

Dear Colleague,

### Re: African Regional Community of Practice on Gender and Health

The African Union's Covid-19 Commission Working Group on Gender and Stigmatisation, the School of Public Health, University of the Western Cape, South Africa, and the Gender and Health Hub at the United Nations University International Institute of Global Health are jointly launching a Community of Practice (CoP) on Gender and Health for the African continent. **To ensure that the CoP meets the needs of its prospective members, we invite you to participate in a brief planning survey which can be accessed via <https://bit.ly/3J65r1R>. The CoP will be shaped by your early responses, so please add your voice now!**

To provide some background, gender inequality remains a major underlying driver of health inequity in the region, undermining the realisation of various international and national development goals, and jeopardising the lives and rights of girls, boys, women, men and other gender identities. There is ongoing work led by various African organisations focusing on advancing gender equality in health through designing policies, implementing programs, teaching, research and advocacy. However, stakeholders across different constituencies, geographies and language groups are not well connected to one another. In addition, there are important areas of work that require further documentation, dialogue and consensus-building particularly around building better links between policy-makers, researchers, feminist civil society organisations and donors to improve the implementation of health programmes from a gendered perspective. In undertaking such work, it is critical to make more visible the contributions of those based in the African region.

The purpose of the proposed CoP on gender and health is to empower ground implementers by connecting them to policymakers, lawmakers, academics and funders to pivot theory and money into action. This pursues greater impact and visibility of implementers so that beneficiaries- ie women and girls- feel a real difference in their lived experience.

CoP members will include program implementors, policymakers, researchers, civil society actors, and donors. The community will engage in collaborative learning and action across various online spaces to advance the above agenda (across programmes, research, training or advocacy) across the continent and critically, make more visible the contributions of those based in the African region.

The range of activities that the community may undertake to improve practice include:

- Working through challenges in health programmes, research, teaching, advocacy
- Accessing information/resources of relevance through the community
- Sharing experiences within the community
- Exploring synergies, and repurposing or pooling existing resources
- Aligning efforts/joining forces in research, teaching, implementation, and advocacy
- Compiling cross-context experience and insight on a topic of relevance
- Providing encouragement, constructive feedback, empowering
- Sharing current developments in the field/around topic of interest
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- Documenting experiences, projects in the area (programme implementation, research, teaching, advocacy)
- Mapping knowledge and identifying gaps

Finally, to better understand the needs of prospective members, we want to start by listening. We would be highly appreciative of your valuable input through this brief survey. The survey will remain open till 31 July 2022.

Should you have any questions or concerns do contact us [africaghcop@gmail.com](mailto:africaghcop@gmail.com). We look forward to your continued engagement and thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

African Union's Covid-19 Commission Working Group on Gender and Stigmatisation  
The School of Public Health, University of the Western Cape  
The Gender and Health Hub at the United Nations University International Institute of Global Health