

# WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

**23** scientists from the Senegalese National Ethics Committee and National Regulatory Authority trained in the design of gender equality plans, and in the application of a gender perspective into research protocol evaluation and trial site inspection.

**50%** of the National Ethics Committees in West Africa are assisted in the design of gender equality plans through the Gender Mainstreaming Secretariat.

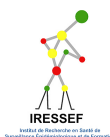
**5** peer-reviewed outputs are published to share the lessons learned from the project to enhance the application of gender mainstreaming in health research in the West African region.

**4** West African scientists gained skills in gender-sensitive protocol evaluation approaches in the Research Ethics Committee of Aragon, Spain.

**40** female researchers participated in a research that aims to explore their barriers and obstacles to consolidate a career in academia and research.

**60** female researchers received educational and professional mentoring from internationally recognized gender and career-promotion experts.

Coordinated by:



This project is part of the EDCTP2 programme supported by the European Union (grant number CSA2018ERC-2314)



## BCA-WA-ETHICS

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



.....

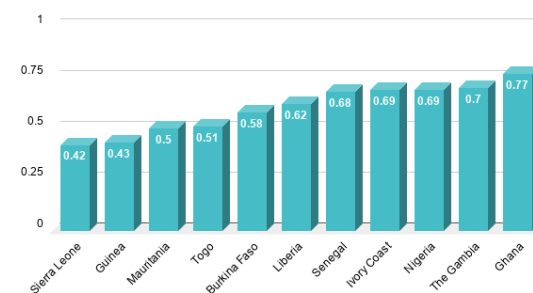
The purpose of BCA-WA-ETHICS is to facilitate the incorporation of a gender perspective into West African-led health research. Its main aim is to improve the capacities and skills of scientists and ethicists that are members of the National Ethics Committees (NECs) in West Africa to mainstream a gender perspective in their institutions' research evaluation and inspection mandate.

## The Gender Gap

### WHY ARE WE CONCERNED?

The higher education gender parity index (GPI), which reflects the ratio between enrolled female to male students in universities, shows that in West Africa, further efforts are needed to close the gender gap in academia. According to recent data from the World Bank and the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, women often occupy less than 20% of faculty members' seats. There is also a marked disparity in the percentage of female and male PhD holders in West African countries.

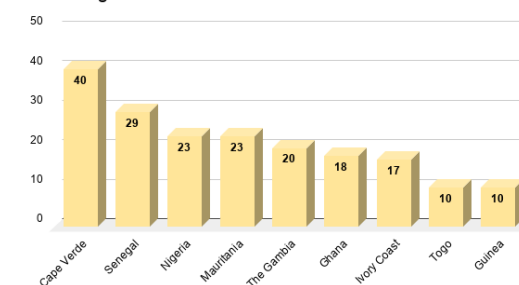
GPI vs. Countries



Source: World Bank, 2018

Similarly, female researchers face the same difficulties with underrepresentation, as in the majority of West African countries, they make up less than 30% of the country's researchers.

Percentage of Female Researchers vs. Countries



Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2018

### BCA-WA-ETHICS WILL CONTRIBUTE TO CLOSING THE GENDER GAP BY:

- Conducting research on the barriers facing West African female researchers in their career development.
- Formulating recommendations to increase research opportunities for West African female scientists.
- Helping and encouraging West African academic and research institutions to design and implement gender equality plans.

## What are we advocating for?

Gender mainstreaming was introduced during the 1985 World Conference on Women in Nairobi. During the 1995 United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing, it was adopted internationally as a strategy for the promotion of gender equality. Gender mainstreaming involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, and evaluation of policies and programs, with a view to promoting equality between women and men, and combating sex- and gender-based discrimination. According to the European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE), there is a marked gender disparity in all levels of research, and such problem could be targeted by the application of gender mainstreaming.

EIGE proposed the Gender Equality in Academia and Research (GEAR) tool, which provides universities and research organisations with practical advice through all stages of institutional change. In parallel to EIGE's efforts, there is a growing body of research on the relevance of gender mainstreaming for health research. Nevertheless, further tools and guidelines must be adapted and applied to developing countries where gender inequalities are highly prevalent.

A key component in gender mainstreaming is the application of sex- and gender-analysis. Research has historically been exclusively focused on men as the default research subject, producing results that are therefore, not generalizable to women.

National Ethics Committees could contribute to gender equality by promoting gender mainstreaming, and by ensuring that sex- and gender-based analysis are taken into account in the research projects they evaluate.

## What are we going to do?

*BCA-WA-ETHICS is a 2-year project that was launched in August 2019. The project comprises a range of training, career promotion, networking, and scientific activities such as:*

- The Gender Landscape: A formative research to map and frame gendered issues in health research in West Africa.
- Training programme in gender mainstreaming approaches in health research evaluation and inspection.
- Internship programme for Senegalese researchers at the Research Ethics Committee of Aragón, Spain.
- 2020 Scientific forum on gender issues in health emergencies and in emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases research.
- 2021 Scientific Forum on the harmonization of gender mainstreaming guidelines and approaches across West African NECs.
- Audit of the Senegalese NEC to evaluate on the effective application of the gender-informed research protocol review and site assessment tools.
- Conduct of social research on the barriers and opportunities for West African female scientists' professional and educational development.
- Promotion of gender mainstreaming approaches in international conferences and forums.

Updates on project activities will be regularly posted at:

[www.bcawaethics.com](http://www.bcawaethics.com)

## WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU?

The Gender Mainstreaming Secretariat is a virtual help desk at the service of all National Ethics Committees (NECs) in West Africa. Its purpose is to promote that all NECs develop or improve their own regulations, guidelines and standard operating procedures to:

- Consider gender-representation in the NECs composition.
- Establish gender-sensitive recruitment, budgeting, procurement and administrative procedures.
- Incorporate a gender lens in the NEC study protocol evaluation activities.
- Support incorporation of gendered perspectives in health and social research.
- Promote sex and gender approaches in data collection and analysis.
- Conduct gender-sensitive research site inspections.
- Prepare for external audits on the effective integration of gender in NECs governance and procedures.
- Develop gender-sensitive educational and professional development programs.
- Develop and facilitate gender equality training programs.
- Design and implement gender equality plans.

**Any NEC representative** may contact the Gender Mainstreaming Secretariat at any time to request advice and technical support in any of the areas listed above.

Technical services are provided **free of charge**.

If interested, please get in touch at [bca-wa-ethics@unizar.es](mailto:bca-wa-ethics@unizar.es) or using the contact form at [www.bcawaethics.com](http://www.bcawaethics.com)