

GENDER MAINSTREAMING SECRETARIAT

A free helpdesk for the **promotion of gender equality in health research in West Africa through gender mainstreaming in National Research Ethics Committees**

BCA-WA-ETHICS

Building capacities in gender mainstreaming for ethics committee members from Senegal to West Africa



GENDER MAINSTREAMING SECRETARIAT

The Gender Mainstreaming Secretariat is a virtual help desk **at the service of all National Research Ethics Committees (NREC) and Institutional Review Boards (IRB) in West Africa**. It strives to help all NREC/IRBs in the improvement of their own regulations, guidelines, and operating procedures from a gender perspective.

The mission of NREC/IRB is **to protect the human rights of research subjects**.

Taking into account the different experiences and needs of women, men, and gender minorities, and how the existing gender inequalities affect their health is crucial for any research to be credible, valid, and generalizable.

NREC/IRB have the power to ensure that gender-blind research does not take place. **The Gender Mainstreaming Secretariat can help you with that!**

Any NREC or IRB representative may contact the Gender Mainstreaming Secretariat at any time to request advice and technical support.

All technical services are provided free of charge.



BCA-WA-ETHICS

BCA-WA-ETHICS is a project funded by the **European and Developing Clinical trials Partnership** that aims to promote the adoption of gender perspectives into social and health research by building the capacities of NREC/IRB in mainstreaming gender tools and frameworks in their governance and in their ethical evaluation practice.

During the 1995 United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing, **gender mainstreaming** was adopted as a strategy for the promotion of gender equality. It involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, and evaluation of projects and policies.

Research has historically been exclusively focused on men as research subjects, and, thus, producing results that are not generalizable to women. There is also a large disparity in how female and male researchers progress in their careers. By mainstreaming gender, the NREC/IRB can help researchers and research institutions **end gender-based inequalities**.

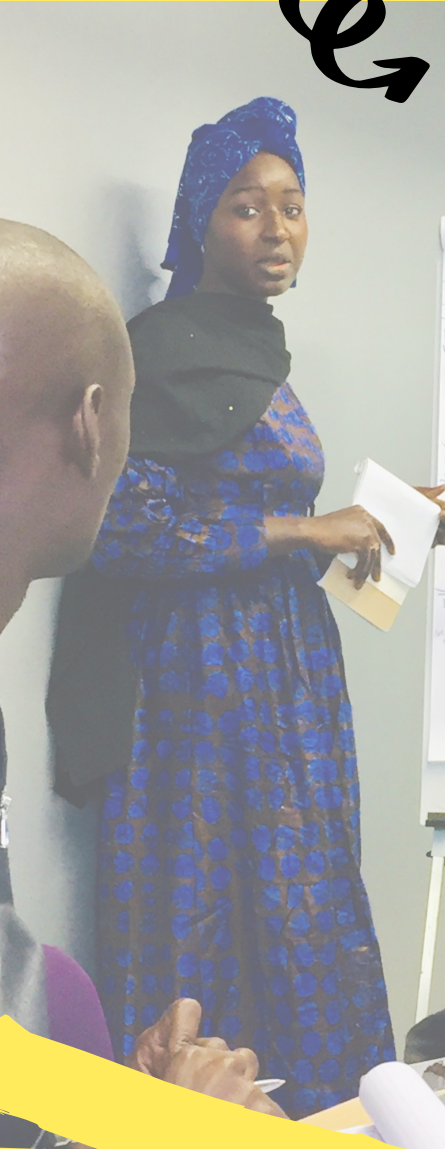
Coordinated by:



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There are multiple ways in which your ethics committee could prevent sex- and gender-based discrimination in health research



WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU?

- 1 We can help you design, implement, and evaluate an institutional Gender Equality Plan**
We can help you assess the gender-related gaps in your NREC/IRB in terms of the capacities of its members, its protocol evaluation tools, and other standard operating procedures (SOPs). A Gender Equality Plan will help bridge those gaps and put your NREC/IRB on the right track towards gender equality by ensuring that women, men, and gender minorities in your institution have the same opportunities and are equitably represented.
- 2 We can help you with your SOPs for recruitment, budgeting, procurement, and archiving**
We can help you to write these cornerstone documents from scratch to ensure that all your NREC/IRB procedures are flowing smoothly. Have your own SOPs? We can take a look at them and help you adapt them to become more gender-transformative.
- 3 We can help you have your set of gender-oriented research protocol evaluation tools**
Having checklists, evaluation tools, and procedures in place with all the items a NREC/IRB member needs to pay attention to during protocol evaluation is crucial. Adapting your evaluation working frame to include all relevant sex- and gender-related aspects can be very helpful in determining whether any proposed research is gender-sensitive or gender-blind.
- 4 We can help you communicate your activities to the general public**
NREC/IRB fulfill an indispensable role in the protection of research participants and staff against gender-based discrimination. We can facilitate the process of preparing communication material such as brochures, flyers, factsheets, annual reports, etc., so that your institution communicates in a transparent and efficient way all your efforts to promote gender equality in research.
- 5 We can help you plan and implement Gender Equality Training**
We can help you prepare the training syllabi and training materials for both NREC/IRB members and for NREC/IRB-supported research institutions and researchers. Gender Equality Trainings could reduce the number of gender-blind protocols that committees receive and could ensure that the NREC/IRB members are equipped with the knowledge and skills to assess research protocols from a sex and gender-sensitive perspective.
- 6 We can help you conduct site or offsite research inspections, monitoring, and follow-up**
Our helpdesk can help you prepare or adapt procedures, tools and checklists used for post-approval research follow-up, monitoring, and inspection. We can also provide guidance to your inspectors and evaluators during the process with regard to which aspects to pay attention to promote that research is conducted in a sex- and gender-sensitive manner in your country.
- 7 We can help you prepare for external gender audits**
Our team can guide you through the process of preparation for a gender audit starting with terms of reference establishment to the implementation of recommendations from the audit report.
- 8 We can help you design your own in-house research and internal evaluations**
Assessing the extent to which gender is mainstreamed in your SOPs, organizational culture, and ethical evaluation of research is crucial. Mapping all gender gaps will help you strategize better ways to better promote gender equality in your NREC/IRB.

Get in touch!

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