

# Advancing Health through Attention to Gender, Equity and Human Rights

S U M M A R Y   O F   S T O R I E S



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SUMMARY OF STORIES



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## Introduction

Attention to gender, equity and human rights can advance health. But the question is: how can this be done? How can health programmes consider the concerns and experiences of women, men, girls and boys from diverse groups as an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes? Health programmes are increasingly recognizing that one-size-fits-all does not deliver benefits equitably to all population groups and that in some cases inequity may even be exacerbated. Programmes have also learned that attention to gender, equity and human rights is crucial for sustaining achievements in health and development.

The booklet provides a brief summary, highlights and key messages from the Regional Report on Advancing Health through Attention to Gender, Equity and Human Rights: stories from the Western Pacific Region, due to be published later this year. Gender, equity and human rights are not new ideas. Nevertheless, their importance has

been given new impetus by the adoption by the United Nations of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which focus on leaving no one behind. To successfully contribute to equity, gender and human rights, many organizations are transforming their culture from within. One critical step in the process is identifying strategic entry points for action, based on lessons learnt from best and promising practices. The stories highlighted here come from across the WHO Western Pacific Region and show that progress is being made, if sometimes slowly. Of course, there is always more to be done. Nevertheless, on International Women's Day 2017, the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific is pleased to present this compilation of examples that demonstrate how attention to gender, equity and human rights is reshaping the way health policies and programmes are developed and implemented – for the benefit of all women, men, girls and boys across the Region.





## Making **polio vaccines** in the Lao People's Democratic Republic more acceptable to all

Increasing the voice and participation of affected communities in policies and actions that affect them is critical to successful, rights-based health programmes. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, where the landscape and the diverse range of ethnic communities present special challenges, reaching out to remote communities often can be difficult. Despite these hurdles, effective outreach provided two-way communication that enabled the national immunization programme to meet its targets and address the health needs of ethnic communities. A targeted immunization campaign made vaccines more acceptable to all communities, while building trust in the health system.



A health programme's reach and effectiveness depend on its ability to capture those left behind. In Papua New Guinea, which has one of the highest tuberculosis (TB) rates in the world, an equity analysis of the TB-control effort was conducted. The analysis sought to determine if the TB programme was reaching targeted populations. The analysis also helped ensure that the programme's financial and human resources were being allocated optimally. The participation of affected communities in identifying barriers to access and in designing and implementing interventions was a critical component of success.

## Integrating an equity focus into analysis for **tuberculosis control** in Papua New Guinea







## Using gender and equity analysis to improve access to **water and sanitation** in the Philippines

Improving access to water, sanitation and hygiene improves the health of children and their ability to do well in school. It also promotes gender equality, empowers women and helps improve life in poor communities. But efforts to improve water, sanitation and hygiene for diverse population groups require a strong evidence base – we need to identify gaps in access in order to address them. In the Philippines, gender and equity analysis helped draw attention to the specific needs of marginalized communities and guided action to help ensure that access to safe water and adequate sanitation becomes a reality for all.





## Analysing **gender-based violence** in Cambodia

Policy-makers need reliable data and strong evidence to develop effective policies. In Cambodia, researchers in 2014–2015 employed the WHO methodology, which is considered the gold standard for measuring violence against women, to conduct a national survey. The gender-sensitive methodology provided rigorous data to support the findings included in the National Survey on Women's Health and Life Experiences in Cambodia. The survey's findings and recommendations provided an important foundation to develop policies and actions to eliminate gender-based violence and achieve gender equality in Cambodia.

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