

M31 Research Gender Policy

1 Introduction

M31 Research is a regional research, evaluation, and advisory firm operating in Zambia, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, with project presence in other countries in Eastern and Southern Africa. Our mission is to improve the livelihoods of vulnerable populations through data, research, and implementation support.

We recognise that gender inequality is a fundamental barrier to sustainable development. Gender inequality intersects with poverty, geography, disability, and age - often compounding marginalisation. As a firm committed to delivering evidence that shapes inclusive and effective policy and programming, we consider **gender equality a foundational principle across our operations**.

This Gender Policy affirms our commitment to integrating gender equity into our workplace culture, research methodologies, field operations, and partnerships. It also provides a framework for tracking progress toward gender-responsive programming and transformation.

2 Policy Objectives

This policy aims to:

- Institutionalise gender equality in M31 Research's organisational structure and project implementation.
- Provide guidance for integrating gender perspectives in research, evaluations, technical assistance, and capacity-building.
- Promote gender balance and equal opportunity in recruitment, leadership, and professional growth.
- Ensure M31's research outputs contribute to gender-transformative development policies and programmes.
- Prevent gender-based violence, harassment, and discrimination in all spheres of our operations.

3 Scope of Application

This policy is applicable to:

- All full-time and part-time employees of M31 Research.
- Short-term and long-term consultants, enumerators, and field teams.
- Interns, volunteers, board members, and independent contractors.
- All M31 Research country offices and projects.
- All sectors and thematic areas where M31 Research operates.

4 Core Principles

The implementation of this policy is anchored in the following principles:

Principle	Definition
Gender Equality	Equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for all genders in access to resources, participation, and decision-making.
Equity and Fairness	Recognition that different groups require different support and resources to achieve equal outcomes.
Intersectionality	Acknowledgment that gender intersects with other identities (e.g. age, disability, ethnicity, rural/urban location) that influence people’s experiences.
Participation and Voice	Ensuring meaningful participation of women and marginalised groups in all stages of our research and programming.
Accountability	Ensuring institutional responsibility for tracking gender outcomes and maintaining zero tolerance for gender-based misconduct.

5 Commitments and Strategies

5.1 Organisational Commitments

M31 Research will:

- Maintain gender balance across staffing levels, with a **target of at least 50% women** in field and HQ roles.
- Ensure **equity in hiring, pay, promotions, and leadership opportunities**, including transparent career progression pathways.
- Provide **flexible work arrangements** and parental leave policies that accommodate caregiving responsibilities.
- Establish a **safe workplace** free from harassment, including confidential grievance reporting channels.
- Include gender analysis as part of our **internal performance reviews and annual reporting**.

5.2 Gender Integration in Research and Projects

All research, M&E, and technical assistance work by M31 Research will:

- Ensure **sex-disaggregated sampling** and analysis across all studies.
- Apply **gender-sensitive data collection tools** (e.g. separate FGD sessions for men/women, female enumerators for sensitive topics).
- Use **gender indicators and frameworks** such as the Gender Equality Continuum Tool, RE-AIM, and OECD-DAC criteria.
- Provide **gender training to enumerators** to avoid bias, ensure respectful interactions, and promote ethical practices.
- Include **refugees, women with disabilities, adolescent girls**, and other marginalised voices in all assessments.

6 Prevention of Gender-Based Violence and Harassment

M31 Research has **zero tolerance** for any form of Gender-Based Violence and Harassment, including sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse in the workplace and during fieldwork.

We commit to:

- Clear codes of conduct for staff, consultants, and partners.
- Confidential reporting and protection for survivors of harassment or abuse.
- Training on **sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)** for all field teams.
- Immediate disciplinary action, including termination and legal recourse where applicable.

7 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

M31 Research will track progress through:

- A Gender Integration Scorecard across project cycles.
- Regular staff surveys and field assessments to assess gender-responsiveness.
- Inclusion of gender outcomes in project M&E frameworks.
- Learning briefs and internal reviews to reflect on what works.

8 Resources and Capacity

We will allocate specific resources to:

- Hiring gender experts where required.
- Training internal teams and field teams.
- Developing gender-sensitive tools, guides, and indicators.
- Participating in national gender platforms and global networks.