

# Inside the GEI Project

## Council Overview of Malawi

Advancing systemic change is a challenge, and the adage, “it takes a village,” seems apt. Change starts when people with a common goal or purpose come together. The Gender Equality and Inclusivity (GEI) Project is an example of researchers throughout Africa joining together to address gender inequality. The aim is to make the research granting process in science, technology, and innovation more equitable.

Since 2023, the GEI project has focused on grant-making activities and evaluating a GEI Policy Framework Roadmap. The plan is to integrate GEI into the grant-making cycle to make research more robust. Click [here](#) to find out more about the GEI project.

As part of this project on GEI integration, there are 13 participating councils from Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Each of these councils is undertaking to implement a GEI lens, and they are all going through unique learnings, experiences, and challenges.

The next series of posts will highlight the councils and their work; starting with Malawi.

### Malawi

In 2023, at the start of this project, Catherine Chaweza from the National Commission for Science and Technology (NCST) Granting Council in Malawi shared why this project is so meaningful. She painted a picture of a young Malawian girl, living in the south, where there had been a Cholera outbreak. Chaweza described how this girl probably felt confused by how this disease could rage like a wildfire in her community. Chaweza sees a future where this girl, hungry for answers, could become a doctor or a researcher in infectious diseases. However, for most young Malawian girls, there's a lack of access to labs, mentors, and opportunities. It's this lack of opportunities that inspires Chaweza to go to work every day and advocate for change, because she imagines the impact it could have.

Chaweza and her colleagues from the NCST Granting Council have titled their project, “In All Fairness: Reducing the Gender Gap in Research Processes and Practices in Malawi.” They are addressing the problem of low participation of women in research because very few women meaningfully participate in the research environment. At present, women account for only 31% of the total number of researchers, and the team would like to increase this to 50% by 2030.

They are focusing on highlighting intersectionality and including training on GEI. They are also training researchers to give them skills to write quality proposals while instilling GEI principles in process and practice.