

Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Policy

1.0. Organisation

The African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) is a regional non-profit research and policy Institute established in 2010 to help bridge the gaps between research, policy, and practice in development efforts in Africa. The Institute seeks to entrench a culture of evidence-informed policymaking in public policymaking by supporting governments to address institutional and systemic barriers to evidence use, growing the community of practice in evidence-informed decision-making, translating practical evidence, and providing technical assistance to promote the uptake of the evidence in decision-making processes. The Institute's priority thematic areas are

- 1) Population Dynamics and the Demographic Dividend
- 2) Health and well-being
- 3) Environment and climate change
- 4) Governance and accountability
- 5) Transformative education and skills development, and
- 6) Gender Equality

Vision

An Africa where evidence is used consistently to transform lives.

Mission

We promote the use of evidence in the design and implementation of development policies and programmes.

We synthesise and translate evidence, analyse data, and strengthen capacity in evidence use for more substantial political commitment to sustainable development, good use of resources, and greater accountability.

AFIDEP Values

Accountability:	We are accountable and transparent in all our dealings
Focus:	We are focused and objective in our work
Integrity:	We do what is right
Diversity:	We value diverse opinions and inclusivity
Excellence:	We continuously strive for excellence
Passion:	We are passionate about our work

For further details about AFIDEP and its work, refer to www.afidep.org.

2.0. Equality and Diversity Policy Statement

AFIDEP commits to equality and diversity for all members of our staff, clients, volunteers, subcontractors and vendors irrespective of their race, citizenship/ nationality, colour, ethnic origin, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy and maternity status, political opinion, religion and belief, medical history, cultural background, socio-economic background, spent convictions, trade union activity or membership, work pattern, based on having or not having dependants, or on any other grounds which are irrelevant to decision-making.

As an organisation, AFIDEP values and promotes the inclusion of these differences, which bring different perspectives and approaches to achieving our mission and living our values.

All employees, whether part-time, full time or temporary, will be treated equally and respectfully. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be based on aptitude and ability. All employees will be supported and encouraged to develop their full potential, and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the organisation's efficiency.

All staff must ensure their behaviour and actions are consistent with this policy. We also require that clients, customers, partners and suppliers be aware of and operate within this policy. AFIDEP will review the policy at least every three years to help ensure that the policy reflects good practice and new legal and regulatory developments and changes.

3.0. Key definitions

Protected Characteristics: AFIDEP prohibits discrimination, which includes and is not restricted to race, citizenship/ nationality, colour, ethnic origin, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy and maternity status, political opinion, religious belief, medical history, cultural background, socio-economic background, spent convictions, trade union activity or membership, work pattern, based on having or not having dependants, or on any other grounds which are irrelevant to decision-making.

Equality: It is about treating each person fairly and ensuring everyone has an equal opportunity.

Diversity: It is about celebrating and valuing our differences. It is about valuing different identities, characteristics, experiences, and perspectives individuals possess and bring to the organisation.

Inclusion: Inclusion is about reducing barriers for everyone, particularly under-represented groups. It is about creating an environment where everyone feels valued and can work to their best potential.

Diversity and Inclusion: Diversity and inclusion are concerned with creating an environment supported by practices that benefit the organisation and everyone working in and with it. It takes account of the fact that people, whilst similar in many ways, differ from one another in various ways. Understanding, valuing, and effectively managing these differences can result in greater participation, leading to benefits and success at an individual, team, organisational and broader societal level.

Equity: This is not limited to equal access to opportunities but equal benefits. It requires the removal of systemic barriers and the accommodation of differences so that individuals can benefit equally.

Barriers: Generally, barriers fall into three areas: attitudinal/behavioural, procedural, and physical. Barriers are usually hidden in organisations' rules, procedures, policies and operations that limit the access to goods, services, programs, facilities, and economic, social and cultural participation of people from diverse groups. Barriers prevent underrepresented groups from maximising their contribution to the workplace.

Systemic Discrimination: Patterns of policies, practices, and procedures that are part of the structures of an organisation and which create or perpetuate discrimination. Discrimination may result from not applying general rules to everyone.

Unconscious bias: Unconscious bias are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their conscious awareness. Unconscious bias happens outside of one's control. It occurs automatically and is triggered by a brain making quick judgments.

The Duty to Accommodate: This is an individualised process designed to improve equality and eliminate disadvantages experienced by individuals or groups related to a prohibited ground to the point of undue hardship. Accommodation includes appropriate steps to address the unique needs of individuals and groups protected by the Human Rights Code. Accommodation is determined in consultation with the person requesting the accommodation.

Harassment: This is a course of comment(s) or conduct about a protected characteristic that a reasonable person knows or ought to know would be unwelcome. Harassment may result from one incident or a series of incidents.

Inappropriate conduct or behaviour: Verbal abuse of coworkers or subordinates, aggressive behaviours and violence. They may include harassment (unwelcome behaviour that intimidates, offends or humiliates a person because of a particular personal characteristic such as age, race, gender, disability, religion or sexuality), sexual harassment, including sexual comments and unwanted touching, impairment in the workplace by alcohol or other substances, or workplace violence.

4.0. Guiding principles

Our human capital is the most asset we have. The collective sum of the individual differences, life experiences, and knowledge that our staff invest in their work represents a significant part of our culture, reputation, and the organisation's success.

We celebrate and value diversity among our staff and prohibit discrimination based on, but not limited to, race, citizenship, colour, ethnic origin, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy and maternity status, political opinion, religion and belief, medical history, socio-economic background, spent convictions, trade union activity or membership, work pattern, based on having or not having dependants, or on any other grounds.

We believe equality and diversity are fundamental to making the Institute a vibrant, proud and successful organisation. We want to be a fair employer and seek a creative yet caring environment for our staff to deliver on our mission and realise their career goals.

In keeping with our values of a demonstration of focus, commitment to rigour in our work with colleagues and partners, and friendly and support to each other, AFIDEP will implement the policy by the following principles concerning equality, diversity and inclusivity:

- 4.1 To treat all staff, prospective employees, consultants, partners and service providers, fairly and equally regardless of their to treat all staff, prospective employees, consultants, partners and service providers fairly and equally regardless of their race, citizenship, colour, ethnicity, origin, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy and maternity status, political opinion, religion and belief, medical history, socio-economic background, spent convictions, trade union activity or membership, work pattern, based on having or not having dependants, or on any other grounds.
- 4.2 To value equality and diversity by maintaining a safe work environment and acting against inappropriate workplace behaviour, including discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation.
- 4.3 To promote an organisational culture that values and promotes diversity and embraces differences by developing and offering work arrangements that help to meet the needs of a diverse workforce.
- 4.4 To promote the impartial recruitment of employees and directors from a diverse field of suitably qualified candidates.
- 4.5 To provide learning and development opportunities and nurture all staff's knowledge, skills, talent and experience. Being aware of diverse strategies and opportunities and utilising various tactics to achieve our goals and objectives.
- 4.6 Developing our culture, management systems, processes and procedures to align with our guiding principles and promote diversity.
- 4.7 Develop, implement and measure ongoing strategies, initiatives and programs to promote equality and diversity across the organisation.

5.0. Legal Framework

This policy will be implemented within the framework of relevant international best practice frameworks and national legislation on equality, diversity and non-discrimination, which include:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Discrimination and the Human Rights Act 1998 - British Law Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)
- The African Union Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination 1965
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, G.A. Res. 34/180, 1979
- The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work 1998.
- The Constitution of Kenya, 2010 and the Malawi Constitution 1994 and their subsequent amendments; Kenya Two-Thirds Gender Rule; Malawi Gender Equality Act 2013
- Kenya Employment Act 2007 (Revised 2012)
- Malawi Employment Act 2006
- The USA Equality Act of 1974 and the USA Federal and State laws, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA).

6.0. Scope of Policy

AFIDEP's Equality and diversity initiatives are applicable—but not limited—to our practices and policies on recruitment and selection; compensation and benefits; talent management and professional development and training; promotions; transfers; social and recreational programs; terminations; and the ongoing development of a work environment built on the premise of gender and diversity equity that encourages and enforces:

- a) Respectful communication and cooperation between and among all staff.
- b) Teamwork and employee participation and engagement permit the representation of all groups and staff's perspectives.
- c) Work/life balance through flexible work schedules to accommodate staff's varying needs.
- d) The organisation and staff contributions to those we engage with to promote a greater understanding and respect for diversity.
- e) Staff, management, consultants, and service providers are responsible for understanding and adhering to the terms of this policy.

7.0. Rights and Responsibilities of Staff

- 7.1. All staff of AFIDEP are responsible for treating others with dignity and respect at all times. All staff are expected to exhibit conduct that reflects equality during work, at work functions on or off the work site, and all other Institute-sponsored and participative events.
- 7.2. All staff must attend and complete annual equality and diversity awareness training to enhance their knowledge and fulfil this responsibility.
- 7.3. Staff who exhibit inappropriate conduct or behaviour against others shall be subject to disciplinary action.
- 7.4. Staff who believe they have been subjected to discrimination that conflicts with the Institute's equality and diversity policy and initiatives should seek redress from a supervisor or the Human Resource manager.

8.0. Rights and Responsibilities of AFIDEP

- 8.1. AFIDEP is committed to creating a fair environment where differences are celebrated and valued and where each individual has equal opportunities, and will advance this standard through the following components and specific activities:
- 8.2. Build Leadership and Accountability: Transform organisational culture by incorporating diversity at all levels and develop accountability for diversity initiatives in the senior leadership and governance team.
- 8.3. Create a diverse and inclusive environment and foster a respectful workplace to deliver their roles.
- 8.4. AFIDEP review all relevant policies, procedures and practices through the Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity lens to ensure that our practices promote and sustain workplace equality and diversity.
- 8.5. AFIDEP will review documentation such as job adverts using the Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity lens to ensure no conscious bias.
- 8.6. Enhance Equality and Diversity Initiatives in Talent Management. Develop a workforce profile based on the workforce and identify gaps regularly. Create

and execute equality and diversity strategies in recruitment, advancement, and retention to be more reflective of the workforce profile.

- 8.7. Expand recruitment efforts by advertising job opportunities to diverse professional networks, agencies, and media and establishing relationships with partner agencies to attract appropriate applicants.
“The AFIDEP is an equal opportunity employer committed to equality, diversity and inclusivity.”
- 8.8. Incorporate equality and diversity into the succession planning framework and encourage management to identify and develop a diverse talent pool.
- 8.9. Implement special programs for the training and development of underrepresented groups to eliminate and reduce barriers and improve their ability to obtain leadership roles within the organisation.
- 8.10. Engaging co-workers in equality and diversity conversation and training, fostering and sustaining equality, diversity and inclusivity by implementing diversity training and strategies for employee engagement.
- 8.11. Provide frequent Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity unconscious bias training to build awareness of equality and diversity during the induction of new staff.
- 8.12. Collect and keep data securely to monitor equal opportunities among job applicants, staff, Board members, beneficiaries of our training, and services and consultants.

9.0. Positive Action

The focus of positive action is on redressing systemic, historical or institutional discrimination by encouraging the participation of under-represented or disadvantaged groups or providing development opportunities so that they can compete equally. Positive discrimination (affirmative action) is recruiting, promoting, or generally giving preference to a person because they belong to a specific, and usually underrepresented group.

Positive action aims to promote equality by improving outcomes for groups who are under-represented or disadvantaged. In these instances, it is possible to encourage specific groups to take advantage of employment opportunities or provide training and development. Such measures take into account arranging training courses and development opportunities. As an organisation with a regional and global presence, AFIDEP will be mindful of local legislation and outside the countries where it has offices, sometimes to take positive action where it is legally permissible.

9.1 Recruitment and Selection. AFIDEP seeks to recruit committed and competent individuals to facilitate the creation, translation, and utilisation of research evidence for policy formulation and resource allocation. AFIDEP will also aim to retain such staff and develop their talent and potential.

Equality and diversity are essential to our recruitment and selection policies and processes. We require all those undertaking selection decisions to have appropriate and up-to-date knowledge to support this. Advertisements, whether internal or external (this includes all media – e.g. printed and online - newspapers, networks and AFIDEPs and other specific websites, targeted journals, and job recruiting agencies). Advertisements must not indicate or appear to indicate an intention to unjustifiably discriminate on the grounds we have identified within this policy.

We must not confine our advertising to areas or publications which would unjustifiably exclude or disproportionately reduce the number of applicants of a particular group. All advertisements for AFIDEP jobs or placements should reflect our commitment to equality through the following indicative statements:

9.2 Performance Management. Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Policy applies to performance management, succession planning and development opportunities.

9.3 Work-Life Balance. We are committed to tackling discrimination because of various working arrangements such as flexible working or part-time working and because of carer responsibilities such as adoption. We understand the benefits of helping employees balance their work and personal commitments and are committed to supporting staff to work flexibly wherever this is operationally possible.

9.4 Equality and Pay. We commit to a pay system that is transparent and based on objective criteria. Equal pay, free from gender or other unjustified bias, for the same or broadly similar work (for work that rates as equivalent and for work of equal value), operates within AFIDEP. We remain committed to regular equal pay audits.

9.5 Bullying and Harassment. Bullying and harassment are about misuse of power and shall not be a part of our working culture or practices. Our Equality Policy requires each staff member to guard against all harassment and support a dignifying work environment. Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious and insulting behaviour or an abuse or misuse of power that undermines, humiliates, or injures the recipient.

Harassment, in general, is unwanted conduct affecting someone's dignity. It can be related to age, disability, ethnicity/race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or any personal characteristic of the individual. It may involve persistent incidents or an

isolated one. The crucial aspect is that the actions or comments are deemed demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient and create a hostile environment.

Bullying and harassment can manifest in a variety of ways, including by one member of staff to another of a different or equivalent level or by one group of staff to an individual member of staff or a contractor, supplier or programme participant. If bullying or harassment involves gender, sexual orientation, marital status, civil partnership status, race/ethnicity, religious belief, political belief, age or disability, relevant legislation may apply.

10.0. Primary Grounds for Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity

AFIDEP has a primary but not exclusive focus on six grounds, which are referred to in brief below:

Age We believe it is favourable to have a workforce of employees of different generations and ages and to encourage the contributions of children, young people and adults of various ages across the range of our work. We require staff, partners and suppliers to ensure that there is no unjustified age discrimination in work-related activities and to promote generational and age diversity as appropriate and practicable.

Disability We are committed to addressing discrimination against disabled people and promoting the inclusion of disabled people in public life. We recognise that disabled people, including those with specific learning differences and mental health issues, are disabled not necessarily through their impairments or relative ability but through common social attitudes and physical and attitudinal barriers, which result in marginalisation and lack of access to full human rights. We aspire to address this by consciously identifying and removing such barriers, making reasonable adjustments and promoting the social model of disability.

Gender We are committed to tackling gender discrimination. Our focus is on promoting equality and reducing discrimination against women and girls who frequently experience social and economic disadvantage, negative attitudes, alienation, abuse and violence. We also seek to address the disadvantages experienced by men and seek ways to ensure that they are not disadvantaged by or excluded from our work.

We recognise that people are subjected to discrimination based on their gender reassignment or perceived gender reassignment; consistent with the respect we have for everyone's right to live in their preferred gender identity, we make relevant guidance available to attune people to the challenges faced by transgender and intersex people.

Sexual Orientation. All staff have the right to be themselves at work without having to be fearful about sharing aspects of who they are. Everyone working with or for AFIDEP should feel confident that negative messages or stereotypes based on actual or perceived sexual orientation will not be tolerated.

Race/Ethnicity and Culture We recognise that racial discrimination is a complex phenomenon based on race, nationality, religion, culture, colour and other physical markers linked to ethnic belonging. Our work is enriched by the different ethnic/racial and cultural backgrounds and communities we engage with. We require all staff, partners, and suppliers to ensure that no discrimination on race/ethnicity occurs and to promote positive and equitable relations between different ethnic groups.

Religion and Belief. We value and respect the faiths/beliefs and cultural diversity of staff working in AFIDEP and the communities in which we operate, including those of no religion or belief. We try to ensure that needs and preferences are met. Where existing work requirements may conflict with cultural and religious needs, we carefully consider whether it is reasonably practical to vary or adapt these to enable needs to be met. Requests for annual or unpaid leave to staff participate in public holidays or other Holy Days of Obligation such as Christmas, Easter, Eid, Diwali, or Guru Nanak require constructive consideration.

11.0. Complaints

Where possible, AFIDEP encourages staff to address breaches of this policy informally in the first instance.

Staff who have a complaint should contact the Harassment Contact in the first instance. The Harassment Contact will establish whether or not an informal resolution is possible. All complaints should be handled in confidence.

Any staff member who feels that their treatment is not in keeping with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Policy has a right to register a complaint under the Institute's grievance procedures.

Staff must not be intimidated, discriminated against or treated differently for raising a concern, complaining or assisting in an investigation. If this happens, it could amount to victimisation, which is unlawful within the terms of the relevant legislation and goes against our Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity and Human Resources policy and procedures.

11.1 Speaking Up

The Speaking Up Policy aims to protect AFIDEP by providing a framework that encourages and enables staff to raise concerns about severe malpractice and breaches in diversity. Built into the policy is an assurance that there will be no risk to the person raising such concerns if actions are based on good faith.

12.0. Accountability and Responsibility for the Policy

12.1 The Executive Director has overall accountability for the implementation of this policy. The Human Resources department is responsible for the administration, monitoring and ongoing policy review.

12.2 The Board of Directors are responsible for oversight and ensuring compliance with the policy through regular reports from the management on policy implementation.

12.3 **Compliance**

The Executive Director and Senior Management Team will uphold the principles guiding this policy. The Human resources office will work collaboratively with senior management and department leads to incorporate equality and diversity in all aspects of the organisation. AFIDEP will complete a review of employment composition and practice every three years and report on this. We will also undertake an annual progress report and a three-year review of our obligations.

13.0. **Monitoring, Evaluations and Reporting**

The Human Resources department will monitor, review and annually report to the management on the organisation's progress concerning the Equality and diversity policy. The Executive Director will, in turn, report annually to the Board on the organisation's progress. In addition, we will disclose details of the diversity variables in our annual report, including the proportion of women staff in the organisation, women in senior executive positions and women on our Board.

Monitoring and evaluation help us assess the effectiveness of our Equality Policy and Diversity and Inclusivity strategy, and to this end, we have several mechanisms in place. We undertake extensive monitoring of the equality profile at the institute to help capture data on the equality profile of all staff. We undertake monitoring of risk inequality and evaluate our efforts to mainstream diversity biennially through a Diversity Assessment Framework.

13.1 **Review**

We commit ourselves to formally reviewing the policy at least once every three years and communicating changes organisation-wide. Responsibility lies with the Human Resources Manager and the Sexual Harassment contact persons.

14.0. **Communication**

A copy of the Equality and Diversity Policy shall be accessible to all staff via intranet sites. All staff, including newly appointed ones, must know about it and their individual and broader organisational responsibilities for achieving equality objectives. In addition, the

policy and supporting equality, diversity, and inclusiveness strategy and its principles, in keeping with our mainstreaming endeavours, must be referred to as appropriate. This includes the induction of new staff, relevant training courses, guidance notes, and manuals throughout the procurement process, as well as the induction of consultants, contractors, and the Board of Directors as part of operational work.

Policy Developed: April 2019

Effective Date:

Next Scheduled Review Date:

Related Policies and Procedures: AFIDEP Human Resources Policy and Procedures
Anti Sexual Harassment Policy - 2018 Amendment