



**African Population and  
Health Research Center**

# POLICY ON GENDER EQUALITY

Revised: November 2018

# **POLICY ON GENDER EQUALITY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The African Population and Health Research Center's (APHRC) commitment to gender equality is based on international standards established by the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). For APHRC, gender equality means ensuring that all human beings are considered equal and treated equally in terms of their rights, obligations and opportunities.

This policy provides guidance to APHRC staff on matters relating to gender equality as they execute their work within and outside the Center.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY**

- To develop a common understanding throughout APHRC of what gender equality means and how to relate it to the organization's systems, policies and programs;
- To provide consistent messages and a coordinated approach to the promotion of gender equality by APHRC staff and offices at all levels;
- To set standards of gender equality against which APHRC will hold itself accountable;
- To guide APHRC staff in adopting principles and practice of gender equality in their personal and professional lives; and
- To foster an organizational culture that exemplifies APHRC's commitment to gender equality.

## **APPLICATION**

The policy applies to all regular and temporary staff.

Successful realization of this policy will require consistent and active participation by all staff.

Senior management will take the necessary steps to ensure the policy is translated into action in both technical and management aspects of APHRC programs. They will transmit the policy to staff and monitor its consistent and effective application throughout the work for which they are responsible.

The resources and administrative and operational mechanisms for implementation and monitoring effectiveness of this policy throughout the Organization will be set forth by the Executive Leadership Team

## **PRINCIPLES**

The Center recognizes that gender roles are neither static nor universal.

APHRC has to address gender discrimination within the organization itself by fostering an organizational culture that promotes the equitable participation and distribution of power, access to and control over resources and equitable number of women and men at various levels within the organization.

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Staff member** refers to all persons who have signed a contract with APHRC to work in any capacity at any given time (regular and temporary staff).

**Gender** refers to the norms, expectations and beliefs about the roles, relations and values attributed to women and men.

**Gender equality** refers to the absence of discrimination on the basis of sex.

**Gender discrimination** occurs when people are treated differently simply because they are male or female rather than on the basis of their individual skills or capabilities.

**Gender stereotypes** are socially constructed and unquestioned beliefs about the different characteristics, roles and relations of women and men that are seen as true and un-changeable.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THIS POLICY**

APHRC expects staff to:

- Treat all persons with respect and dignity both at work and wherever programs are carried out; and
- Be vigilant in protecting confidential information about people while conducting research and disseminating the findings.

**The Center commits to:**

- Promote gender equality as an explicit human right;

- Avoid programs and partnerships that do not promote gender equality;
- Ensure the equitable and meaningful participation of both male and female staff in decision making processes; and
- Create an enabling environment for gender equality to thrive in our internal organizational culture, e.g. pursue family-friendly work policies and practices that enable both women and men to participate fully in work and family life such as provision of maternity/paternity leave, adoption leave, compassionate leave, flexi-time, and leave without pay.

## **GENDER EQUALITY STANDARDS**

APHRC will monitor the implementation of this policy through the following four areas

a) Structures, Systems and Policies; b) Programs; c) Policy Engagement and Communication; and d) Governance and Leadership.

### **a) Structures, Systems and Policies**

- Human resource systems and policies are gender sensitive and responsive. Gender equality is integrated into recruitment, retention, promotion, training, performance management systems, and remuneration.
- APHRC will routinely track and report the gender balance of staff and board governance structures and seek to, as much as possible, balance male and female representation at all levels and positions.
- The Center's Human Resources Policy, Whistle Blowing Policy, and Policy on Sexual Harassment are known by all staff and are enforced to deal with issues of any form of discrimination or harassment.

### **b) Programs**

APHRC programs will endeavour, as much as possible, to ensure that women and men have equal access to benefits from all the projects and interventions implemented by APHRC. This will be achieved through:

- Inclusion of objectives, indicators, strategies, activities, targets and results that are sensitive to gender issues;
- Programs will include, where necessary, the collection of data disaggregated by sex and age.

**c) Policy Engagement and Communications**

All APHRC documents and communications will use gender sensitive and inclusive language and images, and avoid gender stereotypes. These include strategic documents, proposals, policies, project reports, internal and external communications, etc.

**d) Governance and Leadership**

APHRC will routinely track and report the gender balance in leadership and board structures and seek to, as much as possible, balance male and female representation at these levels.

**Monitoring Gender Parity**

Annual reports will include sections on staff gender ratios at all grades within the organization.

**AFRICAN POPULATION AND HEALTH RESEARCH CENTER (APHRC)**

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I, \_\_\_\_\_ (*Employee's Name*), have received a copy of the Policy on Gender Equality dated November 2018. I have read and understood it and agree to adhere, at all times, by every aspect of the policy.

I shall also not hesitate to notify the Human Resources Manager or any member of the Executive Leadership Team should I encounter any suspected or confirmed gender discrimination during my tenure at APHRC.

I acknowledge that this policy is part of my contract of employment.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

(Employee signature)