



12th Linking Research,
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POWER IN INCLUSION
*Expanding Inclusivity in Sexual
and Reproductive Health*

IN THIS *Zine*

2

Expanding Sexual Reproductive Health and Inclusion

By Al Albertson

3

Unravelling Intersectional Barriers: Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services for Women with Disabilities in Uganda

By Rupanker Dey

6

Advancing the position of women and girl's human rights to wash through increasing their participation in locally-led adaptation initiatives

By Hedda Luursema

9

Legal mobilization for the legal and social decriminalization of abortion in Colombia

By Juliana Beltran Grisales

12

Key Themes and Analysis

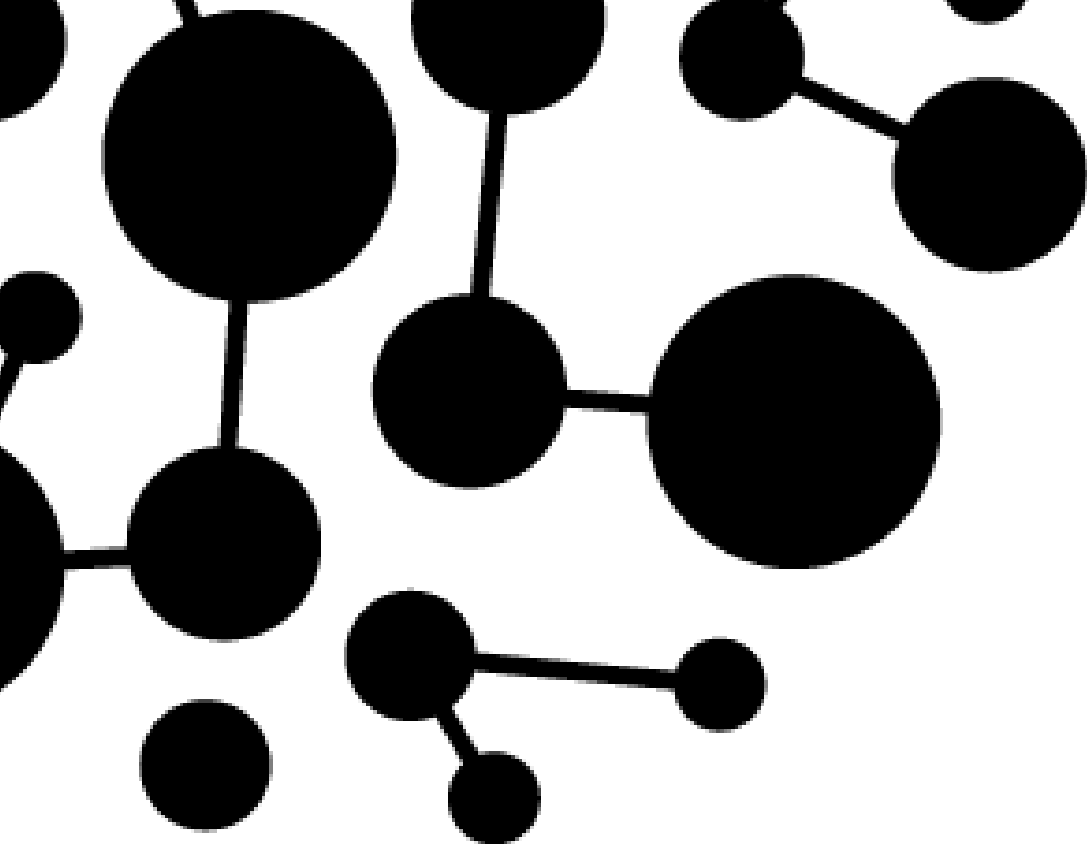
By Al Albertson

13

Research Reflections: Moving Forward

By Al Albertson

Credits



SHARE-NET NETHERLANDS

Linking Research, Policy and Practice

Share-Net Netherlands is the Dutch knowledge platform on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and one of the seven country hubs of Share-Net International. Guided by the aim to make SRHR knowledge accessible, Share-Net aspires to be a convening place for feminists, activists and anyone who is dedicated to fighting for human rights.

Every year, Share-Net Netherlands convenes the Linking Research, Policy and Practice (LRPP) Conference to bring together young researchers with policymakers, practitioners, and researchers working on SRHR in international development. The LRPP creates a space to disseminate groundbreaking new knowledge, engage in open dialogue, identify further gaps in research, policy, and practice, and harness networking opportunities for meaningful partnerships and collaboration.

On November 2nd 2023, the 12th edition of the LRPP was held at the KIT Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam. Thirteen budding researchers presented their papers across the issues of legalisation and (de)criminalisation of safe abortion, menstrual health and experiential narratives, maternal health and service provision, gender-based violence, sexual consent, and inclusive and intersectional SRHR.

This issue explores the research presented at the session on SRH & Inclusion.



EXPANDING *Sexual Reproductive Health and Inclusion*

By Al Albertson

NO MATTER WHERE OUR RESEARCHERS WENT - FROM UGANDA TO KENYA TO COLOMBIA - THEY WERE ABLE TO EXPLORE A WIDE VARIETY OF INTERSECTIONS OF SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND INCLUSION.

While strides have been made to enhance sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and foster inclusivity, particularly among marginalized groups, these efforts remain central to SRHR initiatives and persist as ongoing dialogues within the sector. It's imperative that as we collectively endeavor to cultivate a more inclusive global landscape, we transcend mere acknowledgment of necessary improvements and actively engage people and communities worldwide to integrate inclusivity into all facets of our work. In maintaining this trajectory towards enhanced inclusion, the researchers in this session have illustrated the expansive scope of sexual and reproductive health and inclusion, emphasizing opportunities to refine both practice and policy to address the needs of often overlooked or excluded groups.

RUPANKER *Dey*

UNRAVELLING INTERSECTIONAL BARRIERS: ACCESS TO SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES FOR WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES IN UGANDA

Liliane Fonds

As a dedicated master's student at the International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam, I specialize in Gender and Women Studies with a major in Social Policy for Development. My background includes experience in diverse, cross-cultural settings, where I've honed exceptional communication and writing skills. My passion lies in leveraging innovative solutions and fostering collaboration to address social dynamics that perpetuate poverty, particularly within the context of gender and development.

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UNRAVELLING INTERSECTIONAL BARRIERS

Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services for Women with Disabilities in Uganda

By Rupanker Dey
Liliane Fonds

Through an intersectional lens, this project interrogated the idea that mere access to sexual reproductive health (SRH) and family planning (FP) services ensures positive effects.

Methodology

This study was conducted in semi-urban and rural areas of Uganda. Methodologically, the research incorporates intersectionality and capabilities theories, examining barriers from both the perspective of demand and supply sides utilizing Levesque's healthcare framework.

Using individual qualitative interviews with healthcare professionals, beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries, and focus group discussions this work explored how intersecting identities create barriers to access and explores whether these services effectively enhance sexual well-being and functionality.

Key Findings

This research focuses on the intersecting identities which affect access SRH and FP services in Uganda

SRH and FP needs are impacted and influenced by intersecting identities. These identities, in all their diversity, are not considered when planning services and as a result, the care that can be accessed is inadequate and homogenized.

One of the significant factors to women realizing the full potential of SRH and FP services, even when services are available is their financial status. Additionally, he found that women in rural Kalangala generally enjoy better SRH access than their semi-urban counterparts in Kampala.

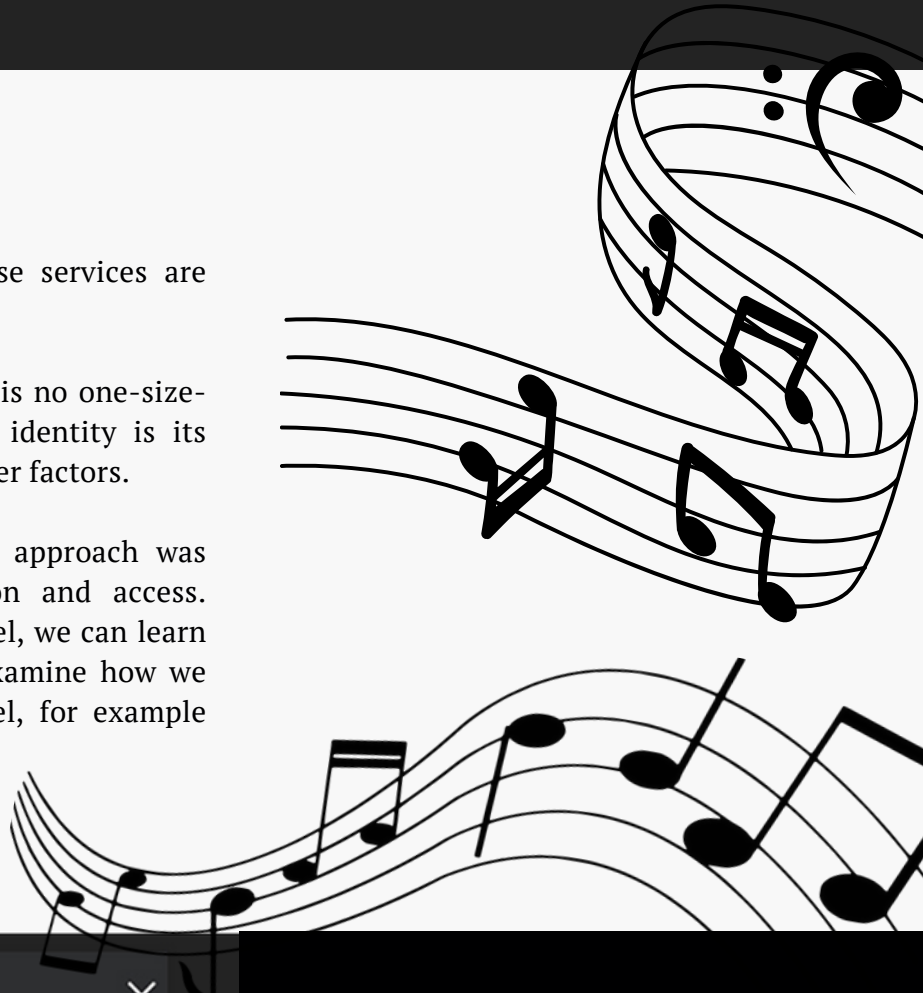
Disability type also significantly influences service accessibility, with less stigmatized disability types having greater access to SRH and FP services. Education, financial dependency, and religion also play pivotal roles in shaping access, impacting both beneficiaries and service providers.



“SRH services for Women with Disabilities are like audio equalizer buttons – each identity represents a unique setting that requires distinct positioning for proper accessibility. There is no one-size-fits-all solution.”

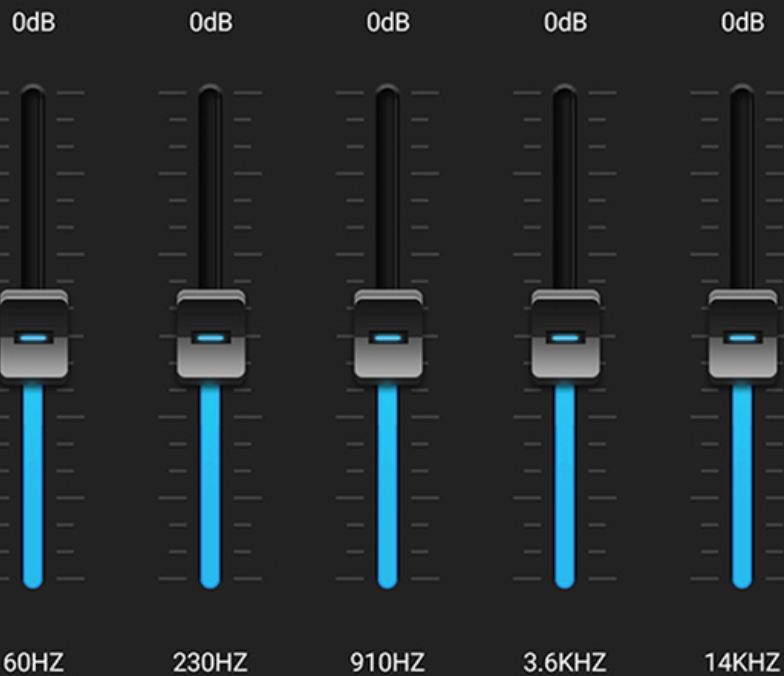
Implication for policy and practice

1. Access to services does not ensure those services are realized or utilized.
2. It was clear from this research that there is no one-size-fits-all model for these services and each identity is its unique factor which often intersects with other factors.
3. A tailored, individual, identity-centered approach was shown to be a crucial factor in inclusion and access. Rupankar showed that at the community level, we can learn more about individual needs and in turn examine how we can remove barriers at the community level, for example engaging community leaders.



Equalizer

🎧 Flat



“ EVERY IDENTITY IS LIKE A MUSIC SCALE UP - THERE IS NO MUSIC THAT IS A SINGLE TUNE. THERE IS NO SOLUTION THAT IS ONE SIZE FITS ALL, WE NEED TO FOCUS ON INDIVIDUAL NEEDS. WE ARE DIVERSE, WE ARE DYNAMIC, WE NEED TO LOOK AT THOSE NEEDS!

A close-up portrait of Hedda Luursema, a young woman with long, wavy blonde hair and blue eyes. She is wearing a white top and a dark vest. The background is a blurred green, suggesting an outdoor setting.

**ADVANCING THE POSITION OF WOMEN
AND GIRLS' HUMAN RIGHTS TO WASH
THROUGH INCREASING THEIR
PARTICIPATION IN LOCALLY-LED
ADAPTATION INITIATIVES**

Simavi

I'm a Population Studies Masters student at the University of Groningen. I'm currently writing my thesis jointly with Simavi. My biggest interest are International Development issues, and my goal is to represent the small against the big!

[LinkedIn](#)

HEDDA
Luursema

ADVANCING THE POSITION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS' HUMAN RIGHTS TO WASH THROUGH INCREASING THEIR PARTICIPATION IN LOCALLY-LED ADAPTATION INITIATIVES

How can community engagement be improved to enhance the involvement of women and girls in climate-related WASH decision-making processes?

by Hedda Luursema
University of Groningen

Methodology

Using a feminist participatory action research, the focus was on community-led adaptation strategies to empower women and girls in climate hazard areas (droughts) of Africa and Asia. Research was conducted in Kajiado County, Kenya, with 14 focus group discussions and 31 key informant interviews elucidating challenges faced by women and girls.

Key Findings

As women are often excluded from **decision-making empowerment** at the community level, empowering women and girls in decision-making was identified as crucial to Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) in the region.

Power emerged as a theme, not only in terms of power and decision-making but also a distinct need to **shift power from NGOs and other international organizations to community-driven approaches** and strategies to address issues, specifically deep-seated cultural and social norms.

Quotes from focus group discussions on menstrual health

“ When there's no water, it's tough to stay clean, and girls even **drop out of school** because they can't clean up during their periods.

“ Women and girls face a tough time when it comes to dealing with water shortages, especially during their periods. It can be quite challenging for them to both **fetch water and maintain proper hygiene** during this time.

“ Climate change has posed many difficulties to young girls and women during menstrual periods, as they **lack funds to buy sanitary towels** due to a lack of income. The scarcity of water also makes it challenging for them to maintain hygiene during menstruation.



Policy Recommendations

- Encourage the **adoption of community-driven approaches** in WASH projects, fostering local leadership and participation.
- Develop strategies to **address deep-seated cultural and social norms that hinder gender inclusivity** in WASH.
- **Encourage collaboration** between international organizations, governments, and local communities to work collectively towards gender-inclusive and community-driven WASH solutions.

Implications for policy and practice

Recommendations from this project stress the need for a more **inclusive and equitable approach** to tackling the challenges stemming from climate change and gender disparities in WASH.

This again makes clear that **communities know their context best** and that perhaps the **role of NGOs is shifting to facilitate rather than dictate**, with the eventual goal of a full power shift.

Quotes on the inclusion of women and girls in WASH decision making

"Women should be involved in water projects because they know the uses of water, unlike men who use water for their animals. Women understand the importance of water for their families, children's education, and daily chores."

"It's important to include women in water conservation and collection efforts because they are usually responsible for fetching water for household use. It's also crucial to educate them on storing and efficiently using water, possibly by recycling it when possible."

"Men should only be given the chairperson position because they naturally use force and may overpower women. Men are not suitable for leadership positions in water projects."

JULIANA

Beltran Grisales

LEGAL MOBILIZATION FOR THE LEGAL AND SOCIAL DECRIMINALIZATION OF ABORTION IN COLOMBIA

Erasmus University Rotterdam-
International Institute of Social Studies

As a Colombian lawyer with a master's degree in Development Studies, my passion lies in advancing SRHR through gender research, advocacy, and campaigning. I have worked with survivors of GBV, and currently, I contribute as a co-creator for Oxfam Novib's Youth Space

[LinkedIn](#)





LEGAL MOBILIZATION FOR THE LEGAL AND SOCIAL DECRIMINALIZATION OF ABORTION IN COLOMBIA

Abortion in Colombia and how three women's organizations (a Mesa por la Vida y la Salud de las Mujeres, Women's Link Worldwide, and Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir) have legally mobilized through different strategies to advance the Sexual and Reproductive Rights of Women, specifically the liberalization of abortion in Colombia.

by Juliana Beltran Grisales
Erasmus University Rotterdam ISS

Methodology

This research shows how Causa Justa “Just Cause” have mobilized through different strategies to advance the SRHR in Colombia. Specifically, the **liberalization of abortion**. The study combined an extensive document review and in-depth/semi-structural interviews.

The social movement’s goal is to switch the narrative of abortion from a crime into a right and a social justice claim.

Key Findings

Strategic litigation, individual cases’ support, knowledge production, and freedom of consciousness have been key strategies.

The organizations studied in this research aim to achieve the legal and social decriminalization of abortion and switch the legal narrative from a crime into a right and a social justice matter. They consider these changes essential for women, girls, and human reproductive beings to exercise their full citizenship and freedom of consciousness. In essence, shifting this discourse and the stigma associated.



Implications for Policy and Practice

Legal Reform Advocacy

The findings suggest that strategic litigation has been an effective tool for advancing the liberalization of abortion laws in Colombia. This implies that policymakers should consider reforms to existing laws to ensure that women have access to safe and legal abortion services. Advocacy efforts should focus on legal frameworks that recognize abortion as a right rather than a crime.

Shifting the social narrative and focusing on community

Policymakers and practitioners should work towards reframing the discourse on abortion to emphasize the importance of reproductive autonomy and human rights. This may involve engaging with stakeholders, including religious and cultural leaders, to challenge stigma and promote a more inclusive and rights-based approach to abortion.

Overall, this research underscores the importance of legal and social reforms to advance sexual and reproductive rights, particularly in the context of abortion. Policymakers and practitioners should prioritize efforts to reform laws, provide support for individuals seeking abortion services, invest in knowledge production, protect freedom of consciousness, and shift the legal narrative surrounding abortion to ensure that people have access to safe and legal abortion services and can exercise their reproductive rights.



KEY THEMES *and analysis*

By Al Albertson

THERE ARE SEVERAL THEMES THAT EMERGED: GENDER DISPARITIES, ENHANCING COMMUNITY MOBILISATION AND VOICES OF WOMEN IN SRH ADVOCACY AND INCLUSION, AND INVOLVEMENT OF ENABLING PARTIES, FOR EXAMPLE MEN AND LOCAL AGENTS WHOSE COOPERATION TO HELP THE TARGET POPULATIONS IS POWERFUL AND NECESSARY TO MAKE A POSITIVE CHANGE.

The breadth of subjects and focuses presented in this session, highlights the intricate nature of inclusion in Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH). This complexity arises from the intersection of various factors, each influencing and being influenced by the others. Socio-cultural attitudes and norms come with different power dynamics, granting privilege to some while disenfranchising others. These dynamics, in turn, sculpt our societal landscapes, significantly impacting access to SRH services. They shape the laws and social conditions around how individuals, communities, and governments include or exclude others.

Whether based on gender or disability, these projects focus on uncovering barriers and gaps in SRH access. Identifying these barriers and gaps is crucial to improving both SRH access and the social conditions surrounding SRH. Additionally, these researchers identified key elements for creating inclusive, accepting, and enabling environments that invariably translate to enhanced accessibility and broader inclusion in SRH services.



RESEARCH REFLECTIONS

Moving forward

TO ENSURE THE SUSTAINABILITY AND CONTINUITY OF PROJECTS, THERE NEEDS TO BE A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM. TO DO THAT THERE MUST BE RECOGNITION OF THE LACK OF SUPPORT FROM THE GOVERNMENT AS WELL AS SOLUTIONS AND SUPPORT TO THE CIVIL SOCIETY SECTOR TO FILL THE GAPS AND EXISTING NEEDS WITHIN SRHR

These sessions, though diverse, were all linked by their focus on marginalized groups (women, girls, people with disabilities) and their right to have a voice in policymaking, as well as access to inclusive, safe, legal, and destigmatized health services and infrastructure. **As evidenced by the variety of subjects and focuses, the issue of inclusion in SRH is composed of intersecting factors, each of which also intersects with one another.**

Socio-cultural attitudes grant power to some while withholding it from others, thus shaping our communities and playing a crucial role in determining access to SRH. They influence the laws and social conditions that dictate how individuals, communities, and governments include or exclude others, whether based on gender and/or disability. Projects like these, which focus on fostering accepting environments,

contribute to increased access and inclusion.

Several key themes emerged from this research, including gender disparities, the importance of enhancing community mobilization and amplifying the voices of women in SRH advocacy and inclusion efforts, as well as the involvement of enabling parties, such as men and local agents, whose cooperation is powerful and necessary for effecting positive change within target populations.

Power and community are overarching themes in this research and require ongoing attention in policy and practice. Questions about **who holds power within a community**, who wields **power over rights, resources, and access**, and how research can be utilized to **reform deeply rooted social conceptions** that profoundly impact the future of SRH and inclusion are central.



Credits

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by Al Albertson

Based on the research presented
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