PRINCIPLES of Community Investigation
The SEEK Initiative is committed to enabling a global movement of community investigators who work in the public interest.

We envision a society in which citizens conduct trustworthy investigations that regularly inform democratic processes, create knowledge about issues in the public interest, and defend basic rights.

We believe the following principles are important for community investigators who strive to seek, gather, analyse, corroborate and present important information in ways that are truthful, accurate, independent and fair.
You can become an investigator.

Any curious and committed individual can uncover important facts, whether you consider yourself a journalist, activist, artist, scientist, student or none of those. We support people from various disciplines who investigate in the public interest, document their findings and articulate clearly where their information comes from. Credibility is built on working accurately, transparently and ethically.
Be transparent in your methods.

We believe that open, ethical methods lead to safer and more trustworthy investigations. Be prepared to “show your work” — to explain how you gathered every piece of information and data. Tracking and explaining your steps will make you a more effective investigator, and a more dependable ally and collaborator for others.
Be inspired by scientific inquiry.

The scientific method is a proven approach to finding evidence. Like scientists, we strive for others to be able to replicate our work, and we remain open-minded to contradictions of our original hypotheses. Just as peer review is fundamental to science, the best investigations are strengthened by questions and contributions from others.
Be straightforward and act in good faith.

Listen with an open mind to the individuals you encounter, regardless of whether they are helping or resisting your inquiry. Be candid with sources about how you intend to use their information. Don’t deliberately misrepresent yourself or facts. Don’t make promises you can’t keep.
Be a healthy sceptic.

Question authority and accept no “fact” until you have tested, verified, and confirmed it from multiple sources.
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Mind your own biases.

Question your assumptions and be aware of how your emotions might cloud your judgement. Be ready to change your mind if new evidence casts reasonable doubt on existing evidence.
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Be accountable for your findings.

Be meticulous that information you share is accurate, fair, evidence-driven and put in the proper context. Consider, as much as practical, how you can prove that events happened as you say they did. Admit when you make mistakes and be ready to correct them.
Minimise harm to others and yourself.

While investigating, consider the toll of your work on those around you and on yourself. Make a plan for keeping your information sources, colleagues, family and yourself safe, in the physical and digital world.
Aim for positive impact.

The facts we uncover can explain how society works, benefit our communities and lead to positive change.
About SEEK.

The SEEK Initiative is working to support the growing global movement of individuals and communities who use reputable investigative methods and tools to expose what is really happening in their societies.

We believe individuals and communities experiencing injustice know better than anyone else about their own needs, challenges, and possibilities for change. SEEK empowers anyone to create high-quality, verifiable, evidence-based stories that inform public decision-making and strengthen democracy in this era of information crises.

The SEEK Initiative was founded by a consortium of partners that now sit on the organisation’s advisory board: CORRECTIV, Global Investigative Journalism Network, Tactical Tech, and Dig Lab Foundation.
SEEK democratises the fight for truth by supporting people-powered investigations.
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