



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 4!

African Perspectives on GTA: Sharing preliminary findings from 19 interviews across the continent

3 August 2023

Webinaire 4!

Perspectives africaines sur l'approche sexo-transformatrice : Partage des résultats préliminaires de 19 entretiens à travers le continent

3 août 2023

The Gender Transformation for Africa (GT4Africa) cohort brings together seven implementation research projects (2022–2025) across Ghana, Niger, Nigeria, The Gambia, Burkina Faso, Malawi, and South Africa. Supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the cohort addresses critical gaps in gender-transformative approaches to sexual, reproductive, and maternal health (SRMH).

As part of this effort, the cohort has hosted a series of interactive webinars to strengthen capacity and foster collaboration. These sessions facilitate cross-project learning and knowledge exchange. The slides are from one of these events.



GRADE Africa



NACOSA



African Population and Health Research Center



HOPE AFRICA



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Outline

- Background
- Methods
- Profile of participants
- Terms
- Definitions
- Steps and Strategies
- Assessment/ measurement
- Achievements and challenges
- Principles
- Questions for Group Discussion

Plan

- Contexte
- Méthodes
- Profil des participants
- Termes
- Définitions
- Étapes et stratégies
- Évaluation/ mesure
- Résultats et défis
- Principes
- Questions pour la discussion en groupe

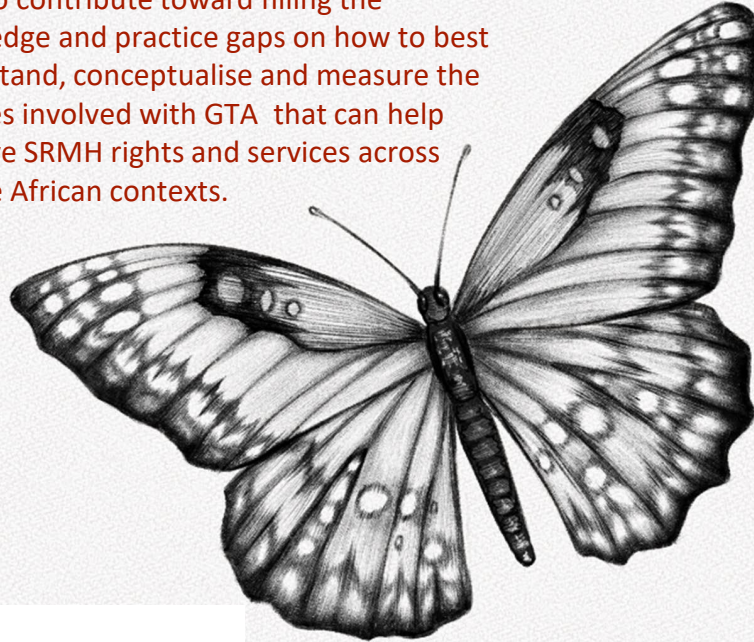
Background

Lack of a shared understanding of goals, principles and processes to assess and measure progress made in promoting SRHR through the implementation of gender transformative policies and programs.

Conceptual frameworks or theories of change have been simplistic, often not taking account the backlash that can happen when power relations are contested.

Lack of rigorous research and learning about implications that match calls for gender transformation. Much of the work in Africa on transforming gender norms and power relations does not get published or put out in the public domain.

Aim: To contribute toward filling the knowledge and practice gaps on how to best understand, conceptualise and measure the changes involved with GTA that can help improve SRMH rights and services across diverse African contexts.



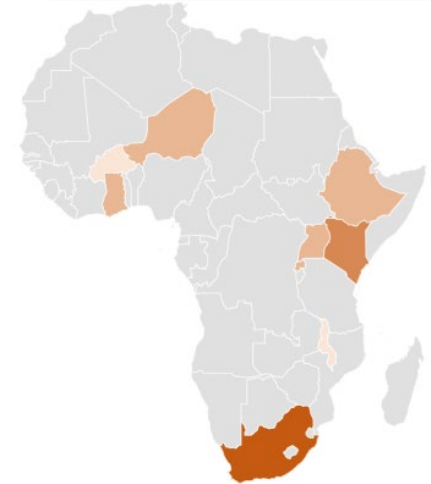
Most efforts have been through small scale efforts led by NGOs without substantial leveraging of government partnerships to ensure impact at scale.

Absence of strong link between Schools of Public Health and health NGOs to those affiliated with Women's Studies and women's rights NGOs.

Insufficient support for research uptake and policy translation across Africa on gender transformative approaches for SRHR.

Methods

- Research design
 - Exploratory focus and need for flexibility in understanding the landscape and nuances regarding the range of perspectives
- Data collection
 - Qualitative with key informant interviews
 - Purposive sampling (19 participants from 9 countries- practitioners, researchers, donors, activists)
 - Criteria: experience implementing gender-responsive or gender-transformative interventions at the field level, focusing on sexual and reproductive health interventions
 - 16 Jan - 16 May 2023
- Data Analysis
 - Thematic
- Rigor and trustworthiness
 - reflective notes, debriefing, and consultations



Profile of participants

Disciplinary background



Area of work

SRHR	Protection and promotion of rights	Institutional capacity building
<p>comprehensive sexuality education, menstrual hygiene, abortion rights, accessing contraceptive services, family planning, maternal health, access to sexual and reproductive health, HIV (prevention, treatment and care), child marriage, teenage pregnancy</p>	<p>empowering women and girls, young women and girls advocacy, equitable access and participation, peer education, girl education, mental health, gender based violence, intimate partner violence, livelihood strengthening, empowering pregnant and parent girls, and engaging men and boys.</p>	<p>gender mainstreaming , gender audit, disability mainstreaming, empowering young researchers, grant application, litigation</p>

Terms

inclusion
agency rights voice equity
empowerment
security diversity
Gender equality
gender equity
Gender transformative
intersectionality
power justice
feminism

Key reflexions

- Empowerment VS Power
 - Empowerment coming strongly, but mainly related to actions at individual level
 - What about tackling power issues?
- Variability in the terminologies
 - Historical evolution, contextual adaptation
 - But... influence from donors and other powerful institutions?

Definitions: Gender Responsive

Only 10/19 responded
1/10 talked about
Power inequalities

Development of
leadership and voice;
empowerment; feminist
action

Aware of and works around differences
and limitations imposed on women and
men by gender norms and roles when
designing programmes and policies, and
when conducting research.

Beyond girls and women,
boys and men:
responsive to the needs of
diverse SOGI; persons of
diverse abilities, age.

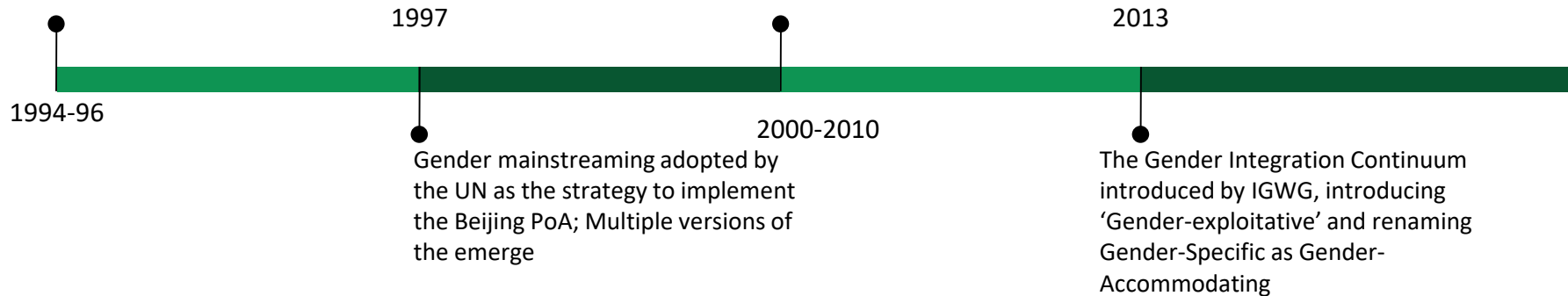
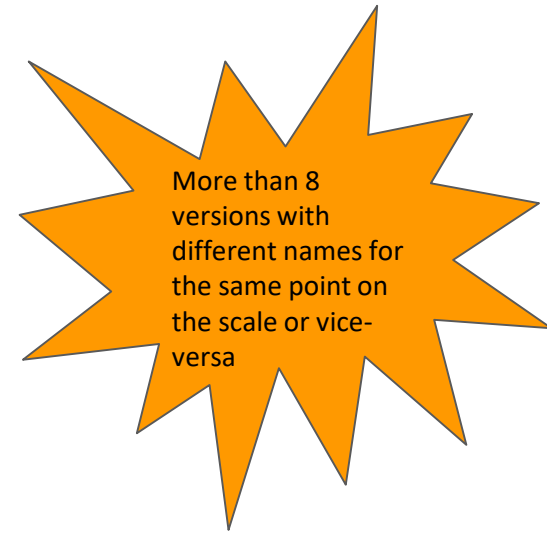
Definitions: Gender Transformative

- Addressing and transforming the sources of gender power inequalities at multiple levels
- Changing patriarchal mindsets
- Creating an enabling environment for equal gender roles and responsibilities (e.g., through technological advancement)
- Empowerment
- Inclusivity (SOGI, PwD)

Definitions: Evolution over time

THE FIRST GENDER SCALE OR CONTINUUM: Naila Kabeer's work. Gender Blind versus Gender Aware; 3 stages of Gender Awareness: sensitive; specific and transformative:

WHO's Gender Responsiveness Assessment Scale (GRAS) is based on Naila Kabeer's work, but introduces 'Gender-responsive' to refer to both Gender-Specific and Gender-Transformative

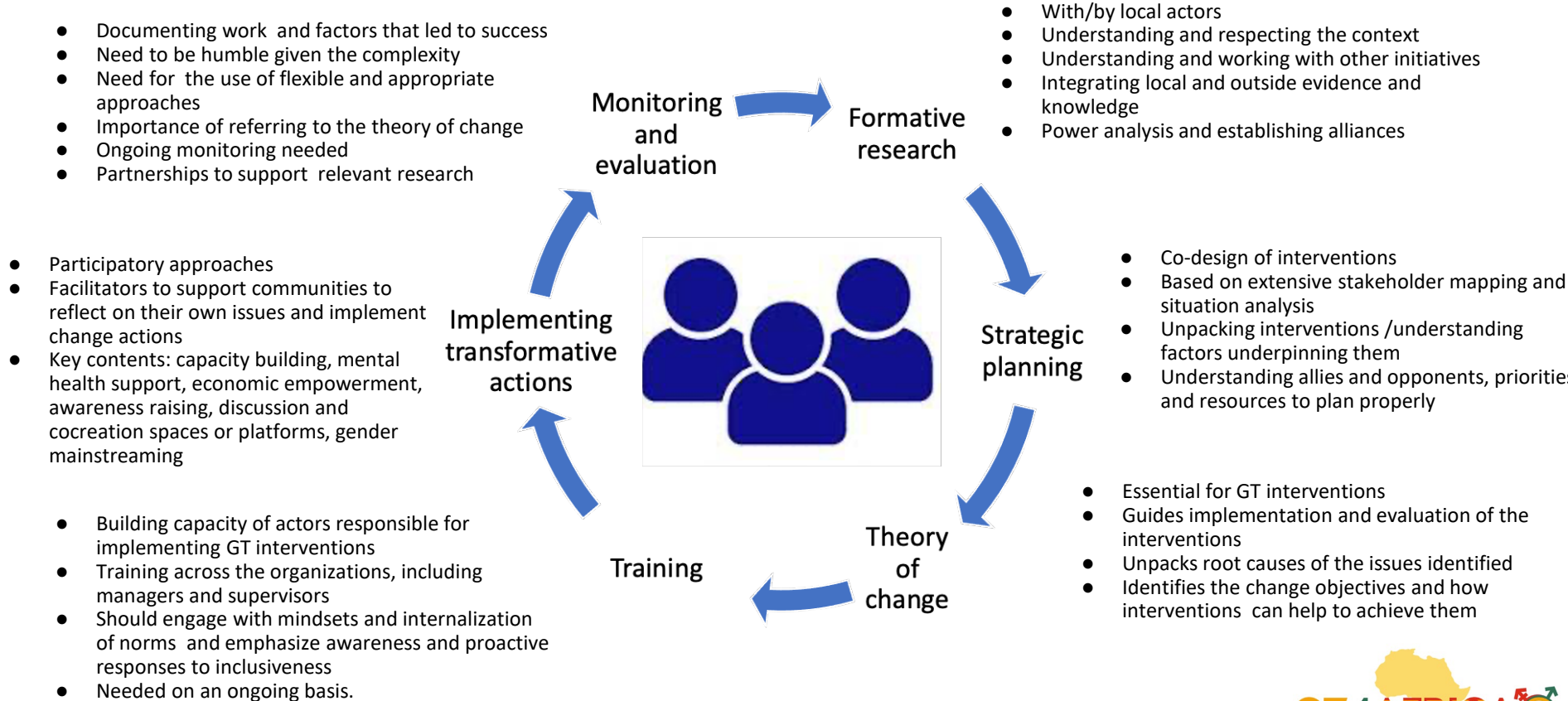


Definitions: Provocation (Quote)

Even if we are talking about gender transformation, what is that power that you want to transform? If one gender has that power, are you saying they should cede the power? Just shed it away? What exactly are we saying? (what we need to do is) really think about a 'mindset' changing: understanding it, debating it, and asking where people ought to go, so that you can see that things are changing. This remains very difficult.

I'll start by saying that the (goal post) will always be moving, as the world changes.....You want to be in a situation where everybody is allowed to be human. Where everybody is allowed to be who they are, what they were meant to be. All people benefit from what the world offers. They are not marginalised on account of anything. They are recognised. There is no one who is hidden under the table because they don't deserve. Everyone deserves everyone has rights, and they can claim those rights. And even then I don't know if that's where we want to be, if that is enough, because they need so much. How does that happen when the resources are not there? We want all those resources, but we are depleting them every day. So where we want to be, can we be there without bringing in what I said at the beginning, bringing in others who we don't see as human; connecting with nature, and connecting with so many things.(R20).

Steps for gender transformative interventions



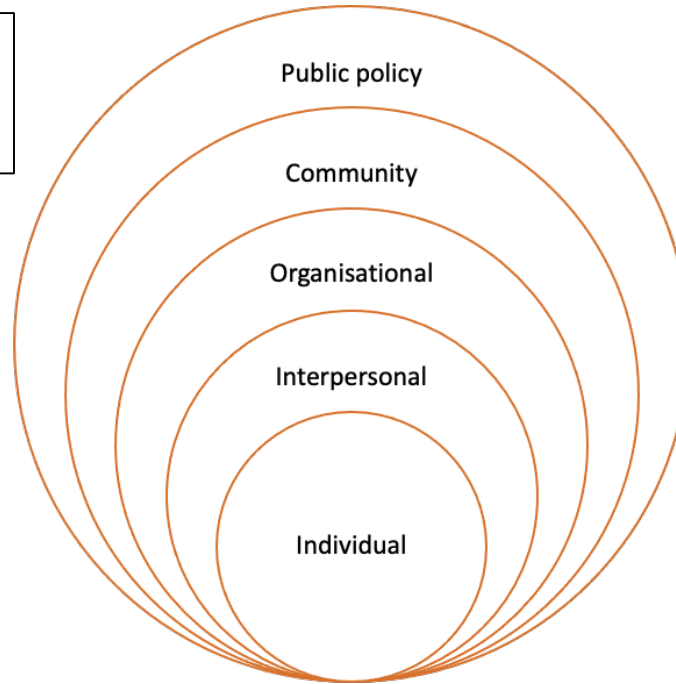
Strategies

Public policy

- Gender mainstreaming in key interventions, strategies and policies

Community level engagement

- Key stakeholders (leaders, parents, media, health workers)
- Male engagement
- Broader population
- Working with community based organizations and other NGOs



Organizational level

- Internal capacity building/ attitude changing

Interpersonal level

- Building a common platform to express voice and nurture leadership (Peer groups)
- Deliberative dialogue/debates

Individual level (empowerment)

- Capacity building
- Consciousness raising
- Engaging with mindsets and internalized norms (e.g. positive masculinities)
- Economic empowerment
- Providing spaces for voicing and learning
- Mental health support

Assessment/ Measurement: What and Who decides

What to assess

Difficult to know WHAT to assess because GT is context-specific

Assess health-outcomes as well as gender outcomes

Assess change in attitudes as well as in behaviours.

Need to assess not only individual-level change but multiple levels

Who decides?

- Programme planners/implementers
- Developed in consultation with intervention-participants and/or community advisory groups
- Allow for flexibility; the 'WHAT' may emerge during the course of the intervention

Assessment/Measurement: How and When

How to assess

RCTs as the gold standard

Using qualitative as well as quantitative approaches

Participatory methods

People's stories: Outcomes harvesting, photo voices

When to assess

One-time measurement not useful

Baseline, midline and endline standard practice; but may miss out on important developments at other times.

Ongoing assessment with stakeholders; especially participants in the intervention.

Several years after the end of the intervention to assess if the change has been sustained

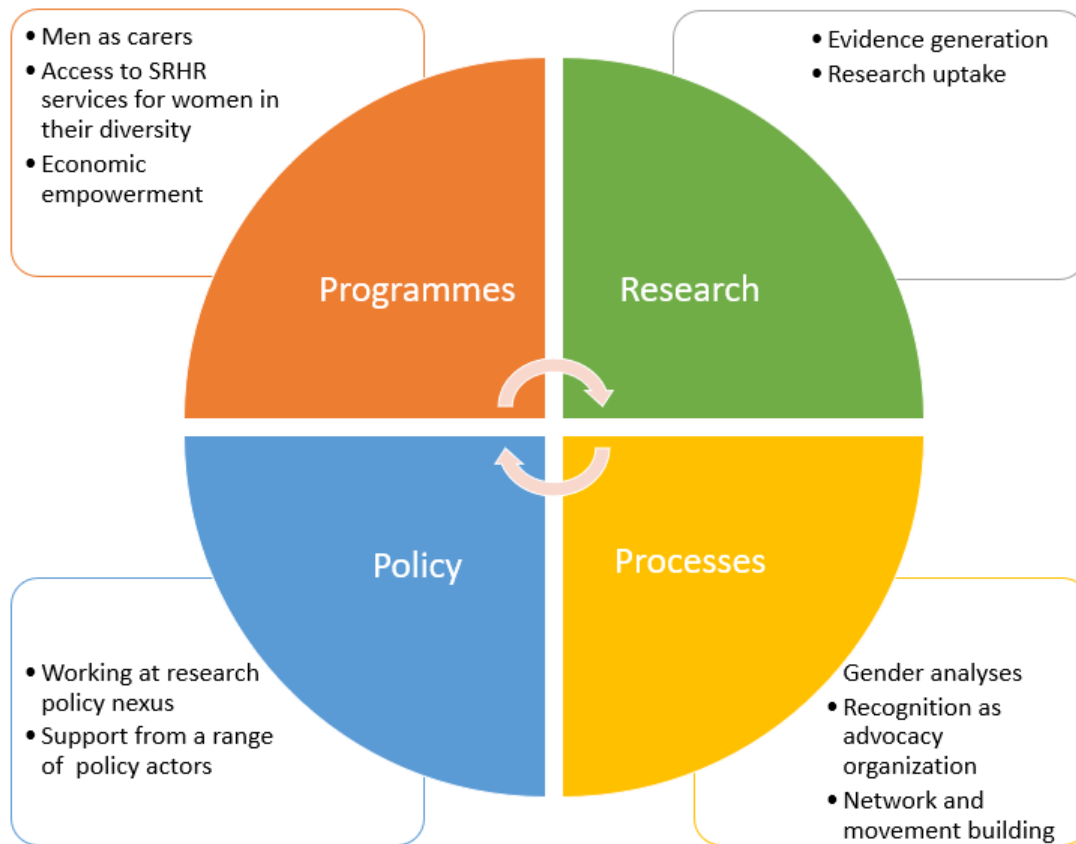
Assessment/Measurement: Provocation

Donors, not implementers often set the terms of the assessment, and can contribute to siloed assessments that does not allow for holistic assessments:

“We have different tools and different frameworks that are project-based. These are dependent on the project monitoring and evaluation framework that is agreed upon between (the organisation) and the specific donor. If it is economic empowerment, then this project is assessing the baseline, the end-line of the economic part, according to the set of indicators that we have agreed with the donors.

This is a challenge because we may not have a comprehensive assessment that provides the overall picture of the changes in the lives of girls and women with a disability that we are working with. It is just project-based. (R28).

Achievements



Challenges

- Patriarchal Contexts

“There are a couple of challenges and I guess the primary challenge is implementing these programs within very patriarchal contexts. That's the challenge that one just has to roll up their sleeves and be prepared to confront and sometimes the system is, so you know, reticent to change. Sometimes it just takes a whole lot of time which is challenging as well, because you don't always have the time, you don't you're not always fortunate to have an 8 year run or 5 year run, you know.” (R11)

- Harassment, backlash and anti-gender movements
- Lack of commitment from and co-ordination with stakeholders

Challenges

- Time and process to do the work of transforming power relations and developing shared understandings
- Change take time and is not linear and makes for complex measurement
- Donors and financial resources

“The other challenge that we are still facing is that we are not attending to the basic needs of the girls and women with disabilities that we are working with. You are calling girls and women with disabilities to come together, but you are not supporting them to participate better. When it comes to assistive devices, prostheses, and wheelchairs, those are the needs that you cannot afford. Yet they are basic to empower women and girls with disabilities to participate actively.”

(R28)



Own's attitude

Flexibility and use of an iterative approach
Humility, reflexivity and interrogating power



Ways of working

Unpacking/ demystifying/ deconstructing/
debate
Deliberative dialogues to influence values/
attitudes/ participatory approaches
Giving people foundational skills, empowering
them (Freirean approach)



Sustainability and coordination

Seeking solidarity and synergies with others
Networking
Navigating ecosystems of power
Brokering support from donors and
governments

Leaving no one

Engaging stakeholders in appropriate ways
Intersectional approach/ specific needs/
Inclusivity/ Human rights



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Thank you