



Process of Development Report: Our Values and Ethical Framework

2021



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Introduction: ethics and values hand-in-hand

An ethical framework is a way of formalising and articulating an organisation's values and ethical commitments which can systematise the way decisions are made to ensure they are in-line with these commitments. Cultivating Community's Ethical Framework began to be developed in November 2020 and will be implemented in early 2022. The basic structure of the framework, a decision-making matrix based on various key work areas within the organisation and our values, was developed early on inspired by systems in place in other organisations such as Engineers Without Borders. As it developed, it became clear that the framework would need to be based deeply on the organisation's values to be embedded in the way we work.

Cultivating Community's values had not been reassessed since their initial creation when the organisation first began in 1998. In order to create a values-based framework reflective of the organisation in its current form, it was decided that the values be redeveloped. This process was designed around the aim of representing the many faces and facets of the organisation, and so consultation was focused on both the board of directors, the team and our broader community.

This process led to the development of four new value statements which in turn are fundamental to the ethical framework. In this way, the development of the ethical framework and our new values became interlinked processes that manifested in our new values statements as well as the final framework. This report outlines these two interlinked processes of development, and the role an ethical framework will play moving forward.



Development Timeline

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- November 2020**
Ethical Framework proposal developed.
 - July 2021**
Values consultation with partners and the board of directors.
 - August 2021**
Values Consultation with team members.
 - September 2021**
Values drafted. Community and partner feedback received.
 - October 2021**
Framework development.
 - November 2021**
Framework finalised and presented to board and Team Leaders.
 - Early 2022**
Implementation of the framework.

Consultation and Involvement

With the Cultivating Community Board of Directors:

- EF proposal received and incorporated feedback from the board.
- Values consultation session held with the board.
- Final EF presented to the board.

With the Cultivating Community Team:

- Values consultation session held with the team. One-on-one meetings were held with any team members who missed out.
- follow-up survey sent with some engagement.
- Final EF presented to Team Leaders.

With our Partner Organisations and Community:

- Initial survey sent to partners to better understand their expectations of us as an organisation in our different areas of work. These were then reported back to the team and to the board for discussion.
- Drafted values displayed at food relief and at the High Rise Bakery with participants encouraged to comment, with overwhelmingly positive responses.
- drafted values sent back to our partners for feedback overwhelmingly positive responses, 100% of respondents confirmed they would be excited to work with us following the introduction of the new values.



100%

Of respondents to our partner survey said they were excited to work us.

Our 2021 Values

Cultivating Community's 2021 values were developed through this consultation process. Our new values describe *how* we work, as opposed to *what* we do, which is outlined in our mission and vision statement.

1 Positivity

We get stuff done and have a can-do mindset wrapped up in trust and respect for all. *We are good at knowing where we face challenges, and we can continually reflect on doing better or changing our ways. We are grateful for our colleagues and the work we do and the communities we do it with. We remain open minded, share in our success and are united in purpose as a team.*

2 Connection

We care about who we work with and for. We utilise empathy, sensitivity, advocacy, curiosity, and ethics to do it. *For us diversity and inclusion are strengths that make us internally and externally more likely to be in tune with our community and participants. We will work hard with our organisations emotional intelligence to connect with each other.*

3 Opportunity

We embrace ideas and activity that can inspire others to lead change in our communities for the better. *Nothing gets ruled out if we think it can make a positive change and meaningful impact to our services and the frameworks. We measure against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Social Connection Index and Well Being surveys and aspire for our opportunities to impact upon Wicked System solutions.*

4 Creativity

We can make magic happen with the depth and breadth of our team and the diversity of our community. *That magic can be lots of small things or one big thing that brings difference and joy to someone we work with or for. We will critically think about solutions and consider what is the problem we are trying to solve and use the creative canvas of our team and the subject matter of food and growing to solve them.*

Cultivating Community's Ethical Framework Explained



An Ethical Framework is a systematic way of enacting an organisation's ethical standpoint, based upon the values of the organisation and political theories such as Feminism, law or international commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals. The Cultivating Community Ethical Framework (CCEF) is based on the 2021 values that were developed through the consultation processes outlined.

The CCEF classifies activities within one of the following four categories: Best Practice, Mild, Cautionary and Exclusionary based upon our values. This translates to an Airtable matrix that defines each of these categories as based on seven areas of work within the organisation: Advocacy, Communications, Community Relationships, Employment, Purchase and Projects.

All projects can then be logged into the matrix as based on which category best matches the activity. The matrix can also be used as a decision-making guide. It is a living document that will continue to evolve with use.

The CCEF is a formalised system to enable us to work in alignment with the values of the organisation, as well as an articulation of our ethical commitments, as collectively expressed through the values consultation process.

An Ethical Framework is a systemic mechanism to ensure practice aligns with values.

Moving Forward

The 2021 values are now in place and will help to guide the organisation moving forward. Cultivating Community's ethical framework is a system for decision-making that will continue to evolve and develop with time and use, responding to the needs of the organisation and the team.

To be initially implemented, all new projects as of 2022 will be logged using the Airtable base. This will help to embed the matrix in the workings of the organisation overall. Projects are logged by examining the verdict descriptions and selecting which best describes the project or activity.

This will hopefully drive the development of the project so it best aligns with the framework and the matrix. It is a reiterative process, as is the framework itself which will respond to the needs of staff and the organisation over time. The framework can also be used as a guide for any other activity staff members might do in their day-to-day work.

A video explaining the matrix is accessible to staff on the shared drive and the base can be accessed via the Cultivating Community free Airtable workspace.

Contributors

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