

Geoethics – A Message from the Field in Tanzania

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Ethics is rule of behaviours that are based on ideas about what is morally good and bad. Geosciences faces challenges during field work, laboratory and reports writing due to lack of ethics how to perform. For geoscience activities to be performed properly certain rules of behaviours, i.e. Geoethics are inevitable.

Geoethics shall be based on social community relation. It means that before starting to perform any geoscience work, the geoscientists must involve the community in the project area and brief them what is going on. There are many cases, especial in Africa that communities get concerned about geoscience activities because they got not involved before the project started. E.g., it happened in the southern part of Tanzania that villagers wanted to burn a rig because they were not aware of what is going on, and they thought that people might want to take their land for cultivation.

Geoscience works must be environment friendly; as we know that some of geoscience activities involve bushes clearing, cutting down trees, land excavation, blasting, drilling etc. So before undertaking these works you must consider how to protect the environment surrounding the project area, and how to replace the affected areas.

Safety, health and welfare implementation are another concern for geoethics. Most of the Geoscience works take place in areas which are dangerous and may cause injuries, affect health and even may cause death. The working place must be made safe before, during and after the works. It happened several time in Tanzanite mines in East Africa that rock fall caused the mine to collapse and killed people. Also, sometime people's death is due to poor ventilation system in underground mines.

Avoiding deceptive acts also concerns geoethics. It happened in various geoscience projects that some geoscientists displayed wrong information to get benefits. Striving to increase the professional competence and prestige of geoscientists also concerns geoethics because it can encourage and motivate geoscience works to be performed in quality and on time. Geoscientist must be honest and impartial and serve with fidelity the public, their employer and the client.

Geoscientists shall act in a professional matter for each employer or client as faithful agents or trustees, and shall avoid conflict of interest; e.g. geoscientists shall treat information coming to them in the course of their assignments as confidential, and shall not use such information as a means of making personal profit if such action is adverse to the interests of their clients, their employers or the public.

Geoethics should require geoscientists to perform services only in areas of their competence; that shall undertake assignments only when qualified by education or experience in the particular technical field involved. Geoethics should include quality control and quality assurance (QC&QA) of geoscience practise to get an actual and reliable result from the laboratory, so during sampling geoscientists should do QC&QA to cross-check the standards of the laboratory to get real and actual results

p.s. The second author is listed as IAPG sponsor of the APC for young scientists from developing countries.