Reimagining Ethics, Learning And Transdisciplinary Evaluation

RELATE

"Getting ethics approval from my university was a 'roadblock' – it delayed the project so much we had to drop the engaged aspect of the research"

"When I had to get formal consent from my co-researchers, using the forms and procedure that is usually expected by the university, it introduced a level of discomfort and distrust – this is not how people approach working together in this culture / community"

"When it was time to evaluate the impact of the research, the participatory part was over – impact was counted in terms of publications and research products, but the perspectives of people in the community on whether anything had actually changed was not heard"

When involved in research, have you heard or felt that*...

"We have our own concerns and questions, but researchers come with a pre-determined research project that doesn't deal with the needs and issues we have and want to address in our communities"

"We had people coming to do their project and then leaving, taking away the knowledge we have, publishing it in their name and we never heard from them again"

"The knowledge and values we have, are not valued when we get involved in research."

"When external evaluators come in to judge the impact of our project, we are not able to tell the full story, of failures or of small subtle changes, because we need a good evaluation to get more funding"

Are you trying to address these challenges by developing alternative approaches to ethics and evaluation in contexts of transdisciplinary engaged research?



*These are illustrative quotes inspired by many conversations with different practitioners when discussing our experiences of ethics and evaluation

RELATE – Reimagining Ethics, Learning and Transdisciplinary Evaluation – is a three year project (from 2026 to 2028), convened by researchers from University of Saskatchewan in Canada, and Rhodes University in South Africa, and funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

The goal is to make visible alternative ways of doing research ethics and evaluation while building and sustaining an open community of practice. Working alongside different actors and communities, we aim to drive lasting institutional change when working on transdisciplinary research.

Transdisciplinary research seeks to address complex global challenges– such as climate change, biodiversity loss, social inequality, among others– through diverse forms of knowledge and involving multiple actors, especially the communities concerned. However, current ethics and evaluation approaches – used by universities and funders – are often misaligned with contextualised research practices that are useful, fair and meaningful to all involved.

Reimagining Ethics, Learning And Transdisciplinary Evaluation

RELATE

What is RELATE?



An open and growing community of practice!

RELATE was launched in Oaxaca, Mexico, in August 2026. We had an amazing week sharing and learning from each other, but this is just the beginning!
This is an open and growing community!

Meet the coordinating team!

Jim and Maureen share a UNESCO Chair in Biocultural Diversity, Sustainability, Reconciliation, and Renewal at the School of Environment and Sustainability at the University of Saskatchewan, Canada. Read more about the Chair here.



Maureen Reed

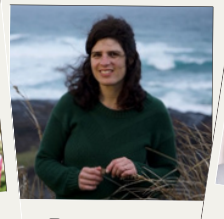


Jim Robson

Eureta, Taryn and Maite are based at the Environmental Learning Research Centre at Rhodes University in Makhanda, South Africa. They work in solidarity with different practitioners on research and learning for socio, ecological and cultural justice.Read more about the ELRC here



Eureta Rosenberg



Taryn Pereira



Maite Zeisser Gutierrez

Reimagining Ethics, Learning And Transdisciplinary Evaluation

RELATE

How does it work?

In the spirit of an open community of practice, our activities are emergent and diverse. While some are led by the RELATE coordinating team, any member is welcome to organise activities and sharing spaces! The coordinating team is also here to support dissemination. Together, we hope to build synergies and maximise our efforts – supporting one another to drive meaningful change in our contexts

Join the next activities!

We will be organising spaces to meet and exchange.
Watch out for information on:

- Online learning sessions (2027)
- In person events (2027)
- Learning festivals (late 2027- early 2028)

How can you get involved?



Questions? Contact us!

relate@gmail.com

Go to the website

Apply to the calls!

We are launching two open calls!

- If you want to create and share accessible materials–like guides, protocols and visual stories–that shows alternative ways that make a difference in the ways we approach, research ethics and evaluation **APPLY TO OUR SEEDLING SMALL GRANTS (application Nov-Dec 2026)**
- If you have already produced materials, publications, art work, protocols, gatherings, and more **SHARE YOUR RESOURCES** with us. You will contribute to building an international online hub where practitioners can find inspiration, and learn from each other's experiences.