The Fieldwork Initiative:
A three-tiered approach aimed at stopping gendered violence during research fieldwork

Grasping the Magnitude

"During your fieldwork, did you experience any form of gendered violence, sexual harassment, sexual assault, or unwanted advances?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes, frequently</th>
<th>Yes, a few times</th>
<th>Yes, once</th>
<th>Almost never</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A 2019 pilot study of 50 women researchers revealed that 60% experienced some form of gendered violence, sexual harassment, sexual assault, or unwanted advances, and only 2% told University staff about it. Fear of retribution and a dependency on interlocutors or the local community was cited as the main reason researchers felt they must endure unwanted advances. 75% stated that they had to put themselves in uncomfortable situations to get the data they needed for their research. 96% of participants stated that they received no pre-fieldwork training or a dialogue on the dangers.

From this **The F.I.S.S.T Training** was born

**Taking Action for Victims**
The pilot study also indicated:
- Female/non binary researchers regularly endure uncomfortable situations as a “necessary evil” for conducting their work.
- Researchers are financially and/or methodologically bound to finish their fieldwork which becomes a double edged sword when they face dangerous situations that make them want to flee unsafe places.
- When researchers do come forward about sexual trauma in the field, they are advised to seek private methods like counseling, which is an out of pocket expense they often cannot afford, and further enforces the notion that gendered problems in the field are a matter of their own personal responsibilities.
- Female/non binary researchers fear that admitting sexual trauma in the field will demarcate them as subpar researchers, lacking street smarts, or somehow negligent for their experiences.
- Researchers internalize uncomfortable situations and do not report out of fear that their research project will be cancelled.
- Some researchers still struggle with long-term trauma after experiencing negative experiences in the field.

From this **The Intervention Program** was born

**Providing Emergency Aid**

Given the rising number of self-funded scholars doing research, financial limitations often stop students from being able to prioritize safety. The Fieldwork Initiative raises money to provide emergency relief for those who face traumatic or unsafe situations while doing fieldwork, including but not limited to:
- Hotel rooms
- Transportation/Emergency flights home
- Hospital/ Mental Health Services
- GPS tracking when researchers feel unsafe.
- Emotional support
- Advocacy on the victim’s behalf

The Fieldwork Initiative follows victims until the end of their fieldwork journey by maintaining supportive, encouraging contact.

Researchers facing difficulty in the field can contact us at www.fieldworkinitiative.com/get-help

Supporters can donate at: http://fieldworkinitiative.org/help-us/

**Creating a Community**
The pilot study lastly indicated that:
- Since research, fieldwork, and academia are difficult domains to navigate by nature, many students feel isolated and struggle with imposter syndrome.
- 33% of those surveyed did not have a confidant or colleague with whom they felt comfortable venting, sharing, and commiserating with.
- First generation and minority researchers can feel particularly out of place due to limited academic contacts, cultural differences, and lack of representation.
- Researchers do not have enough mutual support from colleagues, as they often fear that divulging their difficulties will create a negative image about their capabilities.
- Researchers often do fieldwork alone or in remote places without support.

From this **Women* in the Field** was born

**Mutual Support**

“Women* in the Field” is a virtual community in which network for those in the thick of knowledge production, those facing trauma while working in research, those wanting to discuss difficulties they face in their work, for those needing to ask questions and give answers, and for those simply needing a shoulder to lean on. Now approaching 2,000 members, we offer a place to share our triumphs, celebrate our achievements, laugh at our foibles, and connect each other to personal or scholarly resources in a supportive encouraging environment of solidarity.

New members can join by searching “Women* in the Field” on Facebook.

*The network is open to cis/trans women, and LGBTQI researchers.

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

www.fieldworkinitiative.org

a movement by Jerika Loren Heinze