

On research ethics and research integrity – experiences from Jimma and St. Paul

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Four question to be adressed:

- What is - or better – what *should* be the objectives of capacity building in research ethics and research integrity?
- What kind of ethics training has been offered to academic staff at Jimma and St. Paul?
- How has the ethics trainings been received?
- What *could* be the way forward to make sure that Jimma and St.Paul *themselves* can offer sustainable training in research ethics and research integrity?

Back to first question:

What is - or better – what *should* be the objectives of capacity building in research ethics and research integrity?

Seven standard answers:

- raise awareness.
- foster reflection and self-reflection.
- increase understanding.
- promote dialogue and deliberation.
- enhance moral sensitivity.
- develop moral skills.
- provide knowledge about fundamental principles of research ethics and research integrity.

Four metaphorical answers:

First answer:

One should aim at generating some sort of *movement*:

“To be fully successful as arguments, arguments must be such as to change the heart” (M.C Nussbaum, ” *The poetics of therapy. Hellenistic Ethics in its Rhetorical and Literary Context* 1990, p. 3).

Second answer:

One should aim at fostering *therapeutic doubt*:

«My friend – you know too much without ever having thought about it» (Harry Martinson, *Aniara*, 1956).

«The gift of doubt»)

Third answer:

One should aim at reducing *moral blindness*:

«If you can see, look.

If you can look, observe».

(From the *Book of Exhortations*. Quoted by José Saramago in his book, *Blindness*).

Fourth answer:

One should aim at producing some of sort of *purification (catharsis)*: the relation between mother tounge languages and mother tounge moiralities.

What kind of ethics training has been offered to academic staff at Jimma and St. Paul?

- *Five* five days courses in research ethics (110 academic staff exposed to this training).
- Four courses at Jimma, one course in Addis
- *One* five days teacher training course in bioethics in Addis.

Some particularities of the trainings, 1:

A bottoms up approach:

- What does goodness in medical and health related research entail? (Group work at the start of Day 1).
- What are the core-ethical values in cultures you live and work? How would you rank these values in terms of their importance? (Group work on Day 1).

Some particularities of the trainings, 2:

- Mother tongue languages and mother tongue moralities: On the culturality and contextuality of ethics and morals (lecture Day 1).
- What does respect for cultural diversity mean in a research-context? Are there ethical values in your culture that might come in conflict with universal moral standards? (Group work Day 1).

Some particularities of the trainings, 3:

One particular kind of top-down approach:

- Instead of targeting students these trainings have targeted members of academic staff.
- This approach makes the Jimma and St. Paul trainings different from what goes on in many other countries.
- This is an approach in compliance with *The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (ECOC)*, 2017.

(ECoC) on *Good Research Practices*:

- Research institutions and organisations [should] develop appropriate and adequate training in ethics and research integrity and ensure that all concerned are made aware of the relevant codes and regulations.
- Researchers across the entire career path, from junior to the most senior level, [should] undertake training in ethics and research integrity.
- Senior researchers, research leaders and supervisors [should] mentor their team members and offer specific guidance and training to properly develop, design and structure their research activity and to foster a culture of research integrity.

How has the ethics trainings been received?

- With praise and ovations?
- Yes, and probably with too much praise and ovations.

Last question:

What *could* be the way forward to make sure that Jimma and St.Paul can offer sustainable training in research ethics and research integrity?

Some suggestions:

- Act locally
- Stay bottoms up, as well as top down
- Strengthen synergy
- Think globally
- Go virtual

How to make sense of these buzz words, 1:

- Identify 2-3 members of academic staff who have attended the ethics trainings and who would be willing to undergo trainings to become ethics trainers,
- Identify one member of academic staff who would be willing to serve as secretary of JU's REC after undergoing further training in research ethics and research integrity.

How to make sense of these buzz words, 2:

- Go for the most talented
- Go for those who already have a PhD
- Select at least two women

How to make sense of these buzz words, 3:

- CME can offer training and supervision of these talented individuals – a combination of face to face trainings and distance learning.
- Relevant funding agencies could help make such a vision of sustainability come true.