



IRC Equity Research Project Standard

We acknowledge there are power differentials when conducting research that can be affected by and exacerbated by the research process. These differentials can arise through interlinking systems of oppression such as sexism, racism, xenophobia, heteronormativity, ageism, ableism, historical and neo-colonization, etc. We aim to conduct ethical research in the following ways to promote equity and reduce power imbalances throughout the process. We outline these principles below, which are divided into ‘participants’ and ‘partnerships’ categories.

PARTNERSHIPS

- **Joint Agenda Setting:** We seek to develop locally-driven research agendas for outcome areas aligned with ambitions of IRC country teams and partners in the settings where the IRC works. The purpose of these agendas will be to combine the global evidence base and fit-for-purpose methodologies with the most meaningful research and learning questions to drive fundraising directions and cultivate longer term research partnerships with people or institutes from the countries or regions where research is being conducted.
- **Collaborative:** We will meaningfully collaborate with IRC country offices and partners, such civil society organizations, universities, or others where the study is being conducted, from as early as possible in the research and learning process through in-person or digital platforms. Pre-or post-award, projects should conduct co-design workshops which include finalizing research questions, agree upon roles and responsibilities across partners, make decisions jointly where appropriate, and develop fit-for-purpose methodologies, in line with best practices management research standards. Projects should also conduct validation workshops to share findings with partners and co-create meaning and recommendations.
- **Visibility of Partners:** We commit to sharing opportunities for visibility with our partners. This may be in the form of ensuring co-authorship, including first or senior authors, on reports and manuscripts and as presenters for invited talks. We commit that our research team will not serve on male-only or white-only panels.
- **Budget for Equity:** Projects should appropriately compensate partners in salary support and provide sufficient indirect funding for their institutes within grant applications. The IRC has committed to channeling at least 25% of its funding to local partners (e.g., civil society, local government, private sector actors). This commitment will be extended to research partnerships and

will be incorporated into future business development proposals. We will develop and promote long term collaborations with institutes and research partners where we work, and advocate with donors to achieve this. We strongly support IRC researchers subcontracting to research partners or organizations in the places where we work when possible to shift power dynamics.

- **Bidirectional knowledge production:** We value diverse, contextually relevant expertise and methodologies. We acknowledge that our research trainings, ethical reviews, and skills are incomplete and benefit from the incorporation of contextually relevant and valuable viewpoints from all partners.

PARTICIPANTS

- **Participatory:** We seek to engage research participants throughout the implementation of a research study. Practically, at a minimum, when security procedures allow, we will hold community sessions to discuss research objectives, research design, tools, and ultimately the findings, to incorporate feedback. Where possible, we will add questions and measures that are most relevant to the communities participating in the research. When establishing these community sessions is not possible, global/national advisory groups of activists, researchers and practitioners should be established to advise the study.
- We will also commit to sharing research findings in an accessible format, including back to participants. Transparent documentation of engagement efforts should be articulated within research and learning products, particularly in academic articles in accordance with journal guidance [1].
- **Inclusive and intersectional:** All research and learning efforts must ensure that data is collected and analyzed along meaningful and safely collected social identities. At a minimum, all data must be collected and disaggregated by sex, recognizing IRC's commitment to gender equality as a feminist organization. Additionally, we encourage teams to collect information such as age, disability, race, ethnicity, language, displacement status, sexual orientation and any other identities when it can be safely collected and relevant to the target population and appropriate for research.
- Pre-analysis plans should include information on how data will be disaggregated and/or assessed for effect modification within evaluations by identities. We also recognize how model building and the variables included/excluded can influence interpretations and findings [2].

We will explicitly acknowledge missing constructs or measurement challenges that may influence interpretation of findings in limitation sections. We will also incorporate the researcher's positionality/reflexivity into interpretation of results.

Ongoing Commitments within Airbel Impact Lab (Research & Innovation at the IRC) and IRC's Work Broadly

We also seek to create a more **diverse and inclusive research team** overall within the research practice, aligned with the IRC Airbel Impact Lab's diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI) commitments. Finally, we also seek to implement research through **environmentally friendly approaches**. We recognize that



settings around the world will face multiple crises, including environmental degradation or climate change related impacts. We seek to reduce any negative environmental impacts from research by using electronic data collection when possible and ethical, we prioritize digital platforms for meetings to reduce carbon footprints, etc. We expect this commitment to evolve as IRC's commitment to the Climate Action Plan becomes clarified.

These principles will be incorporated into project quality assurance procedures and leads will be held accountable within project opening/closing meetings and periodically throughout the process, aligned with quality assurance structures.

[1] See BMJ for guidance

[2] See [Data for Black Lives](#); or [Weapons of Math Destruction](#) for more information

