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Transforming gender relations

Insights from IDRC research

Canada



Women are empowered when they have the knowledge, resources, and agency to make decisions and take actions that can improve their lives and their communities.

This publication draws on a paper commissioned by IDRC to examine its experience supporting gender transformative research over the past decade. The original paper was prepared by Sisters Ink, a peer-coaching and consulting group from Canada, Nigeria, Morocco, Zambia, and Nepal. The following IDRC staff members contributed to the publication: Katie Clancy, Cam Do, Martha Melesse, Tavinder Nijhawan, Jemimah Njuki, Marie Renaud, Ruhiya Seward, Chaitali Sinha, Luisa Solano, Shannon Sutton, and Ramata Thioune.

Part of Canada's foreign affairs and development efforts, IDRC invests in knowledge, innovation, and solutions to improve the lives of people in the developing world. Bringing together the right partners around opportunities for impact, IDRC supports leaders for today and tomorrow and helps drive change for those who need it most.

International Development Research Centre
PO Box 8500, Ottawa, ON
Canada K1G 3H9
Tel: (+1) 613-236-6163
idrc.ca | info@idrc.ca

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Why gender-transformative research, and why now?

Equality between women and men has been on the development agenda for decades, but it remains a persistent challenge in much of the world.

Transforming gender relations requires approaches that address and promote equality and equity between women, men, and diverse communities. This also speaks to issues of justice and well-being to ensure that women and girls, and other marginalized populations, have equal access and entitlement to resources, opportunities, bodily integrity, and choice.

Research helps to shape gender narratives. It provides a mirror to societies about what matters, and when research can push for greater freedoms and for lasting changes. Feminist researchers have long emphasized the importance of addressing deeply rooted and structural gendered power relations that perpetuate inequalities and limit agency or the ability to act and choose. Gender-transformative research starts from these premises, and is an approach to research that seeks to understand how existing institutions, gendered power relations, and norms can be transformed. These approaches to research move beyond a focus on women and inclusion to tackle the barriers in gendered relations and power structures in which women are situated.

There has been a growing recognition that structural changes are needed to foster sustained outcomes in redressing gender gaps. The governments of Sweden, Iceland, and Canada have adopted explicit feminist foreign aid policies that incorporate commitments to equitable gender relations, including aspects such as resources and rights, and tackling gender-based violence. The global #MeToo movement has built on decades of activism to bring greater awareness of gender-based violence and harassment into households, offices, churches, boardrooms, schools, and the streets. The women's peace movement in Liberia has catalyzed and sustained the peace process there and is leading to reforms and greater representation, bridging class, ethnicity, and religion.

Important gains have been made in several countries in the last decade in education and maternal health as

well as in ensuring women have legal rights to access employment, own and inherit property, and get married and divorced on the same terms as men. While critical, these changes have not yet resulted in equal outcomes for women globally, or even in the countries where such changes have taken place. A challenging global context — including the rise of extremism, violent conflict, economic instability, volatile food and energy prices, climate change and natural disasters — has intensified vulnerabilities and inequalities. Moreover, there is growing recognition that merely providing access to practical supports, such as services and training, does not bring transformative change because these measures do not necessarily address the underlying norms and structures that perpetuate gender-based inequalities and vulnerabilities.

A gender-transformative approach to research requires an understanding of contexts and the intersections between gender and other social identities, such as race, age, and sexual orientation, and many more aspects that can have an impact on people's choices. It also engages both men and women to drive critical learning and reflection, ensuring there is participation across barriers. From this perspective, we align with the key elements of gender-transformative research articulated by WorldFish and CGIAR, both IDRC grantees:

- understanding people within their contexts, in terms of culture, age, socio-economic identity, and livelihood strategies, and how these elements affect and are affected by gender;
- understanding inequalities between groups, and how they intersect and affect choices and outcomes;
- providing space for women and men to engage in critical learning, reflection, questioning, and action together; and
- engaging with different actors across the socio-economic and political spectrum to change the underlying norms and power relations that create inequalities. (Adapted from Kantor as referenced in Cole et al. (2014). *Gender-transformative approaches to address inequalities in food, nutrition and economic outcomes in aquatic agricultural systems*.)



At IDRC, it is also important that our gender-transformative research addresses structural inequalities, including policies, institutions, and governance mechanisms that perpetuate inequality.

About this paper

This paper describes IDRC's experience supporting gender-transformative research over the last decade and provides lessons for researchers and practitioners. It asks:

- What has been learned from the most promising practices of gender-transformative research at IDRC, particularly in terms of scale and influence, and what are the challenges?
- What are the key lessons to better inform and support gender-transformative research, and what are the related key recommendations?

Sisters Ink, a peer-coaching and consulting group, carried out the analysis, which included a review of a sample of 42 projects selected from a pool of gender-focused projects funded by IDRC in the last 10 years. This included

in-depth interviews with the research leads and IDRC staff. Six research projects from different sectors were further examined and developed into case studies from which insights and lessons on gender-transformative research were drawn.

This publication is an edited version of the original paper by Meryem Alaoui Faris, Adepeju Jaiyueoba, Nanci Lee, Jaya Luintel, and Idah Mukaka of Sisters Ink.

IDRC's gender programming

IDRC has a rich history of research that addresses gender inequalities and research that responds to differences in lived experience between men and women. It has developed innovative tools, frameworks, and accompaniment strategies on gender inequality and mainstreaming gender in research for development. Programs such as Women's Rights and Citizenship from 2006–2010 were at the forefront of rights-based gender research. The program contributed to opening up and consolidating spaces for gender studies in academic

institutions, including fields where gender research did not exist or was not recognized. It also helped to forge links between activists and academics who had not previously worked together. Some of these Women's Rights and Citizenship's approaches still exist and have gained importance, including building the expertise of researchers; addressing gender equality in policy and laws, and changing attitudes and cultural practices; supporting partners in developing networks; and peer learning.

IDRC is strongly committed to strengthening and deepening research on gender inequality, as well as integrating gender across its research programs, and, where relevant, to have a transformative impact. Since 2017, a gender categorization system has been in place for all new research projects. Sisters Ink applied these four categories to the 42-project sample.

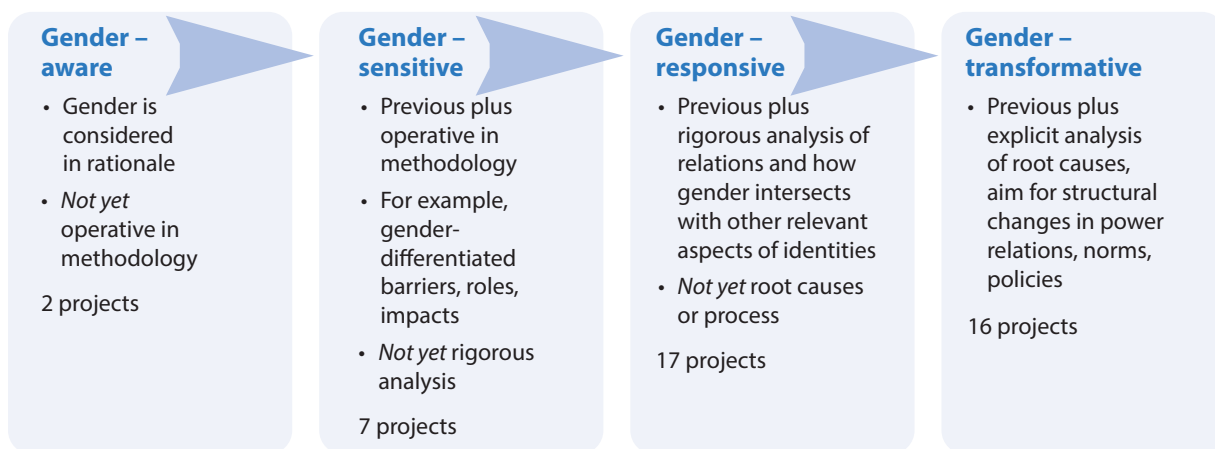
Two of them were gender-aware projects. They included gender in their rationale but the application was limited. They considered gender-differentiated experiences in a limited number of areas, but did not extend the analysis to all relevant areas. For example, they analyzed the economic activity of men and women but not income earned or other benefits. The rationale for gender consideration was stronger than the analysis and implementation, an effect known as gender fade.

Seven gender-sensitive projects included important gender analysis and recognized gender differentiated barriers, attitudes, behaviours, responsibilities, and capacities. Most showed what men and women do — the strategies they adopt and the roles they play, as well as what they are and are not allowed to do — and the barriers and norms they live with. But the analysis did not extend to intersecting identities, and the project did not take action to change inequality.

Seventeen gender-responsive projects considered gender and intersectionality in their rationale, design, and methodology, but had not incorporated the deeper root causes of gender power relations and structural issues such as norms, policies, and laws. Gender-responsive research was, therefore, less contextually applied and adapted, and less able to demonstrate influence than gender-transformative research.

Sixteen gender-transformative projects examined, analyzed, and built an evidence base to inform long-term practical changes in power relations, norms, roles, and inequalities that define the differentiated experiences of men and women. They addressed the root causes and structural barriers that create or perpetuate gender inequalities.

GENDER SCALE RATING FOR 42 GENDER-FOCUSED RESEARCH PROJECTS



Examples from IDRC-supported research

The cases presented here illustrate gender-transformative research in action. They represent a wide range of approaches, from highly localized examples of multi-stakeholder processes, to a digital platform, to building capacity for women to negotiate with local officials or elders. They cover diverse geographic areas. They all include gender-transformative impacts within the time frame of the research itself.

Changing gender and social relations in the fisheries sector in Zambia

In the agri-food system, the focus on gender has largely been on bridging the gender gap in access to technologies, knowledge, and productive resources so that women could increase their agricultural productivity and contribute effectively to household food security. Such instrumentalist approaches to tackling poverty ignore the goal of achieving gender equality as a justified goal on its own. But, as is common in many sectors, the boundaries of what women can do are shaped by deeply engrained social and cultural norms and intra-household dynamics, including the division of labour and decision-making that reinforce women's disadvantage.

In Zambia and Malawi, women participate actively in farming and fishing as important sources of livelihood; however, they are often isolated, performing only processing activities where they use traditional, rudimentary, and labour-intensive technologies, while men do the fishing and selling, earning a greater income. The lack of improved technologies and of access to

finance, combined with women's low mobility, cause up to 38% in losses of captured fish. With few options for women in other nodes of the production chain, they earn less income and lack control over income and decision-making power in the household.

The gender-transformative approach: getting to the roots of the matter

IDRC-supported research examined ways of improving women's livelihoods and empowerment in this sector by exploring the root causes of gender inequality. The key question was how does a gender-accommodative approach — one that works around gender differences to achieve objectives — compare to a gender-transformative approach in terms of influence on women's empowerment outcomes? The research specifically examined shifts in decision-making powers related to the income generated from economic activities and the ownership of key fishing and processing assets, as well as changes in the underlying gender attitudes.

The project was a partnership between the departments of fisheries and universities in the two countries, WorldFish, and the Zambia Centre for Communication Programmes, a social enterprise focused on behaviour change communication. Using a mixed methods approach of surveys, community focus group discussions, and case studies, the research went beyond a narrow focus on technical constraints to uncover underlying gender norm constraints.

WOMEN'S PRACTICAL AND SOCIAL CONSTRAINTS IN FISHERIES

Technical constraint	Social constraint	Shaped by harmful norms and power relations
Use of sub-optimal fishing gear or fish processing methods	Women's exclusion from certain nodes of the value chain	
Lack of cold chain to preserve fresh fish	Women's time and mobility constraints	
Lack of business skills to negotiate higher prices when selling fish	Women's lack of decision-making powers on how to use income generated from value chain activities	
Lack of fisheries extension support	Women's lack of training on best practices and methods	

Community theatre, awareness, and empowerment

In implementing the gender-transformative approach to address some of the harmful social and gender norms, and power relations identified, the project team used results from community discussions to develop scripts and trained community members to perform them as theatre for development. The community theatre focused on several topics, including gender roles, decision-making, control of resources, women's time use, mobility, and gender-based violence. Each theatre performance was followed by a facilitated discussion to spark locally led shifts in gender norms and power relations. Participants in this process included women and men fishers, village committees, traditional leaders, transporters, boat builders, and representatives from village savings and loans, the Department of Fisheries, and the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

This social learning process helped to raise awareness about social constraints and allowed various actors in the value chain to talk about them and generate solutions. The project team measured outcomes related to the following key elements of empowerment:

Choice: Among those who participated in the community theatre, there was a 45% reduction in respondents who agreed with the statement *"women should not be involved in fishing"* compared to a 26% reduction among those who did not take part in this activity. Women involved in the performances increased their participation, by 70%, in the more lucrative activity of fishing.

Agency: Theatre for development also had an impact on women's agency as 30% more women participants increased their contributions to decision-making regarding fish processing and 49% more took part in deciding what to do with the associated income. Women's involvement in decisions about income generated from fish trading increased for those who participated in community theatre, from 65% to 94%.

Ownership of resources: A significant proportion of the men who participated in the theatre, changed their perception of who owns the fishing and processing assets. Men reporting sole ownership went from 50% to 19% in less than a year and a half. Reporting of joint ownership increased from 44% to 76%.

Social structures and attitudes: To measure shifts in structures and attitudes, the project used a gender-attitude scale comprising eight statements reflecting current gender norms and practices: for example, *"women should not get involved in fishing full-time, that is a man's responsibility"*, and *"men should primarily be the ones who control the earnings obtained from the sale of fish."* Overall, the attitudes shifted markedly toward support for gender

equality in those sites that experienced the community theatre. Men's scores for gender-equal attitudes in particular increased significantly.

Lessons learned

Use a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches:

This project used an innovative combination of methods, including participatory action research, participatory theatre, technology testing, and post-harvest loss assessments, at various stages of the fish value chain.

Address the root causes of inequality: The analysis included how attitudes shape women's mobility, time constraints, and other responsibilities that affect their work and gains from that work.

Embed processes leading to change: The research helped to spark dialogue and attitude change with a range of important actors who would not normally speak to one another.

Build systemic partnerships: Although not the type of organization typically funded for such research projects, the Zambia Centre for Communication Programmes, the local partner that helped design the process and the theatre for development, played a key role in its success.

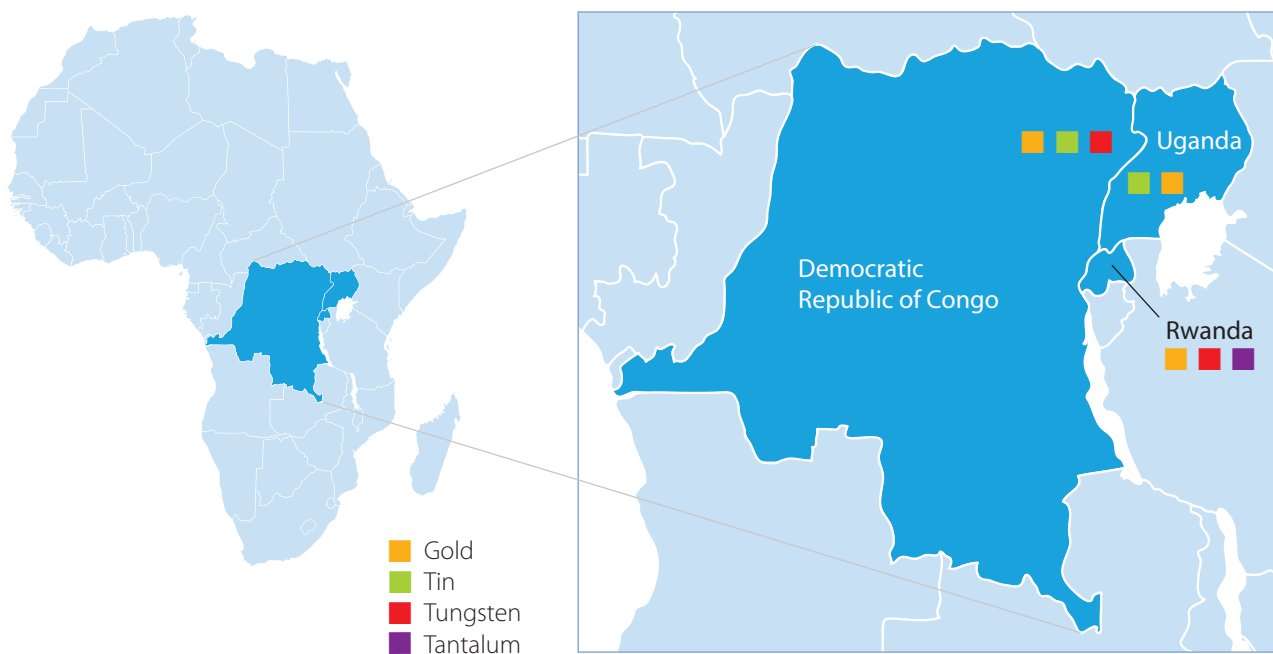
Women in artisanal and small-scale mining: raising women's voices and uncovering adverse norms

Artisanal and small-scale mining supports hundreds of millions of people globally. It grew substantially from an estimated 10 million miners in 1999 to some 20 to 30 million a decade later. Africa houses an estimated one-third of the world's mineral reserves. Millions across the continent earn a living from this form of mining. Although large numbers of women are engaged in this activity, their role is typically assumed to be mainly one of food production and small-scale trading. If women are recognized as doing mining work, they are often dismissed as not 'real miners.' Very little is known about the varied roles they play in the mining process, including as miners.

IDRC-supported research provided an in-depth study of women's economic roles and livelihood practices in the mining of gold, tin, tantalum, and tungsten: four minerals in high demand globally and subject to a range of national and international regulations. The study also examined what holds women back. Carried out in Rwanda, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, this research is timely, as wide-sweeping reforms targeting artisanal and small-scale mining, as well as gender equity, are being implemented in these countries.



SITES OF SMALL-SCALE MINING RESEARCH



Examining gender narratives and power relations at play

Researchers examined the social norms and gender power relations that limit women's economic opportunities in artisanal and small-scale mining and segregate their work to less remunerative tasks. This research revealed culturally rooted forms of discrimination in the mines and identified the ways in which gender norms, attitudes, and institutions shape the kinds of activities that are deemed acceptable for women, as well as their economic impact.

Teams from each country analyzed the social organization of mining, including governance and gender relations within the household, in the mines, and in the communities where the mines operate. The research paid close attention to the authority relations that affect women's and men's forms of agency and that shape their livelihoods. For example, the teams examined relations with government officials, traditional authorities, brokers, soldiers or non-state armed forces, licence holders, mine bosses, subcontractors, and others who can shape the labour dynamics within the mines. They also included gender-based decision-making and power dynamics within the household. This focus was critical. In the absence of a deeper understanding of the various authority relations at play, attempts to promote or empower women in this sector could benefit only a few women, if any. Interviews centred on how gender-based meaning systems, the discourses, terms, and metaphors that structure mining activities, and the roles of women and men in those activities, are understood.

Amplifying women's voices

With a feminist commitment to ensuring that women's voices and experiences are amplified, the research team worked with women miners at each mining site to chart out policy recommendations. Women miners were given an opportunity to articulate their experiences to the very policymakers and civil society organizers who often misunderstand women's economic activities in mining. Giving women a voice helped make their work in this sector visible and raised awareness of how adverse gender norms and ill-informed policies stifle their economic prospects, resulting in negative impacts on families and the economy at large.

Women speak out about discrimination by co-workers

Women miners across the mining sites spoke about gender discrimination intensifying when customary leaders or those with authority realized mining could be a profitable activity, making women potential competitors.

Taboos about women diggers bringing "bad luck", and norms demonizing them as "prostitutes", are rampant. Nakacho, a miner in Uganda, knows this too well. She came to the mine in search of a better livelihood for herself and her children as she found it difficult to make ends meet selling fish. With time and a lot of hard work, she was able to do just that. She recounts the daily struggles encountered from her male counterparts:

"They don't believe we could have earned our money so they ask us where we stole it. They say a lot of bad things about us... It makes me feel sad when I hear it and makes me want to leave the mine."

Stakeholders discussed research results, in each of the three countries, during meetings that brought together national policymakers, community gender focal points (both men and women identified during the research process), government and civil society practitioners, researchers, and women working in the mines. These meetings gave women miners a platform to have their voices heard.

For instance, in the provincial and territorial report-back meetings in Bukavu and Kisangani, Democratic Republic of the Congo, the project brought some women miners to present the findings. They said that the ministerial order preventing pregnant women from working in the artisanal and small-scale mining sites had to be removed as it adversely affected their income-generating possibilities at a time when they particularly needed money to prepare for their new child. Married women in Rwanda are also discouraged from taking mining jobs. Many of the barriers these women identified related to attitudes, but some related to access to finance, decision-making, fair pay, and legal literacy. The research reinforced their words with evidence of the multiple roles women play in mining and the barriers to economic benefits and participation that negative attitudes represent.

Harnessing partnerships for positive change

The project harnessed the strategic partnership involving Carleton University, IMPACT (formerly Partnership Africa Canada), and Uganda's Development Research and Policy Analysis Centre. The partners have strong ties with decision-makers in each country and at the regional level, and they are committed to ensuring sustained awareness and dialogue beyond the IDRC-supported project. The multi-stakeholder nature of the partnership allowed a rigorous approach that engaged policymakers early in the process and throughout it. This led to some real changes in policies. For instance, one of the Rwanda partners became involved in the revision of the government's mining policy, helping to shape a draft policy that had a strong section on gender mainstreaming, as a result of this project. The research team also developed a pilot gender-impact assessment tool for mining policy law and development.

This project helped strengthen women's leadership and voice in the mines and mining sector, increased their capacity to access more lucrative work and more capital, and helped support gender-responsible policies and systems. It also built the capacity of local researchers, particularly women analyzing these issues. Women In/And Mining Organization (WIAMO), a Rwandan organization, became registered following its participation in this project. WIAMO members gained a complex set of research skills, including feminist research, mixed methods, and policy analysis, in a field dominated by men.

Lessons learned

This project illustrates four key lessons for the design of gender-transformative research:

Address structural barriers: Examining the structural gender inequalities that impact access to resources, shape women's opportunities and choices, and dictate what women can and cannot do was crucial to understanding women's role and livelihoods in this sector and to informing effective interventions to address barriers to gender equality.

Engage key stakeholders to effect positive change: The engagement of men and women in each community, the embedded local researchers in each country, and the commitment to bringing the research back to the communities to share results placed gender in policy discussions and debates at local, national, and regional levels. The use of gender focal points was instrumental in giving agency and voice to local women.

Ground research in context: This project demonstrated how contextually grounded research that identifies and engages with different authority relations was instrumental in both raising awareness of women's experiences as miners and providing a space for constructive dialogue based on real-life experiences and evidence.

Analyze how gender intersects with other vulnerabilities: This project provided a clear example of the importance of intersectional analysis to address root causes of gender inequality.

Intercultural health in Peru: choice and voice for Indigenous populations

About one in every four Peruvians is from an Indigenous community. A survey of one of the Indigenous groups in the Amazon region found that half of the population died before the age of 40. To put this in context, this is 20 years earlier than the national average of 64 years of age. Although there is considerable variation within the Indigenous community, a common reality for most includes social exclusion and inequality. Women's health and nutrition are issues that require considerable attention.

Unavailable and hard-to-access health services are the tip of the iceberg. They are the visible symptoms that result from ingrained biases and prejudice within societies and the systems within which they operate. Working toward positively transforming these social norms, including gender norms, through a participatory approach is precisely what a team of interdisciplinary researchers at the *Instituto de Estudios Peruanos* embarked upon.

Health policies and services for and by Indigenous populations

Policies and systems need to acknowledge that health and nutrition are inextricably linked to gender, socio-economic position, culture, and citizenship. When they do not, they have difficulty reaching their objectives and can even cause harm to individuals, families, and communities. One response adopted by the Government of Peru is the integration of Western and Indigenous practices in a holistic way, known as intercultural health.

Intercultural health emphasizes the social determinants of health — the conditions into which an individual is born, lives, and works — and the state's relationships with society to formulate and implement policies and programs. Sustained positive changes using an

intercultural approach must recognize and prioritize concepts, cultures, and practices of the local Indigenous populations. Their voices must be heard, and heeded, to shape their health and nutritional choices.

This IDRC-supported project studied Peruvian examples of intercultural health programs on maternal health, training of nurses, and improving food security and sovereignty. The examples involved Quechua- and Ayamara-speaking communities in Puno and Ayacucho in the high Andes and Awajun and Wampis communities in the Amazon region, representing approximately 12,000 people.

The participatory approach engaged local and national bodies responsible for delivering healthcare and policies. Researchers used a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods. A combination of timely forums brought together local practitioners, community members, and decision-makers, leading to changes in perceptions and policies, and stronger recognition for intercultural training.

Trust and respect

In the Ayacucho region of the Andean Mountains, a food and nutrition program focused on women and children is being implemented by the Centre for Indigenous Cultures of Peru (CHIRAPAQ), an Indigenous non-governmental organization. The program focuses on food security and food sovereignty. Without the latter, communities lose control over food production and consumption, negatively impacting their identity and agency.

Women are primarily responsible for food preparation in these communities. Previous programs to address malnutrition often blamed mothers and publicly shamed their “lack of achievement” as mothers. This led to widespread mistrust and fear of health and other community support workers. Through the CHIRAPAQ program, women such as Raquel Tello, a mother of three children under 12, received guidance on preparing healthy meals using locally available traditional foods.

A program in the Amazon region implemented by AIDESEP, an Indigenous civil society organization focused on training nurse technicians on intercultural practices, found high levels of mistrust among pregnant women seeking care. After nurse technicians were trained on intercultural health, they assured women that they would speak their language; respect their decisions, knowledge, and culture; and support traditional and trusted practices such as vertical birthing and the use of plant-based medicine.

Trained in the AIDESEP program, Gerardo Tukup adapted his health centre’s birthing room to accommodate a traditional vertical delivery position. He also works with traditional midwives and community health promoters ensuring that births are attended by trained health personnel and that an appropriate mix of treatment is provided. Such measures have shown improvements in safe deliveries and reduced complications for mothers and their newborns.

Integrating Indigenous practices

Decision-makers are listening to the evidence emerging from this project.

In the Amazonas region, a policy issued in June 2016 added intercultural training and knowledge of the Indigenous language to the evaluation criteria in the recruitment of healthcare personnel. Also, the Amazonas Regional Education Office agreed to recognize intercultural healthcare as a specialty when issuing certificates. Nery Zapata, a member of AIDESEP’s national leadership board, noted that official recognition makes the program more valuable to the participants and makes the intercultural nurse technicians more valuable to the health system.

Findings from the CHIRAPAQ research were used to develop an intercultural guide for food education, which has obtained the approval of the Peruvian Association of Nutritionists. The guide has been recognized, by officials of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Development, as a valuable educational tool in the fight against anemia and malnutrition in rural areas. The material seeks to de-individualize nutritional problems and avoid reproducing gender and power inequalities through counterproductive value judgements about mothering.

Transformative changes to gender equality toward better health and nutrition are built on increased levels of trust and agency at the local level, and on better informed policies and practices at regional and national levels. These changes were possible because of the strong local leadership, vision, passion, insights, and the sustained follow through demonstrated by the Indigenous peoples where the case studies were documented.



Lessons learned

Four lessons emerged from this gender-transformative research effort.

Strengthen Indigenous organizations: Active measures to support these organizations as leaders can be a crucial factor in gaining the trust of the community and sustaining positive changes. Given the time it takes for gender-transformative change, close collaboration and leadership within and among these organizations are critical to success.

Look beyond symptoms to root causes: Despite looking at different health and nutrition issues, this project demonstrated the value of examining their root causes. Disrespect, mistrust, limited agency, and unequal power dynamics were common factors.

Make knowledge accessible for communities to lead change:

For myriad reasons, it is often the case that knowledge does not produce any tangible difference in the lives of populations. By producing knowledge products in multiple formats intended for diverse audiences, such as videos, case studies, visual manuals, and academic papers, the project strengthened the credibility and reach of its results.

Create interdisciplinary teams for in-depth research:

The team was led by a medical anthropologist and included other anthropologists, nutritionists, educators, physicians, obstetricians, and Indigenous activists. Examining intersectional identities and different social, cultural, and economic drivers of gender inequality requires a nuanced and grounded approach.

Women's rights and access to water and sanitation: improving dialogue between local women and local governments in India

Currently, 55% of the world's population lives in cities and urban areas, and this percentage is expected to rise to 68% by 2050. In India, roughly 34% of the population lives in these areas, and this number is projected to rise to 50% by 2050. Rapid urbanization has compromised existing environmental infrastructures. Additionally, complex land tenure and rental arrangements, particularly in slum areas, prevent municipal utilities from providing much-needed services.

In Delhi, forced resettlement to the periphery of the city has led to the creation of new, overcrowded, and polluted areas that lack basic amenities such as access to clean water, and health facilities. The lack of safe, affordable, and accessible sanitary facilities is the daily reality of poor women in these areas, denying them the right to basic services and a life of dignity, safety, and security.

The development of gender-sensitive sanitary technology and facilities remains a challenge. While there have been many initiatives to create gender-appropriate modifications to existing technology, the larger question is one of accountability, transparency, and equitable governance in the provision of water and sanitation services. Promoting gender analysis in local governance can help address the sanitation gap for poor urban women.

Linking accountability and root causes

Jagori, a feminist women's movement organization in India, led action-research in Bawana and Bhalswa, two communities in the northwest district of Delhi, to engage poor women in improving local services and accountability. The research combined experimental methods to test three accountability mechanisms: the right to information, a gender or women's safety audit, and gender budgeting. The goal was to understand how root causes and gender norms constrain access to water and sanitation. While the research methods, the insights around accountability mechanisms, and the detailed study of the opportunity cost of water could be replicated elsewhere, the process of engagement in this project was strongly embedded with local actors.

Local expertise and local dialogue reveal interlinked root causes

Jagori is experienced in analyzing gender and intersecting identities and the interlinked root causes that exclude women, different castes, and people in informal settlements from basic services. Having such a solid partner with expertise on budget analysis, policy contexts, and advocacy skills was key for the traction gained in this research. Women and Cities International, a project partner, also helped to bring international experience to the application of the tools and analysis.

This research was important because it helped to improve water and sanitation infrastructure through a process of dialogue between women, their communities, and the local governments in Bawana and Bhalswa. The analysis of the interlinked root causes of poor access to water and sanitation showed that these issues are inseparable from land and security of housing tenure, informal settlement rights, and gender-based violence.

Increased capacity in negotiation, research data, and change

The participatory process helped to build the capacity of community members, including women, to dialogue and negotiate with local governments. The work positioned the research team to contribute to the ongoing dialogue around resettlement areas and essential services in Delhi.

The gender budget analysis showed that, in Bhalswa for example, girls were not allowed to collect water because of issues of sexual harassment. The analysis was also able to highlight that even though water and sanitation was a priority, the Delhi budget allocated only 17% of funding to this item.

Beyond issues of sexual harassment, the research also revealed a significant opportunity cost related to this poor service — the wages women were unable to earn because of time spent collecting water or accessing sanitation. The opportunity cost varied depending on the location and type of access. Quantifying the opportunity cost helped to raise awareness about the constraints by valuing this time against the minimum wage standards of unskilled labour, showing the wage losses in a year. The research, supported by specific quantifiable data, highlighted how settlement residents were subsidizing Delhi's lack of investment in proper services.

The research led to some real changes in policies and on the ground. There was a reported reduction in harassment of women on the way to community toilets as well as practical improvements in potable water delivery, latrines, and solid waste collection. In Bawana,

over 300 people in the community signed a petition directed to their Member of the Legislative Assembly regarding maintenance of community toilets. The study also helped to influence a national policy on women's safety and gender-sensitive essential services. In addition, the research team developed practical guidelines for other low-income communities to carry out their own women's safety audits.

Lessons learned

Recognize interlinked issues: The research team found it impossible to work on only issues of water and sanitation. Other rights and issues were found to be equally important for women and their families, including access to food, gender-based violence, and empowering women and youth in the communities.

Show how gender intersects with other identities: In the low-income urban and peri-urban settlements, many factors contributed to vulnerability and could be understood as a complex combination of economic, social, political, and environmental factors that overlap and compound each other. This research helped to show the complexities and intersections involved.

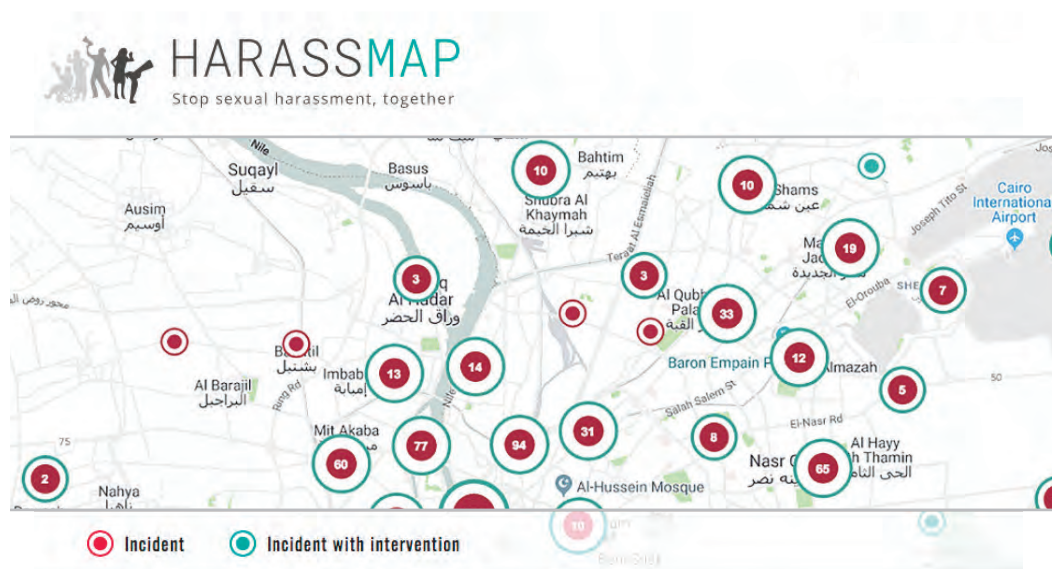
Engage key actors to effect change: Early engagement of key local government actors, in addition to the research's solid and specific evidence, helped to influence services, policies, and, importantly, attitudes and awareness around the many issues that are linked to water and sanitation.

Crowdsourcing to report sexual violence in Egypt

In 2010, pervasive sexual violence, existing cultural norms, and a general tolerance for harassment in Egypt led a network of activists, volunteers, and researchers to start mapping incidents of sexual harassment in Cairo using a technique for data collection known as crowdsourcing. This network became Harassmap, an organization committed to changing the social acceptability of sexual harassment in Egypt by harnessing the power of digital technologies. Harassmap used information available by cell phone and crowdsourcing to better understand which areas of Cairo experienced the most pervasive harassment. With the Harassmap crowdsourcing model, people were able to make anonymous reports using the Harassmap website or via SMS. The data collected included information about the incident, where it occurred, and, when possible, about the perpetrator.

This data was used to create a map of Cairo visualizing the number of incidents. The data was then used to support targeted, community-based outreach that included education, attempts to discuss and change attitudes toward sexual violence, and action research to better understand pathways to change. This case is important because it tackled gender norms, as well as harmful practices and beliefs, in a challenging context.

HARASSMAP





Challenging stereotypes with data

IDRC supported Harassmap's research on the value of crowdsourced data to support social and legal change around the pervasive issue of sexual harassment in Egypt.

Harassmap's research allowed for a better understanding of the prevalence of sexual harassment in Cairo. It enabled researchers to challenge stereotypes that related to sexual harassment and to address it in the Egyptian context. For example, many people shared the misconceptions that sexual harassment happened mostly to young women, that it was most prevalent at night, that it was dependent on the victim's dress, and that it was caused by the socio-political conditions in the country. There were even impressions that perpetrators were largely unmarried young men.

Using findings from the crowdsourced data, and collecting additional quantitative and qualitative data in partnership with local community organizations, the research was able to overturn these misconceptions. It showed that harassment was much more pervasive than anyone knew, and that it existed across religious, socio-economic, and age spectrums. For example, the research team found that women of all ages were harassed and

that incidents occurred most often in the afternoons on the street and in public transportation.

Qualitative findings pointed to the cultural and social norms that helped perpetuate harassment and make it an endemic problem. They also indicated the challenges and barriers that existed in legal reporting structures. For example, people often used words like flirtation to describe "minor" forms of harassment, versus harassment of the more physical kind. It showed there was a wide variety of perceptions about what constituted harassment, why it occurred, and why it was such a challenging issue to understand. The research also investigated the male perspective, indicating that 75% of male respondents reported having perpetrated some kind of sexual harassment. Moreover, interviews and life stories sought to understand the roles of men and women in the community-based outreach activities.

These findings demonstrated that the anonymity offered by the platform was powerful, leading to much higher reporting levels than other measures and incorporating a wider range of gender-based violence incidents. They also exposed the deep structural barriers that existed in legal pathways to report harassment. The evidence was used to

ensure wider awareness and justice. The reporting led to what one interviewee called a quiet sexual revolution in Egypt.

Community response: activism and mobilization

The results of the data and the research were brought, for example, to a popular TV talk show that was broadcast to over 30 million viewers, as well as to a YouTube video viewed by thousands of people. The media campaign acted as an important strategy for influence. The resulting increase in awareness spurred real activism.

Following the reporting, 20 anti-sexual harassment groups and agencies and a number of community-led “safe zones” started appearing, leading to a local movement against gender-based violence. The creation of safe spaces was one of the most successful aspects of this program. There were initial concerns that since the reporting for Harassmap was done online, a large segment of the population who are illiterate and not tech-savvy would be left out. But, through these safe zones, even those without digital tools were able to benefit.

Harassmap’s model was particularly important as both men and women reported cases and some form of follow up occurred with every report. A youth agency contracted as a local partner helped contribute to a high rate of volunteerism and activism, spurring in-community

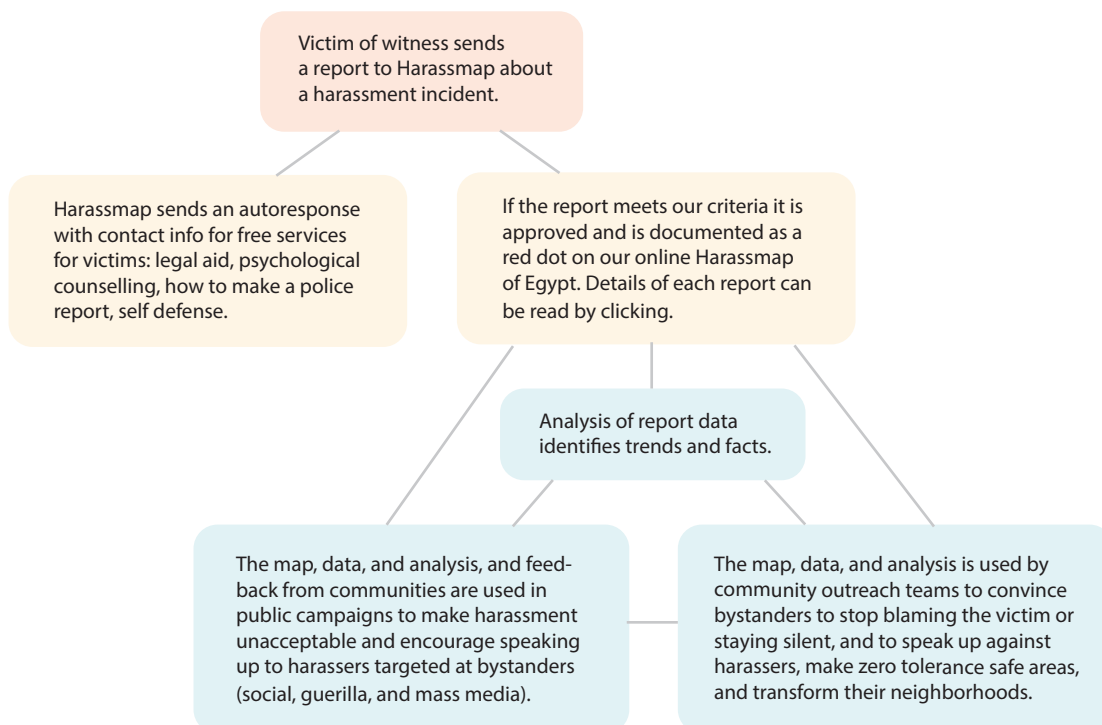
interventions as a result of the data shared. What stood out from this research was the ability of community members to mobilize and ensure the effectiveness of the safe spaces created, such as in Zamalek, an area with high numbers of harassment incidents.

Recognizing the limitation in their laws, community members who were responsible for safe spaces helped identify witnesses to the harassment who could accompany women to file information reports at police stations. Community mobilization also led to government action, resulting in intense and consistent mobilization against harassment. Participation in the promotion of safe places, in the “red spots” of the map, led to the government deploying police vans to the areas.

Men came out in large numbers to volunteer, demonstrating the power of the evidence and the public discourse to change norms and attitudes. There were many accounts of men initiating safe zones within their businesses and helping to bring perpetrators to justice.

As a result of the increase in awareness and working with Harassmap, Cairo University implemented its own sexual harassment policy in 2014. Harassmap has become a leader and an advisor to similar initiatives, and has been replicated in 28 countries. For example, Women Under Siege has been documenting sexualized violence in Syria, while Akshara/HarassMap India is working against sexual harassment in India.

THE HARASSMAP PROCESS



Lessons learned

Let the research point the way to solutions:

Crowdsourced data and research partnerships with local organizations resulted in a better understanding of the prevalence and nature of sexual harassment in the community.

Communicate effectively for action: The media campaign was an important strategy for influence. Effectively communicated research data raised awareness and resulted in community-led mobilization. Public pressure stimulated government authorities to contribute to solutions, such as increasing police presence in high-incidence areas.

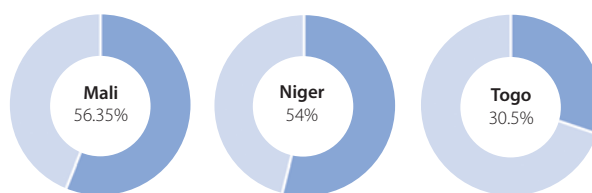
Use evidence and public discourse to change attitudes: Men came out in large numbers to volunteer, showing the power of the evidence and the public discourse to change norms and attitudes. They created safe spaces and arranged accompaniment for victims seeking redress through the police.

Empowering girls to negotiate around early marriage in West Africa

West Africa has some of the highest rates of early child and forced marriage in the world. Of the 10 countries with the highest rates of this phenomenon, six are in West Africa. Marriage before 18 is decried internationally as a violation of the victim's human rights. The practice entrenches gender inequality and constitutes a major form of discrimination against girls and women. It results in a chain of negative consequences for girls who are the main victims of this structural form of violence, affecting their health, economic opportunities, social supports, and well-being. Consequently, it impedes the achievement of national and international goals and aspirations for socio-economic advancement.

Governments in the region have adopted legislation and many global standards to prevent early child and forced marriage. Several have also established a legal minimum age at marriage for women and men and have sought to protect the rights of the child through legislative instruments. However, in most of the countries of this region, the legal age is below 18. Further, despite the existing laws, interventions, and programs developed and implemented by state and non-state actors to prevent or punish early child and forced marriage, the practice is still occurring due to entrenched gender norms.

PREVALENCE OF EARLY MARRIAGE IN WEST AFRICA



Source: WILDAF-IDRC, 2017

Exploring new strategies to challenge early child and forced marriages

IDRC supported Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF) to explore new strategies and approaches to challenge early child and forced marriage in Mali, Togo, and Niger. An African network that facilitates advocacy and high-level dialogue for policy and legal reforms, WILDAF led a multidisciplinary team with specialists in development, health, anthropology, social sciences, demography, education, and legal sciences.

The project design incorporated qualitative and quantitative gender analyses of incidence and research to determine factors and responses to early child and forced marriage. The research teams explored the role of social, traditional, and religious authorities and the conditions required to make them allies and actors in the fight against early marriage. The teams also examined how and to what extent girls' empowerment can contribute to reducing child marriage.

Gender analysis and intersectionality were at the core of the research protocols, with different questionnaires for men and women, boys and girls, and institutional actors. Importantly, key stakeholders and gatekeepers, such as elders, teachers, and religious leaders, were involved in the project as well as pathbreakers such as widows, divorced women, and girls who left their marriage.

Identifying the gender roots of resistance

This project helped to show the overlapping and reinforcing nature of various gender norms and the informal and formal systems that perpetuate early and forced marriages. The research showed that decisions around marriage, which are justified by religious reasons and rooted cultural beliefs and practices, are mainly made by the men in the family or their representatives, such as the father's sisters and/or brothers. Gender norms dictate what is, and what is not, allowed for girls and boys with respect to marriage and gender-based violence. In part, early child and forced marriage is a response to socio-cultural and religious norms that do not permit premarital sex.



The research revealed the economic importance of marriage in the context of multiple layers of vulnerabilities in West Africa. It is a good example of intersectionality because poor families often use marriage as an economic transaction between families. Any interventions to prevent early or forced marriage require an understanding of how economic considerations drive the practice.

The research was also able to show the negative impacts on education as well as health, such as childbearing at too young an age and its impacts on both maternal and child health. In addition, the research showed the lack of legal protection or support for girls involved in early or forced marriages.

Empowerment for both girls and boys

The research used a participatory action approach to empower girls and boys through youth groups. They were trained in communication, awareness raising around their rights, and negotiation with elders in their communities. Through the skills, information, and knowledge provided to girls and boys, the girls have improved their agency. They became excited about the possibilities of remaining at school, training, and finding work before getting married. They made the case for later marriages in their families and in meetings with elders.

Aside from planting important seeds of awareness and empowerment in these communities through the youth groups and elders, the project was able to raise awareness in the region through the provision of new evidence.

Lessons learned

This research has made important inroads in engaging strategic allies and addressing entrenched norms. Among the lessons learned are:

Stimulate change with knowledge: The project shows that by providing critical knowledge and promoting its effective use, research can contribute to changes in attitudes and behaviours at individual, community, and institutional levels.

Use participatory approaches to empower: The research shows that being intentional about transforming gender relations and using a participatory approach can lead to empowering girls and boys who can then be change agents in their communities.

Build research capacity through collaboration: The three country research teams had multiple opportunities to collaborate and share expertise. Rising to the challenge of building an intervention in collaboration with multiple stakeholders was a key takeaway for the researchers.

KEY REFLECTIONS AND FINDINGS

What can we learn from these examples? Although the case studies portray varied contexts and shed light on different gender issues and engagement strategies, they point to four factors that underpin gender-transformative research.

- **Root causes:** Gender-transformative research goes beyond access and gender relations. It examines the underlying gender norms and power relations that shape policies, access to and control over resources, and bodily integrity. This knowledge is highly situated, intersectional, and contextual.
- **Systemic partnerships:** Bringing multi-stakeholder actors into the research is key for sustained change. Such research sparks the kind of change and dialogue that will continue after the project ends.
- **Change embedded in processes:** The research process embeds action and, usually, attitude change, backed by solid evidence. The process and the broader network of actors brought in is as important as the research itself.
- **Complex capacities:** Gender-transformative research requires multi-layered skills and capacities that extend beyond, but include, structural gender analysis.

Put simply, gender-transformative research combines a solid analysis of gender issues with research to tackle them for the benefit of those whom the research intends to serve.

As IDRC deepens its gender-transformative programming, insights from the case studies presented here, as well as others reviewed, provide valuable lessons on how future work can be strengthened for greater impact. IDRC's experience also offers lessons to other research funders and implementing agents that seek to redress gender inequality.

1. Address root causes and structural barriers → Embed research in context

The case studies examined the root causes and structural barriers that contribute to gender inequalities, in terms of both opportunities and outcomes. The study on early marriage in three West African countries carefully unpacked interlinked socio-cultural and economic root causes that dictate who makes the decision, and what influences their decision on whether or when girls and boys get married. The study from India addressed root causes and gender norms related to women's ability to access water and sanitation, as well as unfavourable outcomes such as sexual harassment. Other case studies examined the root causes of engrained social norms,

discriminatory attitudes, and divisions of labour on poor health and nutrition outcomes as well as limited economic and livelihood opportunities. The research linked these practical issues of access and resources to a more systemic and structural understanding of norms, attitudes, harmful practices, and myths.

Embedding the research in local contexts was key to understanding the socio-cultural gender dynamics at play, to gaining insight on who needs to be brought in to effect positive change, and to operationalizing the results. This included understanding local processes, norms, and tensions. In the case of Harassmap, for instance, the research helped shine a light on the legal and institutional barriers women face in reporting sexual harassment. Across the case studies, the researchers and the research processes were intentionally embedded within local contexts. As a result, the projects went beyond addressing practical interests of access and inclusion (e.g. to sanitation, health services, or equal pay) to address underlying gender norms and power relations, and the root causes that perpetuate vulnerabilities and limit voice and choice.

Unless the root causes, such as social norms, limited mobility, gender-based discrimination, or unpaid work responsibilities, are addressed, the symptoms (e.g. early marriage, sexual harassment, or poor health and nutrition) will likely re-emerge or even be exacerbated in the future. In several instances, participatory, social learning processes to engage local women and their communities in negotiating with local governments (as in the case for intercultural health in Peru and improving access to water and sanitation in India) helped uncover the root causes beneath the symptoms. Theatre was used in some instances as a means of engaging not only community members, but also policymakers (such as the Ministry of Fisheries in Zambia), to talk about sensitive issues and to spark dialogue with different actors and those with varied perspectives.

2. Recognize multiple vulnerabilities and identities → Use intersectional, multisectoral, and interdisciplinary approaches

At the core, gender is a relational concept that requires the unpacking of masculinities and femininities, and engaging with women and men of different ages. It is essential to examine how gender intersects with other aspects of social identity, such as race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, religion, or caste, and to analyze these as interwoven identities that can co-exist and define experiences. Within these interwoven identities lie power

differentials and information on how they manifest to shape access to resources, opportunities, and outcomes for different groups.

The case studies shed light on multiple identities that can reside within an individual and a collective. For instance, someone can be female, an adolescent, a mother, and of Indigenous origin, as is the case with some of the women involved in the intercultural reproductive health and nutrition programs in Peru. Similarly, the case study on artisanal miners from Central and East Africa demonstrated that women's multiple identities as miners and mothers or expectant mothers entailed different opportunities and challenges. It is only when these multiple forms of identity are understood and accounted for that gender-transformative research can be truly people-centred. Research that explores and addresses the multiple vulnerabilities and identities that characterize gender inequality can facilitate transformative change. This often requires using mixed-method approaches that draw from different disciplines to collect and analyze qualitative and quantitative data.

Addressing gender inequalities in ways that transcend disciplinary and sectoral silos provide opportunities to recommend solutions that respond to the complex interconnectivity that characterizes the lives of women and men, and boys and girls. For instance, as the case study from Peru demonstrated, what we might normally think of as only health services are intimately linked to nutrition and food security in Amazonas communities. Similarly, part of understanding how to address water and sanitation issues in India is understanding the role that sexual harassment plays in women having to travel to collect water and use community toilets.

This type of multisectoral work relies on a strong interdisciplinary team and related approaches. Examining gender inequalities experienced through intercultural health programs in Peru with expertise from anthropologists, nutritionists, educators, doctors, nurses, and Indigenous activists allowed the range of disciplinary knowledge and experience to enrich the team's ability to address multiple vulnerabilities and identities that intersect.

3. Build trust and meaningfully engage stakeholders **→ Localize people-centred research**

The research process and the broader network of actors who are brought in are key to sustained change. Gender-transformative research is championed — at times contested — and operationalized by the communities themselves, as well as by local and national decision-makers who shape informal norms and formal policies. It

is therefore essential to work alongside individuals and organizations from diverse constituencies from the outset and throughout a project. The case studies used various approaches to build trust and to meaningfully engage stakeholders by creating and nurturing space for local leadership and voice, and by strengthening the capacities of local researchers and organizations.

Whose knowledge is captured and, in turn, who gets to shape the issue, are critical questions. In Rwanda, work with female miners demonstrates how the research process itself is a chance to level the playing field, given the fact that men typically dominate this industry. In Peru, the project acknowledged and explored women's roles in feeding their children and other members of the family by looking at how they could alter their practices to improve health and nutrition, while at the same time respecting local culture and customs. It includes protecting food sovereignty, the right to healthy, sustainable and culturally appropriate food, which is deeply connected with identity and choice.

Engaging key stakeholders is critical for any positive gender-transformative change to take place. The cases demonstrated that the focus should not only be on how issues are problematized, but also how legitimately well positioned and grounded the process is for longer-term influence. This approach ensures researchers work alongside local actors to strengthen their work rather than displace it. Being clear and grounded in the longer-term process of "uptake" and "change" does not preclude influence at these early stages. Important seeds of dialogue and influence can be planted here that root long after the funding has ended, as has happened in the case study from Egypt. Engaging in systemic partnerships as a way to strengthen processes and leverage influence is one of the key learnings from these cases.

Gender-transformative research asks that the system and context be understood to identify appropriate partnerships with actors who can help influence the situation given systemic and structural barriers. This involves examining the gender power relations in place. In most cases, policymakers and other decision-makers or power holders were brought in early and often to ensure the research was well positioned for influence. As many of the cases show, it is important to engage power brokers to build the capacity and negotiating power of women and marginalized groups to engage in dialogue. These individuals are essential for long-term structural change. Paying attention to only women in communities can mean that critical elements of the broader systems and structures that help to unlock and influence individual agency and access are missed.

The actors who are brought into the process must also be a good fit for the system. In some cases, this requires engaging stakeholders who have the power to make systemic changes; in others, it is about building the capacity of women and other marginalized groups to engage with other actors, thus exercising individual agency. Of course, agency entails a complex set of attitudes, confidence, and skills (such as negotiating) which will be very different in different contexts. In the case studies, it was necessary to address and raise awareness about gender norms; sometimes harmful practices, myths, misunderstandings; or simply the way that different actors in the system see and act on the issues.

Engaging key influencers such as state-level policymakers may not always be feasible, particularly in unstable political contexts. Harassmap demonstrates a good example of the role media can play in such settings. To raise awareness about highly sensitive issues of sexual harassment and norms, television and social media were used, in addition to the digital Harassmap platform itself. Influence looked different when compared to the other cases reviewed, but the research process was nevertheless able to support critical policy development, for instance with the university.

4. Scale positive change → Leverage and amplify local thought leaders and institutions

Scale can be replication or expansion of an innovation or a model, and it can also be other kinds of influence. Influencing policies, influencing community leaders, or scaling a participatory research process may be the most important influence to change norms in a certain context. The Harassmap case shows how the platform and community engagement were able to influence norms and university policies, and it was replicated in other places. The empowerment index for agriculture applied to fisheries was also replicated elsewhere. Local Indigenous leaders in Peru achieved influence by changing birthing practice manuals and training nurses in intercultural health practices, including more traditional vertical birthing positions. Global partners can play an important role in scaling by taking lessons and models and applying them elsewhere, as was the case in the mining case study where the North-South partnership was instrumental in integrating lessons at regional and global fora.

Individual thought leaders are important in scaling influence. In one research project, a principal investigator worked for the International Centre for Transitional Justice on research related to reparations for conflict-based sexual violence and he was able to lobby in his own

country. He became the UN Special Rapporteur on Reparations, enabling specific evidence from the research to make its way into the Guidance Note for the United Nations Secretary-General and potentially influencing dozens of countries as a result.

All the cases achieved some form of influence on gender norms and demonstrated that norms, and discussions that lead to reflection on those norms, are as important as, if not more important than, technical strategies and practices. These discussions are powerful building blocks for gender-transformative change. There were also examples of scaling activities where the participatory, social learning processes used to engage various stakeholders and build local capacity presented real possibilities for scaling.

Finally, there were examples that scaled due to the nature of the system addressed. In the small-scale mining case for instance, the extractive industries and associated value chains have relevant global regulations that can be influenced. This kind of local-to-global systems thinking is relevant for addressing issues at the level where the barriers and dynamics are occurring. Partnerships between thought leaders based at local institutions and northern-based researchers can play an important role here.

LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Gender-transformative research goes beyond access and technical issues, and beyond research papers, to embed and embody the desired change. Even in a shorter timeframe, this embeddedness, influence, and engagement of key actors is not only a way to redress inequality through the research, it is an investment in longer-term changes in perceptions, norms, and institutions with policy, legal, budgetary, and market uptake. These changes can be facilitated if measures are taken to embed research in the context, if appropriate analytical frameworks and tools from different disciplines are used to capture intersectionality, and if relevant stakeholders are engaged from across sectors to lead localized change processes that build on trusted relationships.

As we have learned through this paper, research has the potential to affect gender equality when there is intentional consideration of both the content and the research process. Though systemic changes take time, even in the shorter time frames of funded research, early influence is possible. A key lesson is that transforming gender relations research needs to go beyond issues of the inclusion and individual agency of women. Gender-transformative research is a deep and situated treatment



of underlying norms, institutions, and power relations between the genders that perpetuate inequities. Just as there is more to understand in terms of the nuances of agency, transformation, and structural change, there is more to learn about the role of research in these processes, particularly what can be learned about supporting gender-transformative research in ways that are bold, clear, responsive, learning-oriented, and with a view of having sustained impact.

IDRC has a strong foundation in gender-transformative research and continues to forge new territory for gender equality. It is hoped that by sharing our experience supporting gender-transformative work, the Centre will inspire new experimentation, new research, and new granting partnerships with other organizations to help achieve SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) globally. Moving forward, our work will be guided by the following key lessons and recommendations, which will also be of value to researchers and research funders.

1. Be bold in aspirations and mandate

Supporting gender-transformative research is rooted in values, with clarity about what transformative research entails. Gender-transformative research requires being bold in setting a foundation and enhancing the consciousness around which types of norms, structures, and behaviours contribute to different opportunities and outcomes for women and men, and boys and girls, of various backgrounds and experiences.

2. Be clear about what is meant by gender-transformative research

A major challenge for organizations is to achieve clarity on approaches and uses of transformational research across different programs and disciplines. There are diverse understandings of terms such as equity, equality, and inclusion, and there are tensions between these definitions across disciplines. It is essential to achieve some clarity on what these terms mean for research programming so that their application is aligned. This requires ensuring there are formal policies and informal norms at an organization supporting gender-transformative research to support consistent and useful framing.

3. Take a long-term approach to changing gender-based structural dynamics

Although some of the cases presented in this paper were able to show early influence in shifting gender norms through an embedded and localized approach, sustained changes in structures and norms can take a long time. Shifting gender-based structural dynamics is a long-term goal with no clear or obvious rights and wrongs in terms of the trade-offs that need to happen. What is important is engaging the right actors in discussions and dialogues about these trade-offs and tensions. In the research process, this can involve ensuring sufficient time for engagement, trust-building, and embedding the work in the local context.

4. Monitor and measure that long-term approach to track real structural changes

Gender norms and structural changes require a longer-term monitoring and learning process. Ensuring effective monitoring and measuring of complex change pathways is essential to facilitating learning as well as broader dialogue and practice. While much has been learned, and this dialogue is ongoing, there is more that can be understood about these dynamics and how they relate to longer-term structural change. More granular and useful ways of framing and measuring outcomes related to gender relations is needed, both in the field and in how research results are captured and analyzed. We also require better ways of understanding the role that research and evidence play in these outcomes, both positive and negative.

IDRC has pioneered monitoring frameworks such as outcome mapping (see *Outcome Mapping: Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs*, 2001), which stresses what is expected, desirable, and exceptional to see in particular areas, and provides a springboard for dialogue around tensions and trade-offs. Another innovative framework is Research Quality Plus (RQ+), outlined in the *Nature* article “A better measure of research from the global south,” (559: 23–26, 5 July 2018), which assesses research not just for rigour, but also for legitimacy, relevance, and positioning for use, taking gendered contextual realities and the research process into account. These types of frameworks provide a nuanced understanding of pathways to change, which can serve as a springboard to monitor and track structural change over time.

5. Build individual and organizational capacity

Structural gender analysis requires a complex set of skills, capacities, and expertise from different disciplines and entails constant use, reflection, and iteration to get it right. It requires wide-ranging skills, from structural gendered contextual analysis, systems thinking, stakeholder analysis, and deliberative dialogue. It also requires the ability to leverage mixed methodologies, broker effective partnerships across diverse actors, and position research for use. It is a set of skills that acknowledge gender-transformative programming as both a product and a process; it is a way of doing research as well as a way of influencing dialogue,

perspectives, and norms. Moreover, the diversity of gender-transformative approaches to research demonstrates that organizational and programming strategies need to be wary of a “one size fits all” approach. The research strategies and processes must be highly tailored to specific contexts while being grounded in socio-cultural realities, norms, power dynamics, and historical realities. Alignment across diverse strategies and forms of research is more important than consistent application or fidelity to a normative model. In fact, long-term sustained impact may depend on this respect for a diverse match of approaches to diverse contexts and issues.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Agency is a key part of the empowerment process and includes the ability to make decisions and negotiate. It also encompasses freedom from deception, manipulation, and internalized limiting beliefs. Agency is related to choice and perceived choice.

Empowerment is the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability. The ability to exercise choice has three dimensions: resources and future entitlements, agency (see above), and achievements or well-being outcomes.

Gender is the socially constructed roles, behaviours, expressions, and identities of girls, women, boys, men, and gender-diverse persons. It is distinct from biological sex and outside of the gender binary. Gender is not a synonym for women and it is experienced differently across cultures. It is recognized that intersectionality impacts the experience of gender and inequality. Gender relations are constituted, like all other social relations, through the rules, norms, and practices by which resources are allocated, stakes and responsibilities are assigned, value is given, and power is mobilized.

Gender analysis is a way to examine the differences in women's and men's lives, including those which lead to social and economic inequity for women, and to apply this understanding to policy development and service delivery. Gender analysis concerns the underlying causes of these inequities, including intersectionality with other factors such as age, class, or ethnicity, and it is used to achieve positive change for women. Gender analysis is a means of achieving equity, rather than equality, recognizing that different strategies may be necessary to achieve equitable outcomes for different groups.

Gender-aware research is an approach to research, where gender (the differentiated and intersectional experiences of women, men, boys, girls, and gender-diverse persons) is considered in the research project's rationale, but is not an operative concept in the design and methodology for implementation.

Gender equality represents the goal of equal access, resources, opportunities, benefits and rights for women and men, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, and two-spirit (LGBTQ2S+¹) persons. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same, but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should also concern and fully engage both men and women. Equality between women and men is a human rights issue and a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development.

Gender equity is a term acknowledging that the playing field is not even, so systemically or historically marginalized groups may need intentional, preferential, or affirmative treatment to redress systemic barriers and exclusion.

1. The plus indicates a number of other communities that self-identify differently and, in general, that that there is not a single definition or community identifier.

Gender fade in a research project is the inability to incorporate gender analysis in the research methodology or implementation itself in spite of awareness and intentions of having included gender in the rationale.

Gender-sensitive research considers gender in the research project's rationale and addresses it in the project design and methodology, but does not (yet) extend to analysis and action to address gender inequalities (IDRC categorization).

Gender-responsive research considers gender in the research project's rationale, design, and methodology, and it is rigorously analyzed to inform implementation, communication, and influence strategies. (IDRC categorization).

Gender-transformative change is the process of addressing dimensions of power to transform unequal power relations. It applies to more than individual actions and focuses on the structures that perpetuate and normalize unequal patterns between women and men. It also includes an intersectional approach, where ethnicity, age, caste, and local values impact the experience of gender and gender inequality.

Gender-transformative research is an approach to research that examines, analyzes, and builds an evidence base to inform long-term practical changes in structural power relations and norms, roles, and inequalities that define the differentiated experiences of men and women. Gender-transformative research should lead to sustained change through action such as partnerships, outreach, and interventions. (IDRC categorization).

Intersectionality is a concept that shows how gender intersects with other aspects of identity, such as age, ethnicity/nationality, ability, education, class, religion, sexual orientation, geographic location, and any other relevant factors, to impact experiences, agency, access to and control of resources, power, and knowledge.

Marginalized groups are those who have been systemically or historically excluded from participation or influence in society and/or who frequently experience exclusion from exercising rights and freedoms.

Power relations/dynamics are terms acknowledging that gender dynamics are rooted in power relations. Power is seen as multi-dimensional and located everywhere (from household to global levels). It exists in visible forms, such as formal decision-making tables and decision-makers, and in hidden forms, such as forces, actors, and influences on people's decisions.

Practical interests include short-term improvements in the condition of women which address material needs, such as water, education, food, health, or income.

Strategic interests are long term and relate to improvements in the position of women in society. These involve changes in the gender relations between men and women, where women are empowered to have access to and control of resources, and equal participation with men in decision-making that affects their lives.

Structural/systemic change is defined as change that not only addresses issues of access and opportunity, but leads or is linked to more systemic change. This includes formal decision-making arenas where policies, laws, markets, and budgets are established, as well as informal gender norms where influence is more diffuse but may include spaces shaped by movements, elders, artists, religious leaders, mainstream media, and social media. It is assumed that these sites of change systemically entrench norms, rules, attitudes, and behaviours at all levels, including those that limit people at the margins from perceiving or acting on the choices available.



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