



Gender Transformation for Africa: A Sexual, Reproductive and Maternal Health Research Collaborative

Transformation du genre pour l'Afrique: Une recherche concertée sur la santé sexuelle, reproductive et maternelle

Summary notes

12 July Webinar



Webinar Objectives: The webinar seeks to facilitate networking and relationships across the cohort; support learning, sharing, dialogue and reflection on gender transformative approaches.

Welcome and introduction

Participants kicked off the webinar with informal conversation about their favoured feminist African singers and leaders, whose work epitomize challenges to gender norms and equal right.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. African feminist singers and leaders 2. Miriam Makeba, South Africa 3. Cesaria Evora, Cape Verde 4. Angelique Kidjo, Benin 5. Asnakech Worku, Ethiopia 6. Yvonne Chaka Chaka, South Africa 7. Brenda Fassie, South Africa 8. Akosua Agyepong, Ghana 9. Oumou Sangare, Mali 10. Maame Afon Yelbert-Obeng, Ghana 11. Chimamanda Adichie, Nigeria
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There were a few suggestions about compiling and sharing a playlist for the cohort, or sharing similar existing compilations such as the Putamayo's Women of Africa CD.

The informal interaction continued in small groups focusing, among other things, impressions about aforementioned list of feminist singers/leaders.

Lightening presentations by all projects

Kefi facilitated the brief presentations from five projects, reflecting on an example of a gender transformative experience from the projects, with the purpose to get to know projects further and opportunity for each team to engage, and map range of responses, which would serve as input for subsequent discussions.

The following are the five shared presentations:

1. Aminatou Issaka : MAZAN DAGA et les Soins adaptés pour une meilleure Santé Maternelle au Niger
2. Nkoli Ezumah: Improving youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health and Rights (SRHR) services through gender transformative and intersectional approaches in Ebonyi state Nigeria.
3. Beatrice Maina: Action to empower adolescent mothers in Burkina Faso and Malawi to improve their sexual and reproductive health
4. Paapa Asante: Gender transformative and responsive health systems to address unmet adolescent mental, sexual, and reproductive health needs in Ghana, Niger and Burkina Faso
5. Colleen Wagner: Learning Partnership for Gender Transformation in South Africa

Participants shared quick reflections on the presentations:

- Projects contrast in terms of design RCTs and participatory approaches, focussed on empowering teenage mothers, multiple components.
- Many projects focus on service delivery directly addressing barriers

Participants were encouraged to continue the conversation in subsequent small group discussions.

Presentation on gender transformative approaches: technical summary

Sundari Ravindran:

Sundari presented a technical summary of core ideas on gender transformative approaches with purpose to initiate further discussion. The presentation was complemented by an extended slide deck with further reference about transformative approaches and how to carry out programming in gender transformative way.

[Watch Sundari's technical presentation](#)

Participants appreciated the input, especially the combined presentation of conceptual descriptions and relevant practical examples.

Panel presentation of gender transformative approaches in 2 example projects

Following input from Sundari, Asha introduced the next session, panel presentation and discussion of gender transformative approaches led by presentations of two example projects from Nigeria, and Ghana and Gambia.

Project 1: Improving – youth friendly sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services through gender transformative and intersectional approaches In Ebonyi State Nigeria

Speaker: Nkoli Ezumah Health Policy Research Group (HPRG) University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus

Project 2: Shifting gender norms for improved maternal and adolescent health in the Gambia and Ghana

Speaker: Fatou Ceesay

The panel presentations provided further chance to learn about the two projects, and particular activities, thoughts and approaches to gender transformative approaches.

Discussion

Tanya thanked the panel speakers for sharing insightful reflections in the spirit of cohort learning, and led participants into the next session of discussing and unpacking inputs thus far in four small groups.

Plenary feedback

After the small group discussions, the four groups shared with the collective a few key points of reflection about key takeaways from the foregoing presentations, how they resonate with their own projects, and further questions and suggestions.

Group 1 – Kéfilath Bello

- The two projects have different entry points, but they are similar in terms of objective and approach, as they seek to tackle root causes, engage with key stakeholders, and respond to the needs of both men and women, boys and girls.
- The projects also reflect the non-linear process of such programming, also articulated in Sundari's presentation.

Group 2: Natasha Darko

- Both presentations had an intentional focus on male engagement: including men involvement in pregnancy and childbirth, training to service providers, which all challenge traditional gender norms and stereotypes.
- The group highlighted the role of grassroots stakeholder involvement to sustain projects beyond funding cycles, for example, engaging community and traditional leaders and health providers
- Further, the group discussed stakeholder engagement in terms of how to sustain projects financially in the face of donor fatigue, and possibility of replacing larger sources of funding with funding sources locally.

Group 3: Asha George

- The group appreciated the distinction between gender specific or gender accommodating approaches versus gender transformative approaches, which was found helpful in the context of institutions like Youth Harvest Foundation that do a lot of community work to change gender norms.
- The group further discussed the Gambia case, wherein engaging men is a key goal/strategy to prevent exclusion of women from accessing care, and the importance of accommodating and making space for men from the start.

Group 4: Sharon

- The group discussed commonalities and contrasts across projects, which affords rich opportunity for learnings.
- The group noted the development of guidelines for training health workers worthy of sharing with others to foster learning across projects.
- Another practice the group appreciated was the use of reflective meetings, which resonates with other practices in the group like keeping diaries, which have been instrumental in navigating experience during pandemic. And the group noted the complex and intractable nature of transformation.

Tanya Jacobs thanked groups for the rich interactions, and urged all to continue the conversation, learning and exchange.

Closing comments: Kefi, Marie-Gloriose Ingabire, Asha

- Kefi thanked participants for their active engagement, and expressed appreciation to the Steering Committee members for providing input and ongoing support, which had been instrumental in the design of the webinar.
- Marie-Gloriose Ingabire highlighted opportunities for closer strategic collaboration especially across projects in the same country or region.
- Asha noted that several lessons were learned from the first webinar on how to create space for sharing, which will be carried forward in planning and implementing the next engagements, and urged participant to send their input.

Action points:

- More discussion and more music!
- Further engagement on strategic connection within countries and at regional level
- All the resources to be made available on the shared Google Drive.
- If you are having difficulty to access the drive, let us know.
- Participants to share suggestions on the next point of connection