# Conflict Resolution Policy

| ADOPTION BY | |
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| | **DATE** |
| Annual General Assembly | October 6, 2017 |

## 1. PREAMBLE

Collaborative research takes time because it requires constant reflection on power relations within the team and with participants. Trust and reciprocity need to be developed. Working collaboratively with youths also involves ethical responsibility. Aside from the project, youths have several needs related to school, family and more. Time must be carefully planned to ensure that we remain in constant contact with them and not only when we need them for the project. Working with youths also involves numerous interactions and emotions. Working in partnership means constantly managing these emotions and sustaining these interactions; particularly more so than if we were using traditional research approaches.

The data produced through collaborative research is co-constructed. This method is very different from traditional scientific approaches where "data" is considered "objective" and where the researcher is not supposed to intervene. In collaborative research, researchers fully participate in the production of data. As a result, it is very difficult to separate the different steps of the research project (collection, analysis, and writing) and this iterative process poses several challenges.

Our collaborative approach further challenges well-entrenched hierarchies between researchers, students, youths, and non-academic partners. It is not always easy to break down hierarchies between different types of knowledge (scientific, professional, community, youth). This partnership requires culturally-sensitive means of approaching these hierarchies and "bending" them whenever possible. Despite our collaborative efforts, power relations will persist and we need mechanisms to face them.

## 2. THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS POLICY

TRYSPACES is a very diverse team, traversed by various hierarchies and power relations, including people of different ages, classes, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and genders.

Following Article 6 of the TRYSPACES Partnership Agreement, which states that "*The Partners share common principles which support the equal participation of each partner and their representatives: inclusiveness, respect, reciprocity, recognition, engagement, sharing and mutual confidence. The research and co-production of knowledge work is being undertaken in a manner which respects the*

*ethical codes and policy statements of the Canadian Tri-Council,*" the objective of this policy is to delineate mechanisms through which conflicts can be resolved.

## 3. PRINCIPLES FOR COLLABORATION

The guiding principles of TRYSPACES are:

- Inclusiveness
- Respect
- Reciprocity
- Recognition
- Engagement
- Sharing and mutual trust

These principles are to be set in motion through the following mechanisms designed to help implement collaboration, with the full participation of all parties involved based on their needs and limitations:

a. **Collaborative decision-making:** Our Partnership Agreement and governance structure address how information circulates and which decisions need to be made collectively or in subcommittees, as well as the different treatment each partner needs in terms of recognition and accountability.

b. **Roles and responsibilities:** Collaboration implies a clear division of labor. A large portion of the work with youths is invisible (relations, support, follow-up, discussion, etc.). This invisible work needs to be taken into account in our work time, in the budget, in the calendar and regarding deadlines.

c. **Clearly defining our objectives:** Defining specific objectives for each group, as well as calendars that take into consideration the fact that we are all working on other projects and not only TRYSPACES.

d. **Flexibility:** Accepting that our initial conceptualization of the project will evolve. This means having progress indicators and planning for time to re-evaluate the project, what was accomplished, what was planned and what can be changed, and reallocating tasks in accordance with these changes. It is important to speak openly about our different standards and ways of working. Debriefing is central to collaboration.

## 4. CONFLICT RESOLUTION MECHANISMS

Our governance structure rests on a decentralized decision-making process directly involving academic, social, and techno-artistic partners. All committees are accountable to the Steering Committee, composed of the four City Coordinators, four Non-Academic Partners (including one from Hanoi or Mexico, and one techno-artistic partner), the International Ethics Coordinator, and the Student Coordinator. The Steering Committee is required to report each year to the Annual partner meeting.

There are two main conflict resolution mechanisms:

1. **The Steering Committee**: Conflicts will be brought to the Steering Committee, in writing or orally. We will rely on the expertise of the International Ethics Coordinator to help solve them. The Steering Committee will have the final say on the conflict-resolution strategy/approach. If a conflict arises within or against the Steering Committee, we will defer the decision to the INRS Research Ethics Committee as an external and neutral body.

2. **Progress indicators**: We have developed tools for measuring progress. Two of them are qualitative and will also serve to adjust our practices and provide channels for expressing difficulties or conflicts.

   a. Each City Committee will hold periodic debriefing meetings
   b. A short survey designed to gather information on qualitative and subjective indicators will be sent once a year by the Central Coordination.