



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

Webinar Report

GT4Africa Closing Webinar

Thursday, August 21 2025, 14h00-16h00

Welcome and Introduction

The webinar marked the fifteenth convening of the cohort, including the inception and cohort-wide meetings. Wolde welcomed participants and noted that the collaboration has reached the end of its initial phase, while emphasising that this does not signal an end to the relationships or joint work established. The session is meant to provide an opportunity to take stock of collective achievements, celebrate key milestones, and reflect on future possibilities.

Objectives

The closing webinar aims

- to provide an opportunity to take stock of and celebrate the collaboration,
- to explore what it takes to sustain the gains made in terms of promising gender transformative approaches, processes and practices across different African contexts.
- to review discussions on possibilities and strategies of sustaining the collaboration beyond the project, based on input from the endline survey and networking database

Programme

Item	Facilitator / Presenter
Welcome and introduction and music	Wolde
Cohort overview: A visual presentation of the Cohort's work	Kefi
Let's hear it from the PIs -What remains to be catalysed to advance evidence for GTA in the African context? Every PI (2 points)	SC member
Brief overview of endline survey, networking database, and platform	Wolde/ Asha
Group discussion What resonated from the panel and endline survey results? What lessons can be learned from supporting future cohorts or networks on gender-transformative approaches in Africa?	SC member/ Tanya
Closing	Tanya

Cohort overview: A visual presentation of the Cohort's work

Kefi thanked all participants for their engagement throughout the webinar series and used this session to reflect on progress over recent years. She gave an overview of the cohort's journey and various milestones.

- Cohort launched with multiple projects and partners across East and West Africa, including Burkina Faso, Niger, Ghana, Nigeria, and Southern Africa, focused on advancing gender transformation in Africa.
- Implemented learning, capacity-building, knowledge generation and sharing, and collective engagement activities.
- Established a governance structure comprising a multi-partner steering committee, supported by a secretariat at the University of the Western Cape, guided by principles of collaboration, dialogue, diversity, and inclusion.
- Conducted needs assessments, participant surveys, and strategic activity planning.
- Achieved tangible outputs, including a series of webinars, co-produced concepts and team-based work, peer-reviewed publications, and tools to support collective learning.
- Convened in-person meetings, consultations supported by CRD and other funders, and scientific workshops with mentoring and coaching, contributing to a journal supplement and additional outputs.

- Produced multiple scientific publications, reports, blogs, and webinar compilations to disseminate findings and advance gender transformation across Africa.
- After three years, established an African community of practice on gender transformation, developed media products, strengthened mentoring and peer learning, and advanced funding, research platforms, and a context-responsive research agenda for Africa.

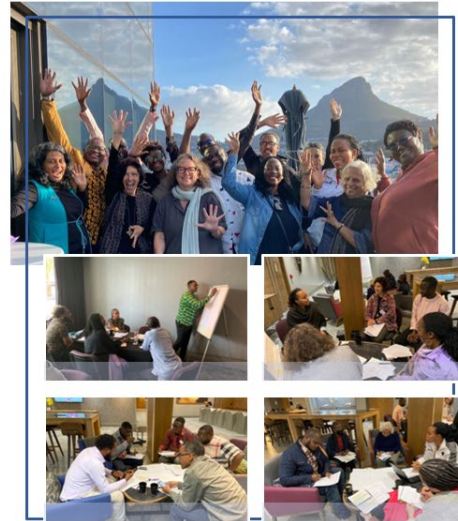
In-person workshops

Feminist Fiesta Consultation co-funded by SARCHI Chair invited cohort members & external stakeholders: 100% response rate



We remember our colleague activist, **Nkokheli Mankayi**, who died later that year, an inspiration of building linkages across social movements. 📌

Writing Workshop: Peer mentoring, time to write collectively, time to reflect collectively: 100% response rate



In its final phase, the cohort hosted a webinar to explore gender-transformative knowledge translation for SRMH, highlighting the complexities of power dynamics, vulnerabilities, and potential backlash in GTA interventions, and to launch the journal supplement.

Webinar series



Let's hear it from the PIs

The principal investigators and representatives of the six GT4Africa cohort projects reflected on progress to date and what remains to be catalysed to strengthen evidence on gender-transformative approaches in African contexts.

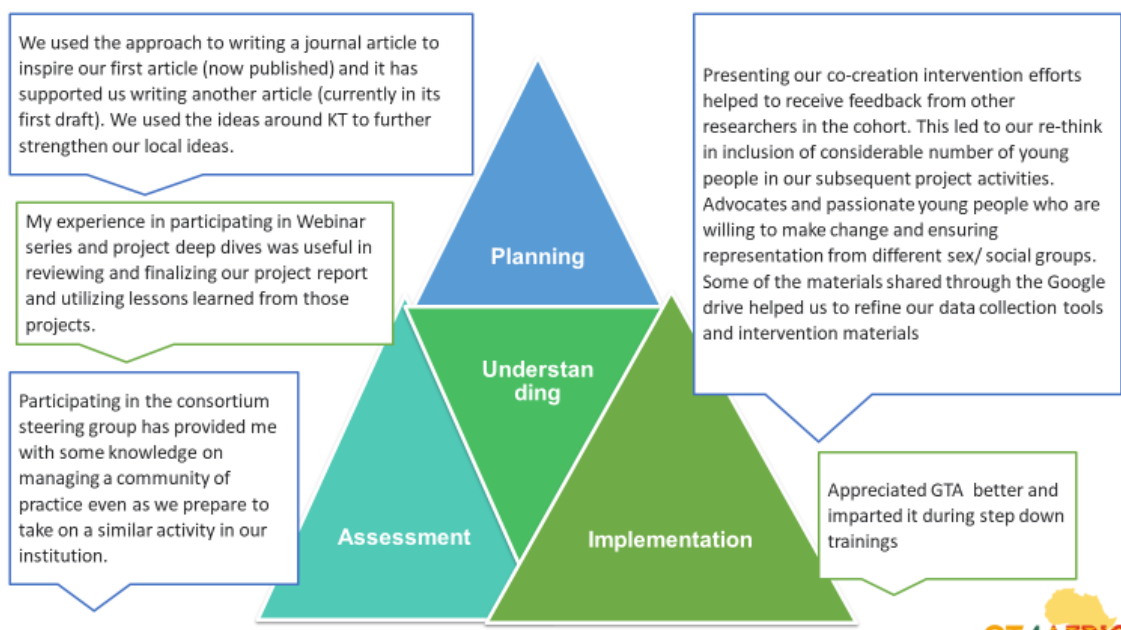
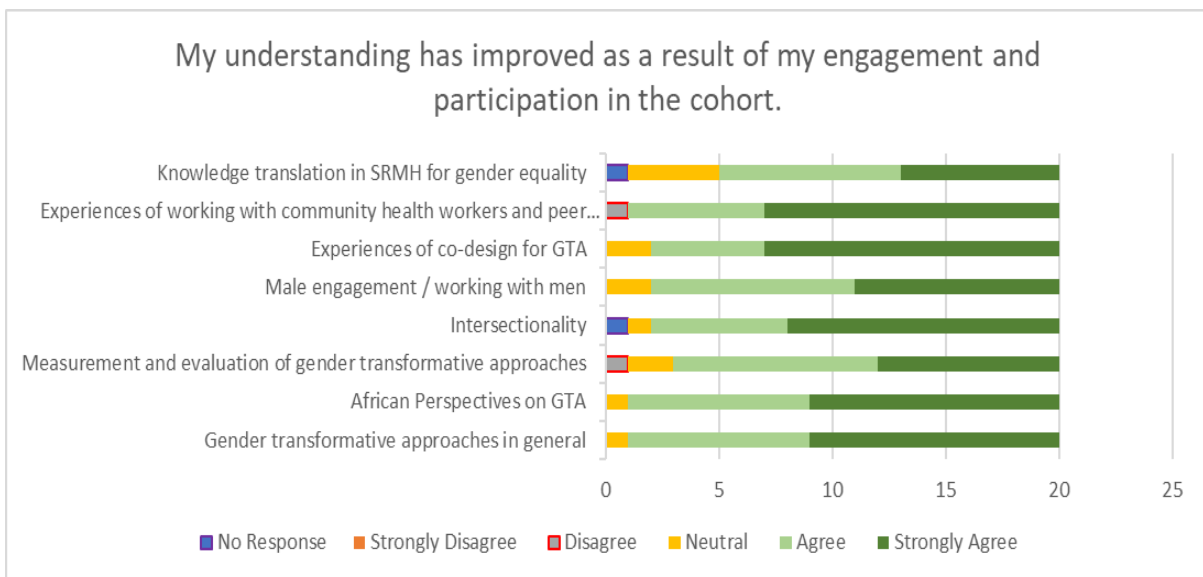
- Irene emphasised the importance of integrating adolescents' voices and lived experiences, highlighting the use of theatre for development to surface issues such as bullying and its impact on mental health and self-esteem.
- Matt noted the substantial body of research generated and stressed the need to promote evidence uptake by governments, citing collaboration with The Gambia's Ministry of Health to integrate GTA into maternal and child health programmes.
- Anthony described ongoing work on impact-focused publications and dissemination through webinars and engagement with health ministries in Burkina Faso and Malawi, alongside efforts to support community-based organisations in using the developed curriculum for youth and adolescent programming.
- Nikki shared lessons from integrating GTA into the national My Journey programme, noting challenges to continuity arising from shifts in funding and context, and underscoring the need for sustainability strategies.
- Ifunanya outlined policy dialogues in Niger and progress in embedding GTA within healthcare provider training, working with state and federal ministries to institutionalise the GTA manual.
- Mohammed/Aminatou noted that significant progress has been made under the GT4Africa initiative at the country level. Planned workshops will provide opportunities to share findings and lessons learned. Research outputs will be disseminated to governments, partners, communities, and relevant regional and district health authorities involved in implementation.
- Asha highlighted a cross-cutting lesson regarding the necessity of contextual adaptation and deep community engagement, ensuring GTA reflects local realities, adolescents' experiences, and health system dynamics.
- Nkoli reinforced the importance of continuity and collaboration across the cohort to sustain change and advance collective learning.

Brief overview of endline survey, networking database, and platform

Wolde presented endline survey findings covering governance and leadership, participation and inclusiveness, and the collaboration's outcomes and impact.

- Highlights included the webinar series and in-person meetings, which enabled rich exchange, peer connection, deeper understanding of core concepts, and improved writing skills.
- Low lights include scheduling conflicts, limited access to in-person meetings, insufficient time for in-depth project sharing, and overly content-dense webinars.
- Despite the challenges, most respondents reported positive impacts on their understanding and application in their research and programme work.

- Key reported lessons for future collaborations included the need for a dedicated coordinating team, inclusive steering structures, sustained capacity strengthening, a central knowledge repository, and clearly defined values and principles.
- Wolde also emphasised the importance of relationship-building, including engagement with activists, strengthening research capacity, and ensuring research is grounded in local contexts as critical lessons for future gender-transformative networks.
- Wolde noted that the GT4Africa Academic Research and Program Network currently has 43 members, with priority areas for action learning including male engagement, operationalising gender-transformative interventions, knowledge translation, and co-production.



Group discussion

Facilitated by Gabriel, participants reflected on what resonated from the panel and endline survey results, and what lessons can be learned from supporting future cohorts or networks on gender-transformative approaches in Africa.

Mentimeter Feedback

a/ What resonated from the panel and endline survey results?

- Participants highlighted the following key points:
- Strong goodwill across the cohort, alongside the significant coordination effort required to support collective learning.
- The value of cross-project learning and effective process management.
- Recognition of the high potential of gender-transformative programming and the importance of sustained investment in the cohort to advance GTA in Africa.
- The central importance of context-specific approaches in gender-transformative work.
- The need for long-term funding commitments (at least 5–6 years) to enable meaningful impact.
- Despite competing demands on members' time, a committed core group remained engaged, with learning extending beyond those able to attend all webinars.
- Strong alignment between panel reflections and endline survey results, which were seen as accurately reflecting participants' experiences.
- The importance of partnerships with policymakers to support evidence uptake and use.
- Broad support for continuing collaboration, given the cohort's strong working relationships and shared purpose.

b/ What lessons are there in supporting future cohorts or networks on gender-transformative approaches in Africa?

- Participants identified several lessons for future initiatives:
- The clear value of working as a cohort, particularly for peer learning, shared reflection, and collective problem-solving.
- The importance of combining technical inputs and mentorship with opportunities to build relationships beyond formal webinars.
- Face-to-face meetings were especially valuable for in-depth discussion, trust-building, and informal learning.
- Regular, engaging, and well-facilitated webinars helped sustain momentum and participation.
- Sharing materials, experiences, and practical tools strengthened collective learning.
- Well-designed writing workshops, supported by advance planning, were effective in increasing publications by African scholars, including the delivery of a journal supplement.

- Inclusion and shared leadership in webinars and discussions fostered ownership and equity.
- Context remains a critical factor in research and programming, requiring locally grounded and adaptable approaches.
- Strong facilitation is essential to guide discussions and maintain engagement.
- Building relationships with a wide range of actors, including activists and policymakers, enhances relevance and impact.
- Continued investment in research capacity strengthening is necessary to support GTA evidence generation, use, and uptake.

Closing remarks

- Tanya reflected that over the past three years, African scholars and activists have learned, collaborated, and celebrated together, building a strong foundation for future work. She reminded participants that while this initial phase of GT4Africa concludes on a high note, with numerous milestones achieved, it is not the end of the collaboration.
- Chaitali, speaking on behalf of IDRC and her colleagues who were involved in supporting the GT4Africa collaborative, expressed gratitude to all contributors and noted that the cohort successfully operationalised gender-transformative approaches across diverse African contexts. She highlighted the cohort's co-creation, capacity strengthening, and collaborative practices as exemplary, emphasising that while the webinar marked the close of one phase, it did not signal the end of the journey.
- Finally, the cohort ended with a virtual group photo and celebratory music and dance.