncheon clubs, whom we knew from previous community projects, identified 32 clubs that were willing to invite some of their older members to participate in the research. Owing to mobility challenges, not all older persons were able to participate. In Sharpeville, we obtained access with the assistance of a social worker involved with older persons who came together every week in a communal meeting place.

We knew that obtaining informed consent in the selected communities would involve a communal decision-making process (see Rakotsoane & Nicolaides, 2019).

Fig. 4.1 A ward councillor addresses older participants about proposed research in rural Lokaleng

We obtained informed consent as part of a trusting and an ongoing relationship rather than a single occurrence (see Kelly & Westoby, 2018; Vitak & Shilton, 2020), through iterative formal and informal dialogue with participants and community structures.

Multiple Versions of a Vernacular The Setswana vernacular of older persons in rural Lokaleng differed from that of Ikageng. To produce an accessible version of research materials for all participants (advertisements, informed consent, questionnaire, and qualitative interview questions), they were developed in English and translated into the preferred community vernaculars. The questionnaire underwent several translational processes. A first round of translation was conducted by language experts in the research team and presented to student fieldworkers whose mother tongue was Setswana for comment and suggestions. The student fieldworkers presented the questionnaires informally for input from older persons they knew. Feedback from the older persons and student fieldworkers indicated that the wording of some questions was confusing or inappropriate. This was corrected and the materials were presented to NWU's language directorate, who highlighted several language construction issues. A pilot study informed further revisions and, finally, we consulted a Setswana-speaking psychologist who was knowledgeable about community-based research involving people with limited literacy. He verified the translations of the questionnaire (see Chap. 5 for a detailed discussion).

Relationality We adopted a relational approach and intentionally tried "seeing through the eyes of the other" (Kelly & Westoby, 2018, p. 65). We selected appropriate options to acknowledge the diversity among the older individuals—some with limited literacy and others who had completed formal education. We provided participants with choices in giving consent—either in writing or orally (see example at the end of this chapter).

4.3.2 Implementation Phase

The situatedness of each of the communities informed practical arrangements for conducting the research, and an integrated relational approach was applied to support older participant' participation.

Situatedness The diverse community settings called for appropriate adaptation to the differing conditions. In Lokaleng, the traditional open-air meeting place *(kraal)* provided little shelter for older participants and the research team when data were collected. We anticipated allowing four to five hours for exchanging mutual greetings, welcoming, explaining the aim of the visit, obtaining informed consent, and providing regular comfort breaks during data collection to prevent the older participants' becoming exhausted. For additional protection and comfort, we hired a tent and chairs from a local businessperson. In Ikageng and Sharpeville, the chairperson of a day-care centre for older persons offered the use of facilities.

An Integrated Relational Approach We anticipated that inviting older persons to participate in research about their cell phone use in an unfamiliar research context

Fig. 4.2 A student fieldworker explains informed consent to an older male participant

could be anxiety-provoking for some. The literature confirms that people's reactions tend to be biased toward responses, such as disengagement, to protect themselves against feeling unsafe if the environment is experienced as unpredictable (unsafe) (see Dana, 2020). We therefore needed to expand older participants' capacity to engage in the research and pay attention to how we related and interacted with them.

Expand Participants' Capacity to Engage We applied two strategies. First, participants were given the opportunity to exercise free choice which meant that they could decide whether to participate or not, and how they preferred to give consent. When choices are available in relatively uncertain situations they promote a sense of safety and control, and people's consciousness is expanded (Adhariani et al., 2017; Bennoun et al., 2018; Levine, 2010). Those older persons who opted not to participate observed the process or enjoyed refreshments. Second, we arranged for the explanation of informed consent to come from someone with similar characteristics to those of the older participants (e.g. language) (see Edwards, 2009; Harrell, 2018). For example, Fig. 4.2 shows a Sesotho-speaking fieldworker engaging with a Sesotho-speaking older man to obtain oral consent in Sharpeville.

Relating and Interacting Optimally In promoting optimal interactions between researchers (including student fieldworkers) and older participants, we applied the following supportive strategies:

1. We set out to provide a clear context (also referred to as a boundary around the interaction in Roos, 2018; Vorster et al., 2013; Watzlawick et al., 2011) by being clear in terms of who would be interacting, the nature of the data, and the method of collection, what would be expected of participants, and what they would gained by taking part. We also informed participants that they could leave the research setting at any time. As researchers, we treated informed consent as a unidirectional process whereby participants were able to express any uncertainties or questions to which we responded before the research commenced.
2. To present ourselves to one another (see Kelly & Westoby, 2018), and to promote what Vorster et al. (2013) refer to as transparency, the researchers, student

Fig. 4.3 Older women (wearing aprons) and student fieldworkers serve traditional food for the communal meal

fieldworkers, and participants wore name tags. During data collection, fieldworkers also showed older participants how their answers were being captured on mobile devices. Transparency in the communication with older participants was further promoted by student fieldworkers taking care to speak clearly, not too rapidly, and refraining from using academic jargon (see Vorster et al., 2013).

3. We created safe social interactions, which according to Dana (2020), consist of verbal and non-verbal messages (e.g. facial expression, voice) to foster the connections. Student fieldworkers welcomed the older participants, thanking each warmly for coming to take part in the project and offering a chair. The student fieldworkers addressed older persons appropriately and politely, and as an expression of respect avoided making direct eye contact. During data collection, student fieldworkers listened attentively to the older persons, even if they wandered off-topic, and checked regularly to see if a comfort break was needed.
4. On completion of data gathering, the researchers, student fieldworkers, and participants socialized and all had a meal together. In Fig. 4.3, older women, with help from student fieldworkers, dish up the meal they had prepared for everyone involved in the project.

All these different actions contributed towards making ourselves present and helped to "break across separateness and put us within reach of each other" (Kelly & Westoby, 2018, p. 74).

4.3.3 Dissemination Phase

Community-based research ethics involves sharing new knowledge with participants —in this instance the technology artefact, developed from the information obtained from them. The situatedness of all three communities again informed the processes followed to share the Yabelana technology artefact (app and USSD code).

Situatedness In Lokaleng, the councillor informed older participants of the date and time when student fieldworkers would be visiting them. In Ikageng, student fieldworkers arranged meetings with the chairpersons of the luncheon clubs. In these smaller, more informally organized groups, older persons invited the student fieldworkers to join them at their usual weekly meetings. Student fieldworkers complied with the dates, times, and the programme proposed by the older persons. This involved joining in the opening prayer, doing exercises (see Fig. 4.4) together, and singing songs. Following the agenda, the chairperson introduced the student fieldworkers and asked them to talk about the reason for their visit. In Sharpeville, the luncheon club's chairperson was similarly contacted and asked to include the research project in the agenda for discussion.

Relationality A supportive interpersonal context was created for the introduction of the Yabelana technology artefact. Two guiding constructs from a social-constructivist perspective informed the dissemination of the Yabelana app and

Fig. 4.4 A student fieldworker joins older women in an exercise session in Ikageng

USSD code: zone of proximal development and scaffolding. The zone of proximal development refers to learning through supportive and knowledgeable people using the (older) learners' actual level of knowledge to provide assistance while allowing for self-exploration (Jörg, 2006). Scaffolding involves sequenced and structured instructions and activities to support people as they attempt to construct their own learning by making sense of the learning content (Oliver & Herrington, 2003; Steward, 2012).

Zone of Proximal Development Older persons and student fieldworkers formed smaller groups, with no more than three older persons to a student fieldworker (see Figs. 4.5 and 4.6). We based our decision for this number on the optimal group size to enable participation (see Kelly & Westoby, 2018). In these small groups, student fieldworkers observed older participants' needs for comfort breaks and their level of skills, and listened to the problems they had encountered with technology. The older persons' use of the Yabelana system was supported by the guidance and encouragement of knowledgeable, trained student fieldworkers (see Moll (2014). The older persons' knowledge construction was further supported by authentic contextualized activities, which meant that the information was presented in a subjective, experiential form with real-world relevance for them (see Kelly & Westoby, 2018; Oliver

Fig. 4.5 Young fieldworker demonstrate the Yabelana system on older persons' cell phones

Fig. 4.6 Young fieldworker demonstrate the Yabelana system to two older women

& Herrington, 2003). Student fieldworkers demonstrated how to download the Yabelana app on to smart phones and presented the USSD code. To narrow the gap between the Yabelana USSD code and what the older persons already knew about using codes, student fieldworkers reminded them of a familiar process—uploading airtime. According to Steward (2012), prior understanding of a similar action helps with the assimilation of new knowledge.

Scaffolding We used a sequenced process whereby student fieldworkers introduced the app and USSD to the older persons. First, the fieldworkers demonstrated how to access information using the USSD code on the older persons' mobile devices or, if they did not have their phones with them, on the students' phones. Second, older persons were invited to experiment with the app and USSD to find general information, and third, older persons practised accessing the information independently. When they got stuck they asked for support from the student fieldworkers or their peers. Student fieldworkers simplified the task of learning the USSD code for the older participants: some created a memory association by presenting the numbers (*134*237#) as a short rhythmic repetition of words, while others designed fridge magnets inscribed with the USSD code for easy access.

The supportive relational context in which the Yabelana system was disseminated provided a space for connections between older persons and student fieldworkers. According to Anderson (2011), learning is enhanced when participants are encouraged to "express their ideas, and to present themselves as real and functioning human beings" (p. 344). The responses of our older persons and student fieldworkers when this process had been followed confirmed that both groups felt affirmed as individuals (see also Chap. 7). The older participants' responses ranged from delight,

gratitude, and relief to feelings of empowerment by being able to seek help independently: "I am happy that there is something like this. To help us find emergency numbers easily", and "Wow, thank you my child (student fieldworker)! I didn't know this was even possible", and "At least I won't have to go around asking for help in an emergency. I can just do it myself", and "I can't wait to brag to my grandchildren when I get home."

The reports the student fieldworkers prepared revealed the insights they obtained through their experiences with the older participants, and indicated clearly that their earlier stereotyped comparisons, projections or judgements about older persons had changed:

> Some students had preconceived ideas and stereotypes about older people (such as older people are slow to learn). In many cases it appears that these stereotypes were proven wrong and students had more positive perceptions of older people after the study.

> Interacting with older people was amazing. They are very kind and genuine people. With incredible love and care! They were friendly and open to us, as well as to learn about the app. They were also comfortable in talking to us and letting us help them with the app.

The we-DELIVER community-based research project, as the case in point, illustrates practical ways to treat participants and fellow researchers in a humane, respectful, and courteous manner, following the thinking of Ramose (2002).

4.4 Broad Guidelines for Community-Based Research

The guidelines proposed here for community-based research are informed by the conviction of Kelly and Westoby (2018, p. 24) that it should be relevant, appropriate and flexible:

- methodological but not mechanistic
- systematic but not dogmatic
- intentional but not inflexible
- rhythmical but not habitual
- procedural but not predetermined.

A context-sensitive approach recognizes that researchers' situatedness is embedded in broader sociocultural, historical, and sociopolitical contexts, and is as relevant as that of communities and participants. The situatedness of communities participating in research indicates the need for relevant sensitive sociocultural practices and appropriate actions on the part of researchers, especially when engaging with marginalized groups who are prone to be on the receiving end of exclusionist practices.

However, community-based research is ambiguous and fluid, and despite being sensitive to situatedness we did not always get it right in our project. For example, when visiting the rural community in Lokaleng, women researchers and fieldworkers demonstrated respect to the *kgosikgolo* and the *baeletsi* by covering their heads, but

did not notice the inconsistency of wearing pants (trousers) or jeans at the time. A student fieldworker reflected: "I was embarrassed to be at the council in pants. That is not how women should dress when they go to the council." It is through such reflective practices that we as researchers learn and become more attuned to how we relate and interact in different sociocultural contexts.

Relationality as a guiding community-based research construct has implications for the paradigm that ethics bodies could usefully adopt to inform their guidelines and their engagement with research applications, researchers, and students. Relationality makes it relevant for the community-based research team to: (1) engage as people, irrespective of their roles as researchers, student fieldworkers or participants; (2) deliberately facilitate communicative spaces and practices that acknowledge all contributions from everyone in the project; and (3) recognize the multiple positionalities of researchers, fieldworkers, and participants. Relationality should effectively promote a sense of interpersonal safety in a socioculturally appropriate manner; be clear about the boundaries of the interaction; and include social engagement strategies in the research setting to broaden participants' capacity to participate in the research.

4.5 Conclusion

We call for a rethinking and a review of the—too often inappropriate—application of general, universal ethical principles to the range of different types of research. This chapter illustrates, for example, how relationality guided the ethics of planning, implementation, and dissemination of a community-based project, and the relevance of this principle for all the role players—participants, as well as researchers and fieldworkers. In the process of ensuring that everyone's rights are protected, the situatedness of communities and researchers needs to be taken seriously, guided by a context-sensitive perspective. We began by setting out the misalignment in applying generalist ethical guidelines across the board, irrespective of the nature of the research topic and without consideration of communities' and participants' situatedness. Context matters when embarking on community-based research; it needs to be at the heart of the ethical practices that guide this kind of investigation.

Appendix

OLDER PEOPLE'S ORAL INFORMATION AND WRITTEN CONSENT
we-DELIVER: Holistic service delivery to older people by local government through ICTs
ETHICAL APPROVAL NUMBER: NWU-HS-2017-0073

Hello, my name is_____. I'm currently doing my first degree (undergrad) /a PhD/Master's student/a researcher at North-West University. We are doing a study and I was hoping that you would be interested to help us. Our study is about getting information about services that could be useful to older people and how people can get the information by using their cell phones. May I tell you more about the study, which is called the 'we-DELIVER' study?

The 'we-DELIVER' study aims to improve direct service delivery to people who are 60 years old and older, from the communities of Lokaleng (Mahikeng) and Ikageng (JB Marks local municipality in Dr. Kenneth Kaunda district) in the North West Province, and Sharpeville in (Emfuleni local municipality) in the Gauteng Province. If you choose to be a part of this study the following will happen: you will be asked to answer questions from a questionnaire of 30 questions and this will take 25 minutes. Some of you will also be asked to individually or in a group talk to a researcher, who will ask you short questions, which will take approximately another 25 minutes. Some of the people we talk to will be asked to join other people in a group to talk about the same topics that we are going to use in the interviews. For these group talks, a group of eight to ten people will be invited. The group talks will take approximately 30 minutes. The individual and the group talks will be recorded on an audio-recorder. The study will be carried out by researchers who have been trained in using questionnaires and how to do short interviews and group talks.

For completing the questionnaire the researcher (me) will have a conversation with you about each and every question. I will ask you about 30 questions. You will have enough time to think about each answer and if you do not know the answer you do not have to answer, but if you want to answer the question you are also welcome to ask somebody else for the answer.

All other information that people share will be used for this study and other studies without identifying the person who gave the information. The information will be placed where other people can see it, but your name will not be linked to the information. When people write about this study, your name will not be used, unless

you prefer it. I will ask you to say if it is in order if we use your name in written pieces about this study or use the photos we have taken of. Is that okay with you?

The following risks are involved in taking part.

Probable/possible risks/discomforts	*Strategies to minimize risk/discomfort*
Some of you will be spending one hour and 30 minutes to give information for the study. It is possible that you will become tired.	We will ensure that people who join the study have chairs. Researchers will give regular comfort breaks and you will all receive refreshments (juice and fruit) about halfway through.
You may feel uncomfortable when asked questions whose answers you do not know.	You will be asked to answer certain questions or participate in group talks with guiding questions. Researchers will be trained in asking guiding questions and in holding group talks. There is no right or wrong answer, and you have the right not to answer any question if that is what you choose to do. The questions will be asked in simple language and you do not have to complete the questionnaire on your own. Someone will help you with that. We have also asked people from the community to help us so that we do not ask questions that make you feel uncomfortable.

The direct benefits to older people:

- You can get information about services easily by using your cell phone or by asking someone to use their cell phones to get the information.
- You will be able to give feedback on your cell phone about the way in which the information about the services is provided.
- The service providers for older people's needs may use this information to find out which needs are not addressed.

With your permission, I would like to make an audio recording of our discussion to make sure I'm getting the information from you in the way we talked about it. Or I can take notes in my notebook. Which do you prefer? Can we also take a photo of you in the group or while you are talking to me? The photos will be used when people write about this study.

These are some of the ways in which the information from this study will be reported on: writing policy briefs, articles or in books and research reports, and presentations at conferences. In all this reporting, nobody will know that it is you who said these things unless you ask specifically to be identified. This means that the reporting will not include your name or other personal details, for example your

home address, that could let others know what you said when you have participated. You will be asked for your permission to use some of the direct words you have said.

If you have any complaints or concerns please feel free to contact me in the first instance. My cell phone number is _____ You can also reach me at [North-West University email address]_____.

This study has been reviewed and approved by a North-West University ethics committee. If, after contacting me with any concern you have, you remain unhappy and wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the ethics committee chair _____[Name] at _____ [Telephone number] or at _____ [Email address]_____. You can also contact the co-chair, _____ [Name] at [Telephone number] or at _____ [Email address]_____, or the secretary, [Name] at [Telephone number] or at _____ [Email address]_____.

Do you have any questions?

[Oral consent-seeking stage, after participant has had sufficient time to think about whether s/he wants to take part]

Record answer as yes or no.

Do you give your permission for me to interview you/take your photo/video you?	
Do you give me permission to audio record you?	
Do you give your permission for us to use your photo?	
Are you happy to take part?	

Thanks, in which case let's start.

we-DELIVER: Holistic service delivery to older people by local government through ICTs

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Researcher record of oral consent

Date	
Location (City/Region)	
Interviewee Name or Number	
Project Explained (Yes/No)	
Interview Recorded or Notes Taken	
	Indicate Yes (Y)/No (N)
Participant and Quotes	**Direct quotes**
	Quotes which would not identify them
	Not to be quoted at all
Participant and Photos	**Photos which identify them**
	Photos which would not identify them
	Not to be photographed at all

[INSERT NAME]_____ _____

Name of Researcher **Signature of Researcher**

(Signed in the presence of the interviewee to confirm oral consent)

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