NMMF Fieldwork Risk Assessment Framework for Marginalized and Underrepresented Identities

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Section 1: General Fieldwork Overview

1.1 Project Overview:

- **Project Name**:
- **Field Site Location(s)**:
- **Fieldwork Duration**:
- **Principal Investigator (PI)**:
- **Team Composition (Number and Demographics)**:
    - (Gender, Race/Ethnicity, LGBTQIA+ identities, Disabilities, etc. to identify any potential risks faced by marginalized identities)
- **Primary Research Activities**:

Section 2: Identifying Marginalized Identity Risks

2.1 Local Environment Risk Factors:

- **Social and Cultural Context**:
    - Is the fieldwork being conducted in an area with known social tensions, discrimination, or violence against women, people of color, LGBTQIA+ individuals, or religious minorities?
    - Are there specific local laws or cultural norms that could put marginalized identities at heightened risk? (e.g., LGBTQIA+ criminalization, gender roles, restrictions on religious attire)
- **Community Engagement**:
    - Will the team interact with local communities or authorities that have histories of discrimination or hostility toward certain groups?
- **Mitigation Plan**:
    - If risks exist, outline plans to mitigate the risk. (e.g., assigning a liaison to engage with the local community sensitively, ensuring team members are aware of and comply with local customs without compromising personal safety or identity)

2.2 Physical Safety and Site-Specific Hazards:

- Safety of Field Sites:
  - Are there environmental risks (e.g., wildlife, terrain, extreme weather) that could disproportionately affect certain team members (e.g., those with disabilities)?
  - Will remote field locations affect access to medical care? If so, does this pose a higher risk to individuals with chronic illnesses or specific medical needs?
- Mitigation Plan:
  - Develop emergency protocols and ensure site-specific accommodations for people with disabilities, chronic illnesses, or other needs (e.g., accessible transport, special gear, medical supplies).

Section 3: Travel Risk Assessment

3.1 Domestic/International Travel Risks:

- Safety of Travel Routes:
  - Are there any known travel risks (e.g., harassment at checkpoints or airports) for team members based on gender, race, or nationality?
- Laws and Regulations in the Destination Country:
  - Are there LGBTQIA+ criminalization laws or other local laws (e.g., restrictions on women's movement) that could affect the safety of team members?
  - Are there visas or travel restrictions based on nationality, race, or religion?
- Mitigation Plan:
  - Provide information and training on the local legal context. Ensure access to safe transportation services and work with local authorities or embassies to mitigate legal risks.
  - Develop alternative travel routes or accommodation arrangements if needed.

3.2 Accommodation and Lodging Risks:

- Safe Accommodations for Marginalized Identities:
  - Will there be safe, inclusive lodging that respects gender identities, provides gender-segregated or gender-neutral options, and ensures privacy?
  - Are lodging options accessible for individuals with disabilities?
- Mitigation Plan:
  - Select accommodations that are explicitly safe and inclusive for all identities. If needed, arrange alternative housing for team members with specific needs.

Section 4: Team Dynamics and Fieldwork Culture

4.1 Internal Team Risks:

- Potential for Bias or Harassment:
  - Are there any concerns or histories of team members exhibiting bias or harassment based on gender, race, sexual orientation, or other marginalized identities?
- Power Imbalances:
  - Consider whether there are any internal power imbalances that could make marginalized individuals feel unsafe reporting issues (e.g., junior researchers may fear retaliation).
- Mitigation Plan:
  - Provide anti-harassment training and establish a clear reporting mechanism.
  - Appoint a Field Safety Officer who can confidentially receive complaints and intervene.

4.2 Inclusivity in Daily Operations:

- Accessibility of Fieldwork Tasks:
  - Are the tasks in the field physically demanding, and could they disproportionately affect individuals based on gender, disability, or other factors?
  - Are there activities that require gender-segregated accommodations (e.g., changing, restrooms), and is there a plan to provide gender-neutral options?
- Mitigation Plan:
  - Ensure that fieldwork roles are assigned based on capabilities and accommodations, not assumptions based on gender or identity.
  - Provide flexible schedules and alternative tasks for those who need adjustments based on health or identity-related needs.

Section 5: Mental Health and Emotional Well-being

5.1 Mental Health Risks:

- Cultural and Emotional Stressors:
  - Could marginalized team members face additional stress due to social isolation in an unfamiliar or potentially hostile environment?
  - Is there a risk of emotional harm related to discrimination, microaggressions, or culture shock?
- Mitigation Plan:
  - Provide access to mental health resources, either remotely (telehealth counseling) or on-site, especially for marginalized individuals.
  - Conduct regular check-ins to assess the mental and emotional well-being of team members.

Section 6: Emergency Preparedness

6.1 Emergency Protocols for Marginalized Individuals:

- Inclusive Emergency Plans:
  - Does the emergency protocol account for specific needs of marginalized identities (e.g., safe spaces for LGBTQIA+ individuals in case of evacuation, accessible evacuation routes)?
- Medical Emergencies:
  - Have provisions been made for individuals with specific health needs (e.g., diabetes, allergies, or disabilities) in emergency situations?
- Mitigation Plan:
  - Develop inclusive and tailored emergency evacuation plans. Identify local medical facilities that provide care sensitive to cultural, gender, and identity-based needs.

Section 7: Reporting and Accountability

7.1 Incident Reporting:

- **Confidential Reporting Mechanism**:
  - Is there a clear and confidential process for team members to report incidents of discrimination, harassment, or bias?
- **Access to Support**:
  - Will marginalized individuals have access to support networks, legal assistance, or internal allies if they face identity-based discrimination in the field?
- **Mitigation Plan**:
  - Ensure team members have access to an anonymous reporting system. Assign an NMMF Field Safety Officer who is responsible for handling such reports.

Section 8: Risk Rating and Action Plan

8.1 Risk Assessment Scale:

- For each identified risk, assign a Risk Rating based on:
  - **Likelihood of Occurrence**: Low, Medium, High
  - **Impact on Safety/Well-being**: Low, Medium, High

8.2 Action Plan:

- For each risk rated as Medium or High, detail the specific actions that will be taken to mitigate the risk, including:
  - Who is responsible for managing the risk?
  - Resources or strategies being employed (e.g., local contacts, travel adjustments, specific accommodations).
  - Timeline for implementation.

Section 9: Sign-Off and Review

9.1 PI/Field Safety Officer Approval:

- Signature and date from the PI and/or Field Safety Officer confirming that risks have been assessed and mitigated.
- The form should be reviewed and updated as the fieldwork progresses or as new risks emerge.