



Promoting Ethical Research Around the Globe

The Issue

Research is critical to addressing the most pressing health challenges of our time. Many of these challenges are global in nature and therefore require international scientific collaboration. Yet, international collaborative research can raise complex ethical questions. For example, how should international research teams test new drugs when patients do not receive the same level of care everywhere in the world? What should happen to patients who cannot access care when the research is over? How can researchers solicit culturally appropriate consent from patients in different settings? These types of questions can only be addressed by a cadre of individuals who are trained in research ethics and able to develop and maintain sound systems for research ethics review and compliance. Such systems are especially critical for NIH-supported research, which requires compliance with U.S. ethics regulations.



Fogarty's Response

The Fogarty International Center (FIC) supports research ethics training to promote the ethical conduct of NIH-sponsored research in global settings. The skills learned enable graduates to conduct high-quality institutional review board (IRB) review of proposed research studies and sustain local systems of ethical oversight. A subset continue their studies to complete advanced degrees and leverage their expertise to address broader ethical questions facing U.S. and global populations, for example around human genome editing, the use of artificial intelligence in research and healthcare and data sharing and biobanking. Most FIC research ethics training programs involve grants to U.S. grantees, who then partner with ethicists in LMICs. An increasing number of programs are now led by ethicists in LMICs, in line with the ultimate goal of promoting local and self-sustaining training in ethics and research ethics review and compliance.

By The Numbers*

- **71** unique awards
- **104** funded grantees
- **1298** Long-term trainees from **107** countries
- Co-funded by **19** ICOs and **3** USG agencies
- Supported research and training in **90** LMICs
- Funded **31** US institutions from **18** states/DC

**Numbers cover the life of the program between 2000-2024*

Program Successes

FIC research ethics training programs facilitate ground-breaking, NIH-funded clinical trials in Uganda.

FIC training at Makerere University provided graduates with the necessary expertise for setting up a national system of research ethics review and compliance in Uganda. This system has facilitated the ethical conduct of ground-breaking, NIH-funded clinical trials on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria in the country. The results have changed clinical practice around the world, including in the U.S. Former trainees have also contributed to national research guidance, for example, the [National Guidelines for Community Engagement in Research](#), and taken leadership positions at [Uganda National Council for Science and Technology](#).

Additionally, former trainees have created a program for advanced ethics training to help sustain high ethical standards in health research in Uganda.



Grantees and former trainees support the ethical conduct of NIH-funded international research initiatives.

Grantees and former trainees have helped to develop ethical guidance for some of NIH's major international research initiatives, including [Harnessing Data Science for Health Discovery and Innovation in Africa \(DS-I Africa\)](#) and [Human Heredity & Health in Africa \(H3Africa\)](#). The resulting ethical guidance (e.g., on [returning individual genetics research findings and managing access to data and biospecimen access for H3Africa](#)) has influenced research practices worldwide.

Grantees and former trainees contribute to key international ethical guidelines for health research.

Grantees and former trainees have contributed to numerous international ethical guidelines, including the influential Council for [International Organizations of Medical Sciences International Ethical Guidelines for Health-related Research Involving Humans](#) and the World Health Organization [Guidance for Research Ethics Committees for rapid review of research during public health emergencies](#), [Tool for benchmarking ethics oversight of health-related research involving human participants](#) and [Guidance on the Ethical Conduct of Controlled Human Infection Studies](#). Grantees and former trainees have also helped to pioneer the ethical conduct of health research by international non-governmental organizations, including [Doctors Without Borders](#).



Former trainee supports the development of national research ethics training and guidance in India.

Nandini Kumar, MD, used her FIC training to establish a national research ethics training program at the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), India's flagship research institution. Dr. Kumar also helped formulate several influential Indian guidelines for research, including India's [National Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical and Health Research Involving Human Participants](#) and [Good Clinical Practice Guidelines](#).

FIC joins forces on international bioethics training with the NIH Clinical Center Department of Bioethics.

The NIH Clinical Center Department of Bioethics (CC DoB) offers one of the premier bioethics training programs in the U.S. CC DoB advises FIC and has designed its own international initiatives to complement FIC's research ethics training program, for example, the free [Ethical and Regulatory Aspects of Clinical Research course](#) and several [advanced bioethics research training opportunities for international bioethics scholars](#).

