



# Gender & Inclusivity

A PROJECT OF THE SCIENCE GRANTING COUNCILS INITIATIVE



## RESEARCH COUNCIL OF ZIMBABWE, ZIMBABWE

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The Gender & Inclusivity Project, a component of the Science Granting Councils Initiative (SGCI), is led by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) of South Africa in partnership with Gender at Work (G@W), Jive Media Africa and the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA). G@W's unique methodology, Gender Action Learning (GAL), together with the Targeted Technical Assistance (TTA) process designed by the HSRC, supports a unique participatory process that responds to councils' needs, builds partnerships and encourages ownership of the change process.

## Gender and inclusivity mainstreaming efforts in the STI research landscape

A full suite of measures was implemented by the Research Council of Zimbabwe (RCZ) aimed at redressing gender inequities at all levels of the science, technology and innovation research landscape

The Gender and Inclusivity Project change team of the RCZ identified several critical areas of intervention. The number of female students undertaking Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programmes at universities is low and there is under-representation of female researchers in calls for grant applications. The change team also highlighted the dominance of male adjudicators in the reviewing of research grants and scholarships. In addition, under-representation of women in decision-making on STI Research Boards was also cited.

To address the situation, the RCZ implemented the following:

- Award of scholarships to university students on the basis of gender and issuing of special invitations to prospective young female researchers as a way of encouraging them to apply for research grants.
- The council reached out to upcoming and well-established female researchers, explicitly inviting them to apply for research grants and scholarships and put in place a system of awarding of research grants to research teams that incorporate female researchers.
- A plan was devised to advocate for the formulation of policies that ensure appointment of gender balanced research boards across the STI ecosystem and to appoint RCZ board members on the basis of gender.
- In its Strategic Plan (2021- 2025) the council has undertaken to adopt the National Gender Policy in the implementation of its mandate to promote, direct, supervise and co-ordinate research that is undertaken in Zimbabwe.

The change team noted the need for awareness workshops on gender and inclusivity at universities and research institutes and to sponsor more

gender and inclusivity research calls – despite limited resources. The council also called on universities and institutes to implement gender and inclusivity policies that address gender equity in research.

Training of RCZ staff, board members and stakeholders on Gender and Inclusivity mainstreaming in research is also needed, as is building the capacity of young female researchers to respond to research calls and scholarships.

### Successes

- In 2022, RCZ awarded 50% of university scholarships to competent female students and this is set to increase the number of female students enrolling in STEM programmes.
- Adjudicating panels for research grants applications and scholarships were constituted on the basis of gender and this has ensured full representation of women in decision making.
- The RCZ Board now consists of eight (8) women and seven (7) men, representing diverse professional and academic backgrounds and experiences, which gives room for women to influence decision making.
- The staff complement of the council is eleven (11) men and eight (8) women.



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