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.

Coordinated by:

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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.

**ACTIVITIES**

**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

**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 or using the contact form at www.bcawaethics.com