There were three key issues affecting the pattern of research grant allocations:

- Geographical location – researchers based outside of the capital city of Kampala were at a disadvantage when it came to access to information on opportunities for research funding as well as the requisite capacity to apply for the grants;
- Gender – few women researchers applied for grants or responded to proposal calls;
- Generational bias – senior/experienced researchers were given preference in grant allocations over emerging or younger and less experienced researchers.

Applying a gendered lens to the work of the council, the Gender and Inclusivity Project change team set out to expedite certain initiatives aimed at resolving these issues, including:

- The establishment of the national Gender Equity in Research Alliance (GERA) which has set up regional gender committees across four administrative regions of Uganda to coordinate gender equity in research and provide more opportunity for geographical inclusion: https://www.gera.ug/;
- The development of the UNCST Grants Management Manual to highlight the importance of mainstreaming gender inclusiveness as a key requirement for funding;
- The formation of a gender committee and drafting of a gender policy to tackle gender issues in the council’s regular work and to ensure that programme implementation is gender-inclusive;
- Empowering young researchers through mentorship programmes; ensuring that when vulnerable communities participate in research, their rights are protected; and ensuring that research conducted in Uganda is, among others, beneficial to women, youth and marginalised communities.

Challenges

Despite the above successes, the UNCST recognises the need for ongoing support to improve its capacity to conduct gendered analysis and to collect and develop its use of such data in organisational evidence-based programming and planning.

The council is also exploring the idea of issuing calls that specifically focus on gender issues.