



KIT Royal
Tropical
Institute



Advancing Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment

WE ARE KIT ROYAL TROPICAL INSTITUTE

KIT's Gender Approach

At KIT Royal Tropical Institute, we promote the development and implementation of approaches that lead to gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment. We move beyond conventional approaches to gender and development by focusing on the transformative potential of gender work.

The transformative potential of gender work

KIT's gender work spans a wide range of sectors and themes, addressing gender equality and transformative change in relation to food security, natural resource management, energy, finance, agribusiness value chains, and health. We also have a sound basis of stand-alone women's rights and empowerment initiatives. By emphasising transformative and participatory learning, we invite our partners to critically reflect on their gender work.

Inspired by feminist principles, our work offers a deeper understanding of how gender dynamics affect and are affected by our clients' work and organisations, across sectors and contexts. We do so by analysing gender relations and their intersections with age, sexuality and other social markers of inequality. This analysis provides a solid foundation for developing gender-sensitive and transformative programmes, approaches, interventions and internal organisational processes and structures.

Building foundations and pushing boundaries

We work with a diverse group of partners and clients to close the gap between gender intentions and achieving gender equality and empowerment outcomes. We partner with organisations that have an interest in pushing boundaries to stimulate transformative and systemic change in gender relations. We also work with partners and clients with emerging interest and growing awareness in strengthening how their work can be more gender-responsive. We work with operational staff as well as decision makers and managers - in the field as well as in the boardroom.

Deep gender experience

Our international gender team draws on more than 25 years of experience in gender work in international development, across a broad range of sectors and themes. With more than two dozen gender specialists, we specialise in both

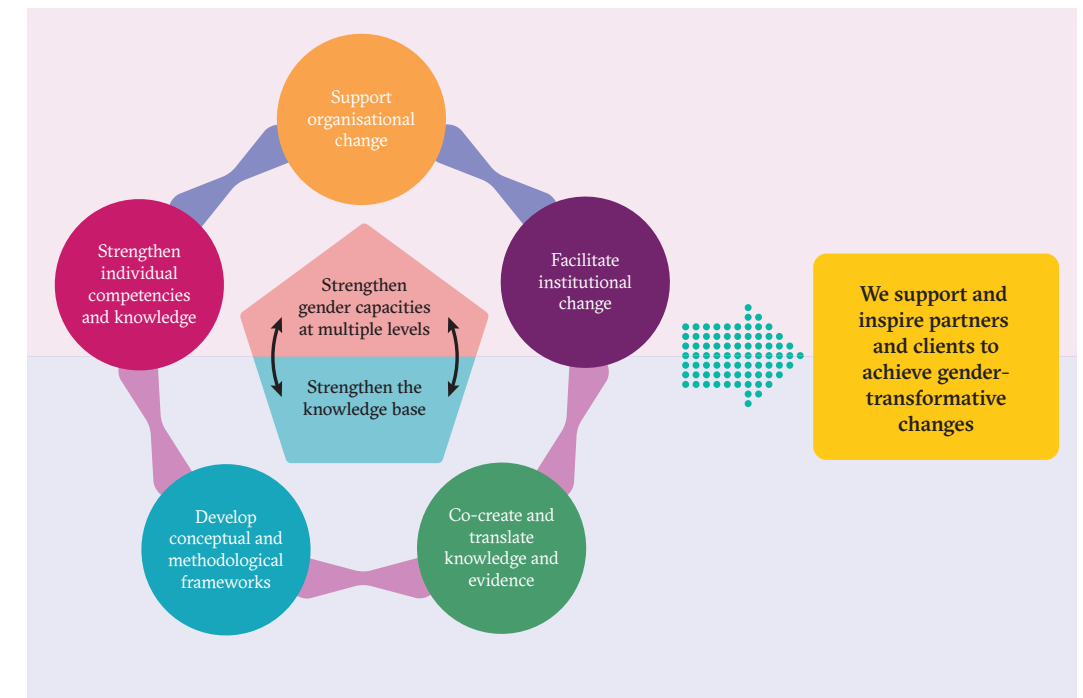
stand-alone women's empowerment and rights initiatives and on the integration of gender equality and empowerment into agriculture, private sector, finance and health programmes.

In addition to our gender and thematic expertise, we bring rich experience in organisational change, capacity development and learning, knowledge management and applied research. In our projects and knowledge work, we collaborate with partners and research associates worldwide. Since 2013, KIT Gender has executed more than 85 projects with a value of over €30 million.

Our Services

Our services are tailor-made to individual organisations and contexts. We start with the questions of our clients and partners and collaborate with them to deepen and expand their gender perspective and engagement. Our services include institutional assessments, advisory services and technical assistance, capacity building and gender training, supporting and facilitating institutional change, applied research and gender knowledge, action learning, and tool development.

How do we contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment?



Women's and Girls' Rights and Empowerment

The empowerment of women and girls and the realisation of their rights calls for transformative change at individual, organisational and institutional levels. KIT has a long-standing track record of collaborating with women and girls to transform power structures that reproduce gender inequality. Power relations manifest themselves in how institutions work, how resources are distributed, and the recognition of women's and girls' rights and interests. We work with civil society and non-governmental organisations to strengthen advocacy and amplify the voices and leadership of women and girls. Together with governmental and donor agencies, we also look at the root causes of inequalities and disempowerment, and on that basis strengthen opportunities to create transformative and sustainable change. We facilitate learning at individual and organisational levels, grounded in participatory capacity and organisational assessments.



Young Women for Awareness, Agency, Advocacy & Accountability

Realising gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment and rights are central to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. But the voices of many young women are silenced, and they are often subject to sexual and gender-based violence.

The Young Women for Awareness, Agency, Advocacy & Accountability (YW4A) programme is designed to strengthen and diversify young women's participation and amplify their voices to effectively influence decision-making towards gender-just laws, policies, norms, and practices related to bodily integrity and equal participation. From 2021-2025, YW4A is strengthening the leadership capacity women's rights organisations, faith-based organisations and young women in Palestine, Egypt, Kenya, and South Sudan. The programme supports shifting power relations within institutions and organisations and the fulfilment of young women's rights to dignity, bodily integrity and equal participation in decision-making.

KIT is one of eight partners in a consortium led by World YWCA. As a technical partner, KIT is drawing on a long-standing track record of collaboration with women, girls, and partners to transform power structures that reproduce gender inequality. Specifically, KIT leads the design and implementation of gender-transformative Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL). This includes: (1) The design of baseline studies, mid-term and end-line outcome monitoring and learning, and

integrating a gender-transformative approach to MEL processes; (2) Organisational and advocacy capacity assessment of women's rights organisations and facilitating collective learning; and (3) Developing and implementing a learning agenda to ensure adaptive programming.

Gender-transformative monitoring and learning mechanisms are co-created with a reference group comprising young women from the women's rights organisations participating in the programme in each country. This reference group defined the changes that the young women want in each country's context, which serves as a benchmark for the programme to support the implementation of monitoring, evaluation and learning.



Professional Development for Gender Trainers

Together with the UN Women Training Centre, KIT offers a comprehensive training programme that supports gender trainers from across the world to reinvigorate their work to advance gender equality and women's empowerment.

Gender training has been a mainstay of gender and development initiatives for nearly three decades. It was originally conceived as a way to challenge the root causes of gender inequality and disempowerment in international development. But as it became more popular in the mainstream, it increasingly became a tool of development rather than a fundamental challenge to it.

The collaboration between KIT and the UN Women Training Centre takes gender training back to its roots by emphasising a feminist analysis of development from the get-go. Rather than operating within the confines of dominant development ideas, participants critically analyse the foundations of gender inequity in development. The programme offers a safe space where common assumptions are challenged, while leaving room for more fluid interpretations of gender that better represent individuals' daily lives and realities.

Gender trainers often develop their training skills on the job, so for many participants, this is their first formal 'professional education' in this field. The six-month programme provides a unique opportunity for participants to sharpen

their gender training skills and knowledge of gender in development concepts. The training boosts participants' overall 'gender fluency', enabling them to speak to and work with gender across a variety of topics and themes in development. It also creates space for them to renew and establish their commitment to gender training as a transformative process towards gender equality.

The curriculum is based on KIT's 25 years of experience in gender training, evaluations, and our publishing and convening efforts on gender training. The content is co-designed with renowned gender experts from both the Global South and North. Participants learn through in-person and virtual sessions that use a combination of lectures, guest presentations and practical activities and assignments.





Gender in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management

KIT's long-standing work in agricultural development focuses on the people involved: men and women farmers, processors, retailers, and extension workers. Gender dynamics are critical to understanding the social cleavages, opportunities and constraints at play within livestock, aquaculture, forestry, water, and nutrition- and climate-smart agriculture. The past 10-15 years has seen long overdue acknowledgement of the importance of gender relations in agricultural development. We have responded and contributed to this shift by working with organisations to explore not only how gender analysis can make initiatives in the sector more effective and impactful, but also how agricultural development and natural resource management can advance gender equality in its own right. We work with partners to explore how to integrate gender analysis and understanding into their work and better align their agricultural, social and gender objectives.

Driving Gender Research in Agriculture with CGIAR

KIT works with agricultural and environmental research institutes within the CGIAR network worldwide to strengthen and advance research on gender equality.

Between 2017 and 2019, KIT coordinated the CGIAR Collaborative Platform for Gender Research, which aimed to increase the profile, robustness, and impact of CGIAR gender research. In 2020 and 2021, KIT continued to support CGIAR gender research through an NL-CGIAR Partnership Senior Expert Program grant.

Under KIT's leadership - and housed within the CGIAR Research Program on Policies, Institutions, and Markets - the Platform articulated a forward-looking, CGIAR-wide gender research agenda. CGIAR is a global partnership comprising 15 international agricultural research institutes. They work to generate new evidence and tools that contribute to a sustainable and food-secure future while driving innovation. The Gender Platform contributed to raising gender research - and the role of gender scientists - to the top of the CGIAR agenda, bringing it the recognition and priority it deserves in agriculture, aquaculture, and natural resource management.

The Platform convened several scientific and international conferences, including the *Seeds of*

Change conference hosted at the University of Canberra in Australia in 2019. These conferences allowed researchers to share and critique each other's work, lead or participate in capacity-building sessions, and build peer relationships.

Annual co-funded grants for studies were a key mechanism to support gender research on specific themes such as gender dynamics in seed systems, the 'feminisation' of agriculture, and gender dynamics in value chains. The grants provided opportunities for gender researchers to make sense of the current body of research to tell a bigger, more coherent and collective story than is possible through separate projects alone. The daring research agenda introduced nine themes of global relevance and is embodied in a forward-looking publication on CGIAR gender and agriculture/natural resource management research: *Advancing gender equality through agricultural and environmental research – past, present and future*.

Integrating Gender into Fisheries and Aquaculture Development

Through a long-standing partnership with WorldFish, KIT is working to better integrate gender into aquaculture and fisheries development programmes.

Women constitute 14 per cent of the people involved in aquaculture and fisheries, generating substantial returns for households and communities. However, due to the focus on the 'act of fishing' for commercial purposes (predominantly carried out by men), and on the owners/decision-makers in fish production, much of women's work goes unrecognised in households, communities, and programmes and policies. This reduces the effectiveness of targeted interventions, perpetuates inequities, and impedes food and nutrition security.

KIT provides gender integration capacity strengthening support to WorldFish, an international not-for-profit research centre which works to improve aquaculture and fisheries to achieve food security and poverty reduction in developing countries. Tailor-made training unpacks the specifics of each project's Theory of Change from a gender perspective and makes key gender concepts relevant and meaningful to participants. By providing practical guidance and ongoing coaching, KIT supports different types of partners to better identify and track the gendered barriers limiting women's access to and control of important

resources, participation in decision-making, and benefits from fish value chains.

KIT also supports WorldFish to consolidate the tools it employs to track women's empowerment. For example, the project-level Women's Empowerment in Fisheries Index (pro-WEFI) inspired by the Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) will allow WorldFish and other partners working in aquaculture and fisheries to measure how their interventions are enhancing gender equality and how this can lead to improved food and nutrition security.

KIT has also developed a conceptual framework for a gender analysis of aquaculture value chains. The framework highlights how gender concerns affect value chain functioning and outcomes, both in the context of the communities and institutional settings, providing key insights into how WorldFish and partners can be more sustainable and gender-responsive.

Gender Finance

Financial inclusion is key in development and to women's economic empowerment. In recent years, KIT has grown to provide industry-leading research and technical support on financial inclusion and gender lens investing. Our approach seeks to transform underlying inequalities that shape whether different groups of people, including women, can use and benefit from financial services and products. To achieve a sustainable impact on people's lives and the financial performance of the service provider, we place equal emphasis on a sound business case and in-depth understanding of women customer segments. Our customer-centric approach allows us to find solutions that address women's needs, preferences and constraints through financial, non-financial and digital services.



Reinforcing Access Bank's "W" Initiative

In 2019, KIT's financial inclusion team joined hands with Palladium to help Access Bank with an ambitious goal: to become the bank of choice for women in Nigeria, Ghana, Rwanda and Zambia.

A primary aim was to furnish the "W" Initiative – the bank's primary vehicle to engage with and serve women – with more insight into the unique dynamics of the women's market.

KIT adopted a dual approach to build the bank's capacity to serve the women's market – one which placed equal emphasis on the demand and supply side of the equation. Through in-depth interviews and research, KIT helped Access Bank to better understand the financial and non-financial needs of these customers, with a particular emphasis on women entrepreneurs, young female professionals, and professionally qualified, affluent women.

This research also provided a comprehensive picture of the relevant non-financial services and digital financial services providers; this assisted in identifying potential strategic partners to help the bank increase its outreach to women. Coupled with the training of frontline staff and broader strategic recommendations, this insight helps Access Bank to hone its business offering based on evidence and build its capacity to respond to the unique dynamics of women's markets.

Moreover, supported by a new framework designed by KIT, the bank will be better equipped to collect and analyse data that generates new insights into the financial performance and impact of the "W" Initiative.



Gender Lens Investing with the Austrian Development Bank

Backed by KIT's experience in gender lens investing, our financial inclusion team supported the Austrian Development Bank (OeEB) to integrate gender into its investment process.

Beginning in 2019, KIT worked with OeEB to forge a 5-year Gender Action Plan, a roadmap of key steps and targets for better integrating gender into the bank's investment processes across different sectors and portfolios. The Action Plan is based on a gender lens investing approach and seeks to integrate gender analysis into OeEB's financial analysis and investment decisions. A number of gender awareness workshops with OeEB staff supported awareness raising and capacity building around the Action Plan.

KIT also developed a comprehensive service line for gender smart finance, which supports OeEB's partners and clients to incorporate a gender lens into their own investment strategies. These services offer participating institutions a range of technical assistance, from research and strategy to training and gender smart financial product and service design. The KIT-OeEB collaboration also produced a gender 'marker' to help OeEB reflect on the ways in which its investments in financial institutions impact women.

Another key component was KIT's research into gendered risks and opportunities within manufacturing, renewable energy and infrastructure projects. This study provided the foundation for OeEB to incorporate a gender lens into its environmental and social due diligence process for investments in these sectors.



Business, Human Rights & Gender

Global and local markets provide opportunities as well as risks to women's and girls' empowerment and rights. KIT is uniquely positioned to apply its long-standing expertise on gender and rights analysis and value chain development to pressing questions around responsible business conduct, human rights and gender equality. Our work focuses on cocoa, coffee, minerals, fish and aquaculture value chains, and looks at women and men as workers, end-users and stakeholders at different levels in supply chains. We work with our clients and partners to better understand the gendered risks along value chains and capitalise on opportunities to generate meaningful human rights and equality outcomes. This means ensuring both men and women equally benefit from their engagement in value chains, and transforming gender relations in markets, institutions, communities and households.



Nespresso Catalysts for Gender Transformative Change

Agronomists' influence on farmers *vis à vis* good agricultural practices is widely recognised. However, their crucial role in facilitating social change in farming communities often goes unnoticed.

This learning programme strengthens the capacity of Nespresso agronomists to analyse, understand, and address gender inequalities in the socio-cultural contexts where they work. It supports agronomists in using a gender lens to understand power relations and to act as catalysts for gender transformative change. Merging Nespresso's vision with KIT's expertise, the co-created, flexible methodology is continuously refined to meet the diverse needs of agronomists in the countries where Nespresso operates.

The programme spans four to six months and is underway in more than eleven countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia. It is implemented by local trainers who translate abstract gender concepts into the lived reality of agronomists and farmers. Across three modules, agronomists develop an awareness of gender inequalities and are sensitized to the critical role of women in coffee production: learning *for* action, learning *in* action and learning *from* action. The programme design is rooted in KIT's extensive experience with learner-centered, adult education methodologies with participants' experience and knowledge as core. New and sometimes complex ideas are introduced and

then applied to agronomists' daily work using real-life examples, practical assignments and on-the-job mentoring. Space is created for critical reflection, including on personal biases.

The training programme has been contextualised and fully implemented in six of the countries where Nespresso operates, both face-to-face and virtually. Together with Nespresso's gender strategy and efforts since 2015, this training programme has significantly contributed to agronomists and country managers showing more openness to and interest in gender equality. Concretely, gender equality is becoming a priority area in yearly plans, new initiatives specifically for women farmers and their husbands are being set up, and farm visits and training invitations are more inclusive.



Advancing Gender Equality & Women's Rights in Mining

Led by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), KIT supported the development of a global multi-stakeholder initiative to support women's rights and gender equality in mining.

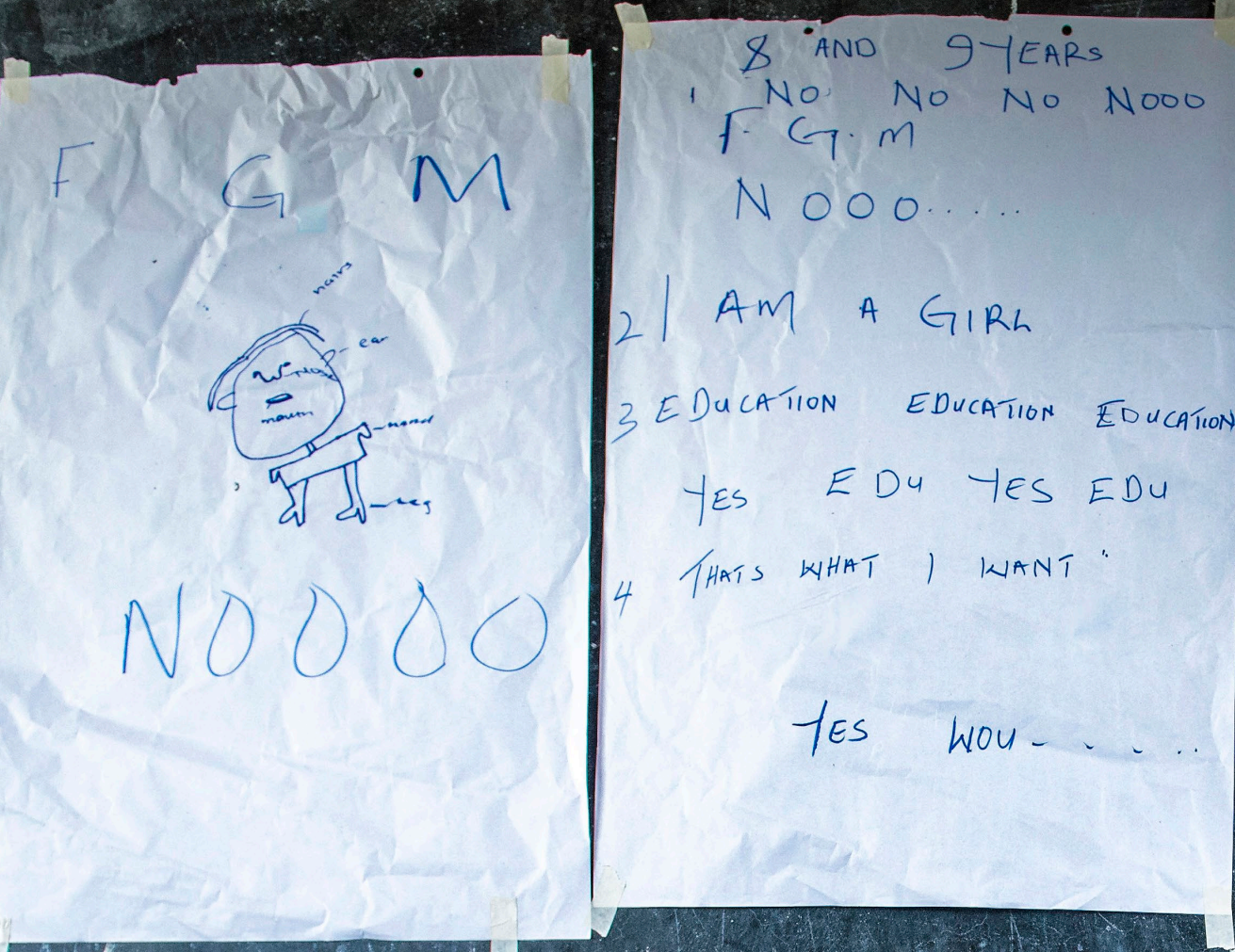
The mining and minerals sector is widely recognised for its potential to catalyse economic growth and spur development. Gender inequalities can be found at all levels of mining, at production sites, in mining-affected communities and households, in local and national economies, and upwards across mineral supply chains, and in governments and companies involved. A growing body of evidence suggests that if gender concerns are not adequately addressed, current mining policy and practice can actually worsen gender inequalities.

Since 2016, the MFA has taken a leading role in international efforts to better understand gender in the minerals sector and address inequality through policy change. Backed by KIT research and subsequent guidance from our gender specialists, the Ministry brought together stakeholders from across the minerals sector. Today, this Ministry-led knowledge platform on Women's Rights and Mining has developed into a collaborative effort of international organisations (Global Affairs Canada, GIZ), Dutch and international civil society organisations and knowledge institutes. It seeks

to secure commitments from key stakeholders to empower women and girls and uphold their rights in the mining sector.

With support from our gender specialists the initiative produces independent reports and fact sheets and hosts learning and sharing events at national and international levels, including the OECD Forum on Responsible Mineral Supply Chains. The initiative also influences the integration of gender into international standards and instruments from leading international and regional policy-setting organisations, such as the OECD and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).





Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

Gender equality is fundamental to health. Social factors, such as the degree to which women are excluded from education, or involvement in public life, not only affect their knowledge about potential health problems and how to prevent and treat them, but also their participation in healthcare systems. The physical, economic, and social conditions in which women live further compound access to care and prevention services. We address gender inequalities in health by promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), reducing teenage pregnancy and child marriage, and improving maternal health.



Harvesting Lessons Learned with ‘Yes I Do’

As knowledge partner for the ‘Yes I Do’ programme, KIT is helping to inform best practices in advancing SRHR.

Child marriage, teenage pregnancy and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) are serious obstacles to the SRHR of girls, limiting their choices and future prospects, and perpetuating cycles of poverty. In turn, poverty, combined with a lack of opportunities, and the prevailing social and cultural norms around gender and youth sexuality are the main drivers of child marriage and teenage pregnancy.

Covering Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, Indonesia and Pakistan, the ‘Yes I Do’ programme led by Plan International, works on enhancing young women's decision-making on whether, when and who to marry, on whether, when and with whom to have children, and on protecting young women from FGM/C. KIT supports the programme by integrating its expertise on gender and social norms change, in mixed-method and operational research.

In our research, we train both female and male research assistants on gender and social norms and how to collect data in a gender-sensitive way. KIT analyses the results of the research to gauge how beliefs, attitudes, and practices around gender have changed, not only among young women and men, but also among the community and its leaders.

The outcomes of these studies—in combination with the monitoring and evaluation component of the programme—inform the alliance members on the lessons learned, what needs be adjusted, and good practices which need to be harvested. Validating the conclusions with young people, parents and leaders is a crucial part of this process, as it increases transparency with the engaged communities.

Through the end line study and evaluation, KIT measures the results and impact of the programme, and this information is used to educate communities about the perspectives of girls and young women, who's voices often go unheard. This process reinforces the engagement of leaders who have the influence and respect needed to spearhead advancements in the SRHR of women and girls.



Share-Net International: Generating and Sharing New Knowledge in SRHR

Share-Net International, the Knowledge Platform on SRHR, strengthens the linkages between research, policy and practice in the field of SRHR.

Share-Net's vision is for people to have a satisfying and safe sex life, the freedom to decide how many children they want and with whom, and access to quality care which meets their SRHR needs.

Share-Net brings together SRHR actors to share existing knowledge, generate new knowledge to address prioritised research gaps and translate knowledge into actionable formats that contribute to better policy and practice.

In the past few years, there has been a dramatic rise in opposition to SRHR. Opponents are increasingly organised, and their anti-SRHR messaging is reaching a much wider audience, including key decision-makers. The Community of Practice (CoP) on SRHR Messaging is working on a tool to enhance and amplify messaging on topics such as LGBTQ+ rights and a women's right to choose, so that they can be heard.

Another key area of focus is the inclusion of infertility on the SRHR agenda through an Infertility CoP. Addressing infertility is about breaking the silence in existing interventions. This can be achieved by including infertility

awareness in comprehensive sexuality education and contraceptive counselling, or educating people about sexually-transmitted infections and their implications for infertility or gender-based violence. The Infertility CoP participated in the recent Share-Net co-creation conference where they worked on nine knowledge products, including a statement on infertility presented at the 2019 International Conference on Population and Development in Nairobi.



→ No one with fertility challenges should walk alone” said Omotade Alalade, speaking about her fertility journey at the Share-Net co-creation conference 2019. Omotade is the founder of BeiBei Haven which supports women and couples in Nigeria dealing with infertility.

The Meanings of Gender

Terms like gender, empowerment or gender equality can mean a million things to a million people. In our work, we pay attention to the meaning of gender and promote sound understandings of gender relations that are grounded in feminist thinking and practice from around the world. In our collaboration with partners and clients, we make gender understandable, meaningful and applicable. In our reports and knowledge products, we strive to clearly articulate key concepts, as illustrated with selected quotes from a number of our key publications below.

“Empowerment of women and girls is the expansion of choice and the strengthening of voice through the transformation of power relations, so women and girls have more control over their lives and futures. Empowerment is transformative when it challenges constraints to agency and tackles systemic constraints to women's and girls' ability to exercise choice and voice.”

“Women and girls are not a homogeneous group, and gender is not the only basis on which their disempowerment occurs and is experienced. Ethnicity, race, class, caste, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and location affect the lives and futures of women and girls. Strengthening women's agency, choice and voice hence requires addressing gender in its intersections with other markers of disadvantage.”

A Conceptual Model of Women's and Girls' Empowerment
(White Paper, for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation)

“Women's and girls' own articulations and experiences of empowerment are part and parcel of the process of empowerment and this also applies to efforts to measure their empowerment. This means that by definition, empowerment cannot be prescribed or imposed in a top down manner by external agents, including development practitioners and donors, as this risks imposing their values of what empowerment 'ought to be' or 'look like'... Measuring empowerment can both reinforce and challenge power relations. Different ways of knowing and different power relations will privilege the perspectives of certain actors at the expenses of others.”

What do Participatory Approaches have to Offer to the Measurement of Empowerment of Women and Girls?
(KIT Working Paper)

“Women's empowerment has specific outcomes but at the same time is a process of change. There is no one-to-one link between one particular gender strategy and one particular gender outcome. Projects that use a variety of different strategies and activities to address multiple, context-specific problems, combined with the investment in sufficient resources and capacities, generally achieve more and higher-level categories of gender outcomes than projects that implemented fewer strategies with fewer resources. Projects that explicitly acknowledge relationships between gender outcomes and explore and take into account the conditions under which women can access and control resources, are more likely to achieve benefits and empower women than projects that implicitly assume that access to resources lead to or guaranteed control.”

Typologies of Change: Gender Integration in Agriculture and Food Security Research
(Report for IDRC)

“When intra-household dynamics are not unpacked, it can reinforce assumptions of how women's empowerment works. This perpetuates dominant interpretations of women's empowerment and existing ideas on what men and women do, need or want without engaging with women's own voices and interpretations of what matters to them.”

Enhancing the Effectiveness of Agriculture-to-Nutrition Pathways
(Paper for Food and Business Knowledge Platform)

“Gender transformative approaches (GTAs) respond to a call for an alternative to the “business as usual” approach to gender integration and how development itself is conceived. This alternative approach is needed to move beyond instrumentalist interventions and to address the underlying causes of gender inequality. Rather than focusing exclusively on the self-improvement of individual women, GTAs also work towards transforming power dynamics and structures that reinforce gender inequity with the wider purpose of promoting gender equality and improving development outcomes.”

Implementing Gender Transformative Approaches in Agriculture
(Discussion Paper for the European Commission)

“For financial inclusion efforts to support entrepreneurs, it is essential to analyse how gender works in the ‘entrepreneurial ecosystem’, and how this ecosystem may systematically reinforce gender inequalities, by constraining the ability of women entrepreneurs to access and benefit from financial offerings. Through a gender lens, the ecosystem encompasses more than access to markets, financial institutions, and enabling regulatory systems; it also includes what goes on in the family, at home, and at the level of cultural and societal norms.”

Beyond Access: Exploring Gender Transformative Approaches to Financial Inclusion
(Paper for IDRC and MasterCard Lab)

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Jeroen van Loon

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