

Evidence of Impact: Case Study 3

Gender and Health Hub



Challenge

Gender inequity profoundly impacts health outcomes. Integration of gender considerations is hindered by a paucity of practical tools to translate lived experience and evidence into policies and programmes.

Actions

Develop pragmatic and simple tools, based on evidence and lived experience for policymakers and practitioners to mainstream gender considerations into health policy and practice.

Co-produce evidence to inform and support global, regional, and national action on gender and health in substantial, innovative, and practical ways.

Result

Created a Gender and Health Hub, a network of policymakers, researchers and implementors that:

- Generated evidence to guide and inform national, regional and global health actors in their priority-setting, and promotes knowledge-sharing and policy engagement.
- Utilized evidence and experience-informed knowledge to accelerate gender integration and catalyze action in UN institutional, regional, and global policy and practice.

Moving Forward

Expand the network with a focus on engaging diverse stakeholders across the national, regional, and global levels to advance gender equality and provide a platform for critical conversations

Challenge

Gender inequality profoundly impacts health outcomes.¹ In contexts where there are gender policies and programmes in place, they tend to be fragmented and rarely prioritized. Without pragmatic and simple tools, based on practical experience and evidence, policymakers and implementers struggle to embed gender mainstreaming in health policy and practice.

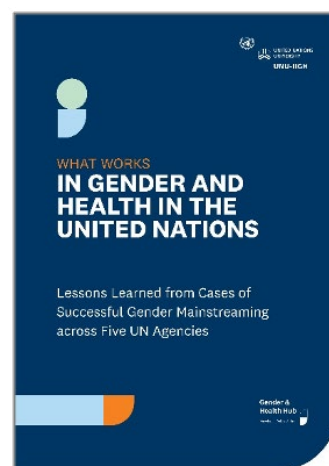
Actions

UNU-IIGH launched the [Gender and Health Hub](#) at the UN Commission on the Status of Women in 2021. The Hub bridges knowledge gaps and fosters thought leadership through mutual capacity strengthening, brokering innovative partnerships, amplifying new voices, and cultivating meaningful alliances and catalytic networks to reduce gender inequities and improve health outcomes. It is network-driven, bringing together experts, practitioners and thought leaders from national, regional and global levels to collaborate, co-produce evidence and guidance, and to chart an actionable research and practice agenda.

Results

Since its launch, the Hub has used multiple platforms, including a website, online discussion boards, regional and global consultations, and a biennial forum to convene, communicate and promote collaboration. Intentionally bringing diverse players to the table, it has united over 6000 people from across the global health ecosystem to form an active gender and health network to identify emerging issues and gaps in the gender and health response and generate evidence to initiate and guide action.

- ✓ The Hub crowd-sourced and co-developed a research agenda on sex and intersectional differences and gender equality priorities for COVID-19, which spans advocacy, programming, and policy actions for funders, civil society, implementers, policymakers and researchers. The process involved over 900 stakeholders, primarily from the Global South, in online discussions, multi-lingual surveys, and virtual regional and global meetings. The integrate these learning in current and future pandemic planning, the process and findings were presented at WHO's Global Research and Innovation Forum 2022 and included in a special British Medical Journal collection of papers, podcasts, and videos on Gender and Pandemic Response.
- ✓ The Hub documented and consolidated lessons on what works to integrate gender effectively in large-scale government health programmes in Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia. Working in partnership with local research institutions including the Public Health Foundation of India and the School of Public Health at the University of Western Cape, the Hub identified [over 50 potential case studies](#) topics in the three regions. Eight of these case studies went on to be published, focusing on 'how' best to integrate gender in scaled health programmes". Policy dialogues took place in five countries to share lessons and promote scale-up, and efforts are underway to share lessons across countries and regions.
- ✓ The Hub partnered with the African Union's Covid-19 Commission Working Group on Gender and Stigmatisation and the School of Public Health at the University of Western Cape in initiating a Community of Practice comprising Africa-based programme implementors, policymakers, researchers, civil society actors, and donors. The Community of Practice facilitates regional collaboration and policy-relevant knowledge production and networking to support African organisations struggling to advance gender equality linking different constituencies, geographies and language groups previously not connected. It convenes monthly for a webinar series prioritising local thought leadership from all sectors on gender and health in Africa.
- ✓ In response to the rapidly evolving digital health space, the Hub convened a monthly Gender and Digital Health Webinar series² bringing together over 2,500 attendees, nearly half of whom are from Global South, to consider the gender dimensions of digital health technologies in low- and middle-income countries. Organised together with the University of Cape Town and BBC Media Action, the series focused on translation of evidence to policy and practice-based learning. The resulting policy brief and discussions have already informed UNDP's [Digital Strategy \(2022-2025\)](#), GAVI [technical brief on gender and digital health information in immunisation programming](#), and WHO Europe's [scoping review on equity within digital health technology](#).



Moving forward

The Hub has established itself as a collaborative, network-driven knowledge creator able to bridge gaps and foster thought leadership through evidence co-production, mutual capacity strengthening, and brokering innovative partnerships and alliances. Moving forward the Hub will continue to expand its network, generating and applying evidence to address gender equality in all its diversity, and to platform and engage stakeholders across the national, regional and global levels, amplifying knowledge and expertise from the Global South.



1. <https://globalhealth5050.org/2021-report>; <https://www.unwomen.org/en/get-involved/beijing-plus-25>

2 <https://iigh.unu.edu/about/unu-iigh/pillar-two/gender-and-digital-health>

Photo credit: UK Department for International Development

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37941/BN/2023/3>