Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Capacity Building of Organisations and Individuals

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Abstract: To ensure its partners have the capacity to implement gender responsive projects, COL introduced an online training programme on gender equality and women's empowerment. This paper reports the methodology and results in measuring the efficacy of this online training at individual and organisational levels. The ability of individuals and organisations to plan and implement transformative actions with a gender perspective require adequate knowledge, skills and a change in attitudes. Given this need, the commonly used Knowledge, Attitude, Skills (KAS) model was used to measure the efficacy of this online training at individual and organisational levels by defining different dimensions of capacities with three learning domains — Cognitive, Affective, Psychomotor (Bloom's Taxonomy). The baseline and the end line of KAS at the individual level on the six core gender capacities was established for comparison. Two questionnaires were designed to assess the learning achievements of the participants and to measure the efficacy of the training. An analysis of the study registers a clear trend of positive outcomes at the individual level regarding improved knowledge, attitudes and skills on gender equality that could be applied in their work. Furthermore, the paper reports that the organisations demonstrate an enabling environment for more gender equal policies, structures and practices and proposes ways to convert the success of this training by integrating it into the broader gender equality strategy of these organisations.

Keywords: learning outcomes, gender equality, women empowerment, training effectiveness, knowledge attitude and skills, synchronous and asynchronous, iterative process, communities of practice.

Introduction

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is an inter-governmental organisation that promotes 'learning for sustainable development' using open, distance and technology-based approaches. Its programmes are guided by commitment to a quality education and lifelong learning for all, skills development for sustainable development, and gender equality and inclusion. Capacity-building of partner organisations and individuals to deliver effective programmes has been one of COL's key roles. COL designed an online capacity-building intervention on gender equality and women's empowerment to impart the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills to enable individuals and organisations to implement programmes effectively towards achieving gender equality (UN Women, 2016). The study on the efficacy of this online training assumes significance in informing COL's practice in any future gender training interventions designed to enable communities and partner organisations to effectively implement commitments towards gender equality and women's empowerment (UNDP, 2007).
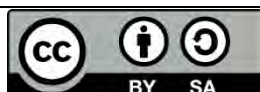
Literature Review
Pedagogic Assumptions

Among the more popular theories of learning, the choice of constructivist theory for this capacity building on gender equality and women's empowerment was informed by understanding its three core elements. First, constructivism is guided by the principle that learning occurs when learners are actively involved in interpreting and constructing their perspective of new knowledge gained based on their individual experience and previous knowledge. Second, it considers that learners (partner organisations and their staff in this case) bring with them their reserves of experience. Third, it believes that the mind has a vital role in learning in bridging environmental stimuli and learners' responses (Harasim, 2012). Within this learning paradigm, cognitive constructivism fosters critical thinking and focuses on enabling learners to modify their existing knowledge to accommodate the new information. This requires following a pedagogy that allows learners to reflect on situations, encourages discovery, enables construction of meaning from their experience and requires demonstration of their learning (Serhat, 2021). Further, it emphasises behavioural and cognitive processes as critical learning elements and key to successful learning.

Most online learning theories have been derived from the major learning theories. There are important insights for online learning that are extensively used for adults in continuing education programmes. Malcom Knowles (1998) posited that courses designed for adults should tap into their social contexts and experiences. Bransford, Brown and Cocking (1999) showed that effective learning environments are framed within the convergence of four overlapping lenses: community, knowledge, learner, and assessment. These lenses provided the foundational framework for building an online education theory based on the facilities that the internet offers about each of the four lenses. A carefully crafted and professionally researched online training design requires a methodology that improves the training return on investment (ROI) and individual knowledge retention. Blending with the Pedagogical Purpose model posits that instruction is not simply about learning content or skill but also supports students socially and emotionally. Reflection can be incorporated as a powerful pedagogical strategy with activities that require learners to reflect on what they learn and to share their thoughts to extend and enrich reflection (Picciano, 2017).

The goal of all training programmes is to enhance performance. UN Women (2016) defines the importance of training in gender equality to the broader gender equality agenda as:

> A transformative process that aims to provide knowledge, techniques and tools to develop skills and bring changes in attitudes and behaviours. It is a tool and strategy to effect individual and collective transformation towards gender equality through acquiring knowledge and skills necessary for advancing gender equality in their daily lives and at the workplace.

Training effectiveness measures the impact of training on the trainees and their organisations in terms of knowledge, skills and performance. Kirkpatrick's (2006) four-level training evaluation model is one of the proven models for measuring training effectiveness. The four levels are reaction (participants' satisfaction with the training), learning (knowledge and skills acquired during the training), behaviour (changes due to training or knowledge transfer back on the job) and impact (difference made in the performance or the results driven by the work). There is enough research to support the

intrinsic relationship between individual and institutional change. Clearly defined objectives help both teachers and learners to measure training effectiveness, understand the progress, and identify recurring themes or patterns and potential to implement across the board.

Pedagogy and Structure of the Course

The design of this course was informed by a capacity needs assessment (conducted in September 2020) that identified six gaps based on the previous knowledge and experience of individuals and organisations. A review of the gender capacity assessment and development guide (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research — GIAR, Trans International and International Livestock Research Institute — ILRI, 2015) and gender assessment framework and tools (International Labour Organisation — ILO and Food and Agriculture Organisation — FAO 2015) has further guided the structure of the course. It dealt with **K**nowledge, **A**ttitude and **S**kills/**P**ractices (KAS/P) in those six core capacities. The curriculum, through six modules, aimed to address the structural aspects and power relations that perpetuate gender inequality. It contributed to knowledge advancement on concepts linked to gender equality, human rights and women's empowerment. This was extended to examine public policies and budgets in addressing gender inequality and introduced a gender transformative development perspective to engage in broader processes of social change.

Gender Equality Concepts capacity refers to recognising the gender dynamics within a context, understanding gender and equality, acknowledging the barriers to gender equality and practicing gender-sensitive actions. This module included four elements:

- Key gender concepts.

- Concept of gender equality and global norms.

- Concept of women's empowerment.

- Approach and perspective for action.

Women's Human Rights capacity entails knowledge of women's human rights and associated protocols, acknowledging the opportunities and barriers to equality of rights and harnessing the legal instruments to uphold advancement of women and girls. It dealt with three elements:

- Recognition of women's rights as human rights.

- International instruments on advancement of women – CEDAW and Beijing PFA.

- Accountability to provisions.

The *Concept of Power* refers to understanding the intrinsic link between gender inequality and power and its adverse influence on social institutions, decision making and development outcomes. The capacity relates to the commitment to the transformation of gender relations and stimulating women's leadership and women's empowerment. This module looked at:

- Power and its forms of expression.

- Feminist approach to power.

- Women's empowerment.

Gender Analysis and Strategic Planning refer to understanding the tools, the capacity to design and conduct gender analysis within a given context and the application of gender analytical tools and frameworks in strategic planning and networking to inform programmes and influence policies relevant to the context of gender equality. It focused on the following elements:

- Gender analysis and tools.

- Strategic planning for promoting gender equality:

  o Gender mainstreaming strategy.

  o Gender advocacy technique.

  o Gender-responsive budgeting technique.

Gender Concerns in Humanitarian crises refers to knowledge of vulnerabilities and capacities in times of crises, understanding how gender roles, inequalities and identities shape and influence those vulnerabilities and capacities disproportionately with widening disparities. It also includes recognising the practices for gender-responsive recovery plans and the need to address their potential risks in further deepening gender inequality. This module included two elements:

- Vulnerabilities in humanitarian crises.

- Response and recovery measures for humanitarian crises.

Gender-Responsive Programming capacity contains understanding the realities of women's inequalities, designing gender-responsive programmes to address those issues and mainstreaming gender in policies and structures. This capacity also refers to skills in fostering progressive changes in gender relations, engaging with various stakeholders for such social transformation, and tracking the progress of those changes with gender-sensitive monitoring. This module included the following elements:

- Analysing poverty with a gender lens.

- Designing rights-based approaches.

- Engaging men and boys in promoting gender equality.

- Determining development outcomes and impact.

- Tracking progress of gender equality with gender sensitive M&E.

The pedagogical approach guided this online learning with an empowering methodology that provided opportunities for participants to experience the knowledge construction process and embed their learning in a realistic context.

- Course material with detailed lesson notes and PowerPoint presentations of each module were shared with the participants before the session to encourage the first level of exposure to the new knowledge.

- Training content was supported by an instruction process that encouraged a critical reflection on power relations and existing inequalities. It included powerful messages on equality concepts and gender issues through video clips from the UN Ambassador, the champion of the

HeForShe movement, UN Human Rights functionaries and globally recognised gender professionals. Further, the two global events on Human Rights Day (December 10) and 16 days of activism against gender-based violence (November 25 –December 10) held during the training period were capitalised to reinforce the content.

- Exercises in the middle and at the end of each module allowed participants to reflect on their learning. Often this was practised as group exercises paving the way for cross learning and any gaps in understanding were addressed.

- Assignments for each module provided hands-on application of concepts and strategies appropriate to the local context and which could be integrated in daily work. There was a total of ten (10) assignments that provided an opportunity for the participants to apply their new knowledge to their personal life and in their daily work.

- Structured mid-course feedback from participants in the training focussing on its value in their future work, the scope for improvement and the observed gaps, was valuable to monitor and continuously improve the delivery of training.

This training was implemented for six (6) weeks between November 2020 and January 2021. It was followed up with nine (9) organisational workshops (January – February 2021) to review the participants' work on the ten (10) assignments that formed an integral part of the course design. The entire course was conducted with the help of a subject matter expert.

An interrupted or slow internet connection was a challenge in some countries. The online training was followed up with sharing the recording of Zoom classes, so that those trainees, who have jobs that clash with the class, could catch up.

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following questions about the course:

- Did the training on gender equality and women's empowerment positively impact the participants' knowledge, attitude and skills on core gender equality capacities?

- Did the effectiveness of this online training increase the scope for application of new knowledge and skills in the daily lives of participants and future work of the organisations?

- What lessons could be drawn from this training experience for future training?

Methods

The ability of individuals and organisations to plan and implement transformative actions with a gender perspective requires adequate knowledge, skills and a change in attitudes. Given this need, the commonly used KAS model was found to be most helpful in measuring the efficacy of this online training at individual and organisation levels by defining different dimensions of capacities within three learning domains — Cognitive, Affective, Psychomotor (Bloom's Taxonomy in Paul, 1985). This has guided specifying — the knowledge dimension as a cognitive understanding of concepts and objectives relating to gender equality; the attitude dimension as internalising or believing the need for change, and the skills dimension as the application of knowledge into practice towards achieving gender equality. The baseline and the end line of Knowledge, Attitude, Skills (KAS) at the individual

level on the six core gender capacities was established for comparison. The questionnaire was the choice for collection of data due to two factors. First, it is the most common tool to assess gender training and second, it is simple, quick and easy to administer despite its weakness in response (UN Women, 2016). Two questionnaires were designed to (a) assess the learning achievements of the participants and (b) measure efficacy of the training. The questionnaires, using Survey Monkey, were shared online with all training participants.

Description of the Participants

The training covered the COL's gender initiative partners across nine (9) countries from four (4) regions — Africa, Asia, Caribbean, and Pacific. A total of 110 staff (79 women and 31 men) have participated from eleven (11) organisations, including both frontline and management levels. In the baseline 56 women and 28 men, while 47 women (Africa 12, Asia 18, Caribbean 3, Pacific 14) and 27 men (Africa 8, Asia 18, Caribbean 1) in end line participated in the survey. The same people who attended the training responded in baseline and endline surveys. Given the pandemic situation, we considered this a reasonable representation of the trainees and so good enough to draw a generalisation of the findings.

Description of the Instrument

The questionnaire on learning achievements consisted of 66 KAS/P statements spread across the six core capacities the training has imparted. The 66 statements were equally distributed to three dimensions — knowledge, attitude and skills/practices. These statements were constructed concerning the learning objectives that state "the participants will be able to define gender equality, recognise women's rights as human rights, become aware of unequal gender power relations and its social dynamics, integrate gender perspective in development work and monitor progress with a gender lens using gender-sensitive indicators".

The questionnaire design on training efficacy included the four-level evaluation model – satisfaction, learning, behaviour, and impact. *Satisfaction* was collected from the perceptions of participants on the relevance of the training curriculum (course content), quality of methodology (facilitation, tools and learning material) and the use of various means for review of learning. Each of these three was measured on a 3-point scale and provided the impressions the training left on individuals. *Learning* was measured from KAP acquired by the participants, and the outcome of the first questionnaire was considered to reflect this aspect. *Behaviour* was considered from changes in the ability of participants to apply the acquired KAS in their work environment. This was measured from the confidence of individuals to transfer the new knowledge and skills in their work on a 3-point scale and from the scope of organisational support mechanisms (organisation culture or supervisor follow-up) to foster this knowledge transfer. The *impact* was considered from the effect that application of KAS after the training has at individual and organisation levels. The scores of these four levels reflect the capacities and skills of individual staff in linking the learning in more explicit ways to broader processes of social change. Given the timeframe, the focus was on the immediate impact regarding the difference training has made in their personal relations and workplace.

Description of Analysis

The post-training survey data was tabulated by each statement, and then averages for KAS for the six core capacities were calculated. This took note of the 'agree' responses to negative statements and

'disagree' responses to positive statements. The results were analysed and reported with both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. Descriptive statistics with the measures of frequency was used for the analysis with simple frequencies and arithmetic percentages. The trends have been presented using a histogram (learning achievements) and pie charts (training effectiveness). Pie charts show the aggregated data for all four regions.

Findings and Discussion

As per the research questions mentioned, the findings are presented in three sections:

- Achievement of learning outcomes.
- Efficacy of the online training.
- Lessons learnt.

Achievement of Learning Outcomes
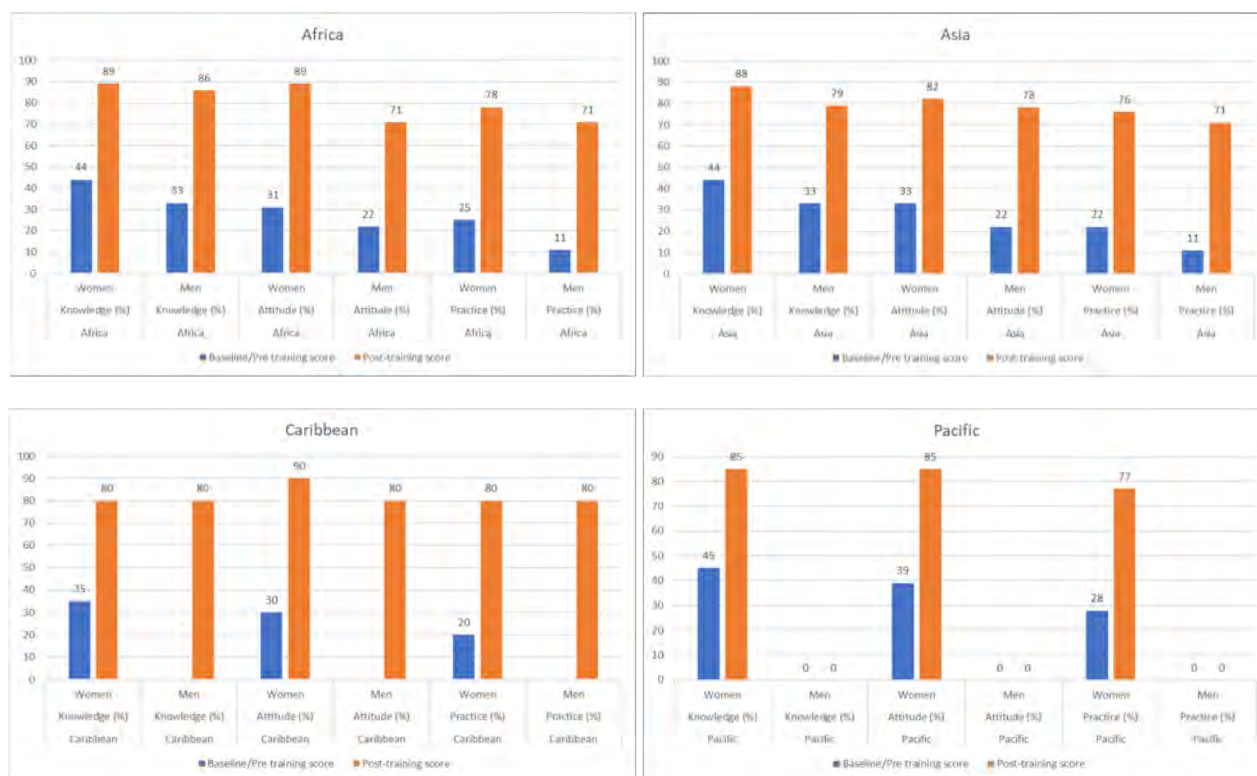
Gender Equality Concepts

The post-training score presents a clear progressive trend (at least two-fold) in KAS levels of individuals across all four regions and among women and men. However, it records a gender disparity, with men's scores registering lesser than women's (Table 1 and Figure 1). There is now clarity in understanding gender equality as a human right and the difference between equality and equity in a gender context. The respondents can acknowledge the differential playing field between women and men and are positively disposed to affirmative actions for compensating those disparities. They believe that gender constructs are changeable and are willing to challenge unjust power relations and negative stereotypes to transform gender relations. However, understanding the building blocks of gender inequality and not equating authority and leadership to masculinity seems to remain divergent and suggests the need for a more focused input or critical reflection.

These findings resonate with experiences of other training programmes on gender equality for teachers. The trained teachers showed an increase in their knowledge about gender issues, a decrease in their beliefs that gender differences are unchangeable and an increase in acknowledging diversity (Kollmayer et al., 2020). The international professional learning programme recorded a powerful influence on the teachers by creating a new mindset among them for changing their professional practice toward a social issue and challenging their current beliefs, values and practices (Klibthong & Agbenyega, 2018).

Table 1: KAP/S on Gender Equality Concepts by Region and Sex

Region	Baseline/Pre Training Score (%)						Post-Training Score (%)					
	Knowledge		Attitude		Practice		Knowledge		Attitude		Practice	
	W	Men	W	Men	W	Men	W	Men	W	Men	W	Men
Africa	44	33	31	22	25	11	89	86	89	71	78	71
Asia	44	33	33	22	22	11	88	79	82	78	76	71
Caribbean	35	NR	30	NR	20	NR	80	80	90	80	80	80
Pacific	45	NR	39	NR	28	NR	85	NR	85	NR	77	NR

NR = No Respondents; W = Women

Figure 1: Core Competence – Gender Equality Concepts – Pre- and Post-Training

Women's Human Rights

There is a substantial increase in all three dimensions of women's human rights among female and male participants. Post-training, they demonstrate knowledge that women's rights are an inalienable and indivisible part of human rights. There is now an understanding of CEDAW and Beijing PFA as international instruments for advancing womens'/girls' rights. They have become aware of the specific provisions to eliminate gender discrimination and the government's legal obligation to ensure equality of rights. This trend is noticed across all regions, with a relative difference and a noticeable gap between women and men (Table 2 and Figure 2).

On the other hand, most of them recognise that neglect of women's rights is a human rights violation, believe in women's freedom of choice in all matters concerning them and show commitment to stand up against gender injustice. They are positive about actively accessing legal spaces to hold the state accountable for fulfilling CEDAW provisions and undertaking public campaigns to challenge cultural practices that discriminate against women and girls. However, there is a significant gap in the overall practice dimension, including a divided response to shared responsibility for household chores and sexual and reproductive behaviour. Nonetheless, research suggests higher KA levels indicate greater potential for an increase in practice, and these women and men register more than 70% in knowledge and attitude levels.

These results are coherent with the evidence from the literature. After participating in a Human Rights Education Programme, the women reported that their husbands' attitudes changed positively, physical abuse ended completely, and their influence on decisions within the family increased

(Altinova et al., 2016). In the Girls Inspire Initiative that addressed the root causes concerning the issues of gender equality, the vulnerable young women, who took part in the capacity development, have demonstrated confidence to challenge issues concerning their basic rights and gained abilities to make informed decisions concerning their health, marriage, education and other entitlements (Mnubi, 2020).

Table 2: KAP/S on Women's Human Rights by Region and Sex

Region	Baseline/Pre-Training Score (%)						Post-Training Score (%)					
	Knowledge		Attitude		Practice		Knowledge		Attitude		Practice	
	W	Men	W	Men	W	Men	W	Men	W	Men	W	Men
Africa	37	22	31	22	25	11	89	71	89	71	89	57
Asia	33	22	22	11	17	11	82	71	82	71	76	64
Caribbean	25	NR	25	NR	20	NR	80	85	85	85	80	70
Pacific	39	NR	33	NR	28	NR	85	NR	85	NR	77	NR

NR = No Respondents; W = Women
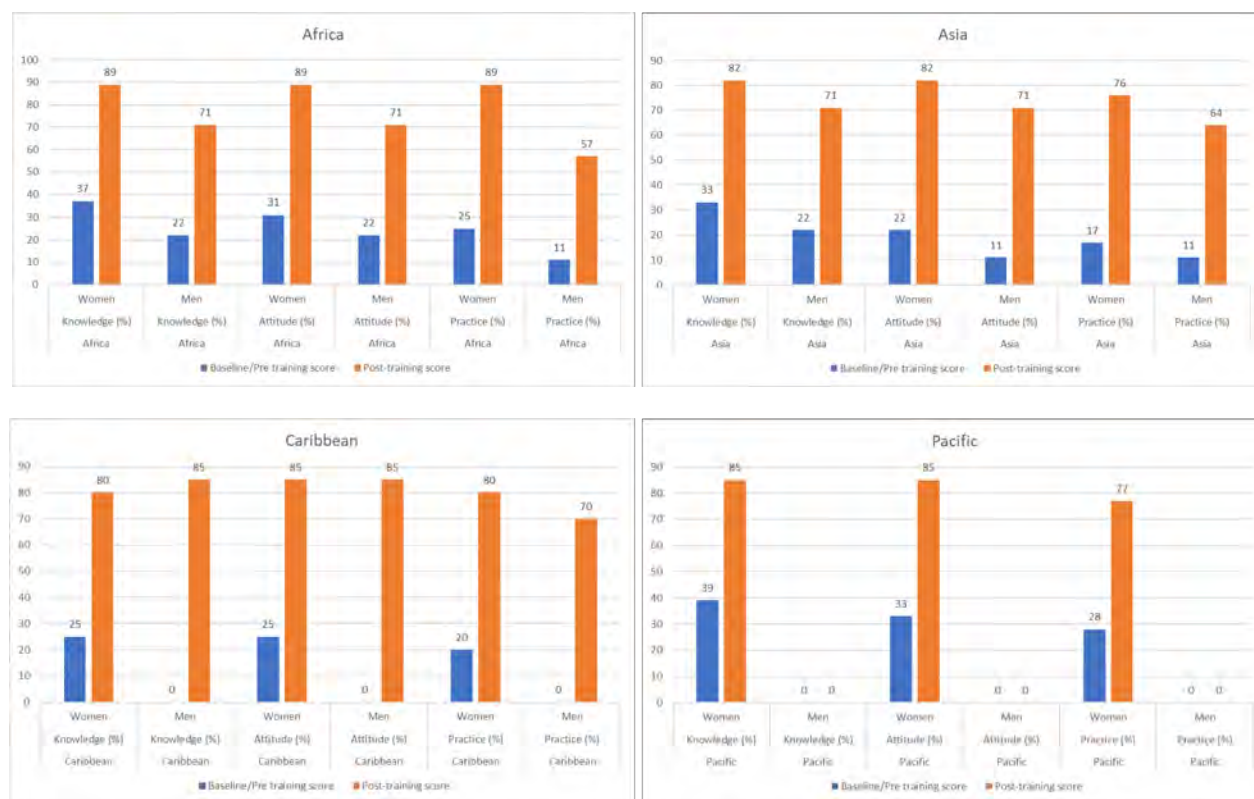
Figure 2: Core Competence – Women's Human Rights – Pre- and Post-Training

Concept of Power

The overall trend in KAS on the role of power in gender inequality and on the scope of transforming such power relations registers a huge improvement among women and men across all regions. However, the skills dimension has recorded a lower response than knowledge and attitude (Table 3 and Figure 3). There is greater awareness at the individual level of the intrinsic link between gender inequality and power relations in society and its influence on decision-making and development

outcomes. Most of them demonstrate an understanding of the role of social institutions in shaping gender and reproducing power relations between women and men and the intersectionality of gender with other forms of discrimination.

The participants acknowledge that power is inherent in everyone and recognise the expression of 'power with' in fostering solidarity for gender equality. They express their commitment to challenging the illegitimate 'power over.' On the other hand, there is a positive disposition to practice women's empowerment with a human rights-based approach and in the agency of people to challenge the unjust gender relations in society. There is a willingness to engage in strategic gender needs and to review class oppression and women's subordination in modes of production for transforming power relations both in private and public realms. However, the response to the practice dimension is much more divided in the case of respondents from Asia and the Pacific and among African male members.

The literature also acknowledged the potential discrepancy in responses between women and men and among both on transforming power relations due to their social acceptability bias (Garrison-Desany et al., 2021). A study of gender training in NGOs that work at the grassroots examined its effectiveness in altering the equations of power, both within and in institutions, enabling women staff to discover the power within themselves and raising awareness among male staff (Murthy, 1998). Another study on the impact of gendered power relations in HRD indicated that the experiences of female and male respondents regarding the exercise of power reflected the gendered contexts of power (Hanscome & Cervero, 2003).

Table 3: KAP/S on Concept of Power

Region	Baseline/Pre-training Score (%)						Post-Training Score (%)					
	Knowledge		Attitude		Practice		Knowledge		Attitude		Practice	
	W	Men	W	Men	W	Men	W	Men	W	Men	W	Men
Africa	31	22	25	11	19	11	89	86	89	71	78	57
Asia	28	11	22	11	17	11	94	78	82	71	76	64
Caribbean	25	NR	25	NR	20	NR	90	90	90	90	85	85
Pacific	33	NR	28	NR	22	NR	92	NR	85	NR	77	NR

NR = No Respondents; W = Women
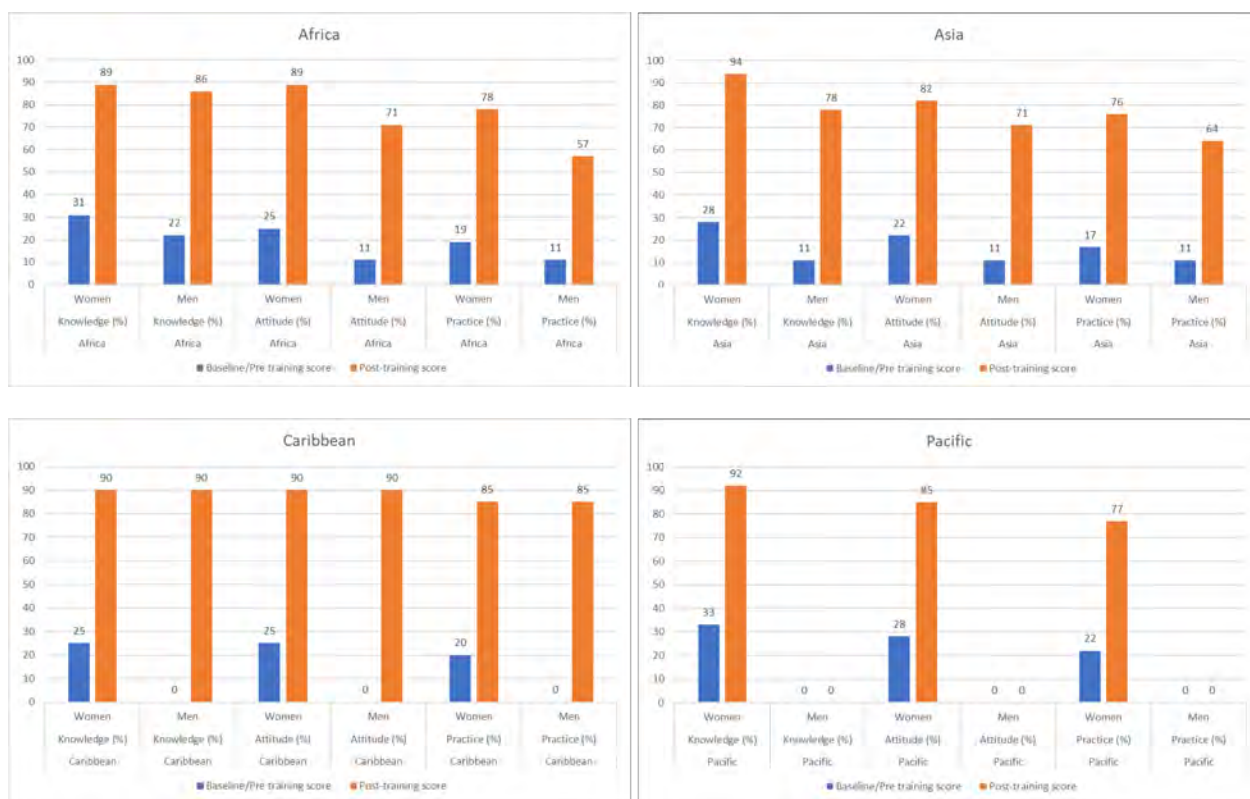
Figure 3: Core Competence – Concept of Power – Pre- and Post-Training

Gender Analysis and Strategic Planning

The post-training scores present increased levels of KAS, which assume a huge value given the critical role of gender analysis in achieving gender equality. This is a positive foundation since the baseline of knowledge and proficiency in this core capacity was extremely low (Table 4 and Figure 4). The participants show explicit knowledge of the scope of gender analysis tools to examine the underlying causes of gender inequality and plan actions to deal with them. There is increased awareness of gender mainstreaming as a strategy for gender equality and the need to integrate the concerns and experiences of women and men in policies, programmes and practices. Further, they gained an understanding of gender advocacy to influence legislative reforms that provide the legal foundation for actions on gender equality. However, the awareness of gender budgeting as a technique for gender equality is lower compared to other aspects.

The participants are committed to advocating key gender equality issues. They agree to equal participation of women and men in leadership and decision-making and recognise the contribution of women's unpaid care work for economic advancement. However, some percentage of respondents still is apprehensive about valuing women's unpaid care work. The participants are positive to practice designing and conducting gender analysis for strategising gender equality programmes and influencing policy processes with a gender perspective that integrates the real needs of women and men. They consider addressing gender strategic needs that challenge women's subordinate position and advocate for gender-responsive budgeting to achieve gender equality.

The literature corroborates these findings on the learners' achievement from training. An online course on gender-based analysis PLUS offered to civil servants has noticed their effectiveness and outcomes in programmes. The communities of practice shared and exchanged at their annual conferences also confirmed such outcomes (Status of Women Canada, 2012). Further, the results of Moser's Framework present the implications of regular gender analyses for development effectiveness. It also acknowledged the crucial role that the learners' understanding of the distribution of workload and gender power relations at the household level could play in targeting innovations and services, uncovering the intersectionality of gender with other axes of inequality and increasing their ability to reach out to target population that could contribute to poverty reduction (Balgah et al., 2019; Sally Theobald, 2017).

Table 4: KAP/S on Gender Analysis and Strategic Planning

Region	Baseline/Pre-Training Score (%)						Post-Training Score (%)					
	Knowledge		Attitude		Practice		Knowledge		Attitude		Practice	
	W	Men	W	Men	W	Men	W	Men	W	Men	W	Men
Africa	25	11	19	11	13	10	89	71	89	71	89	57
Asia	28	11	22	11	17	10	88	78	82	71	76	64
Caribbean	25	NR	20	NR	10	NR	90	90	90	90	80	80
Pacific	28	NR	22	NR	17	NR	85	NR	85	NR	76	NR

NR = No Respondents; W = Women
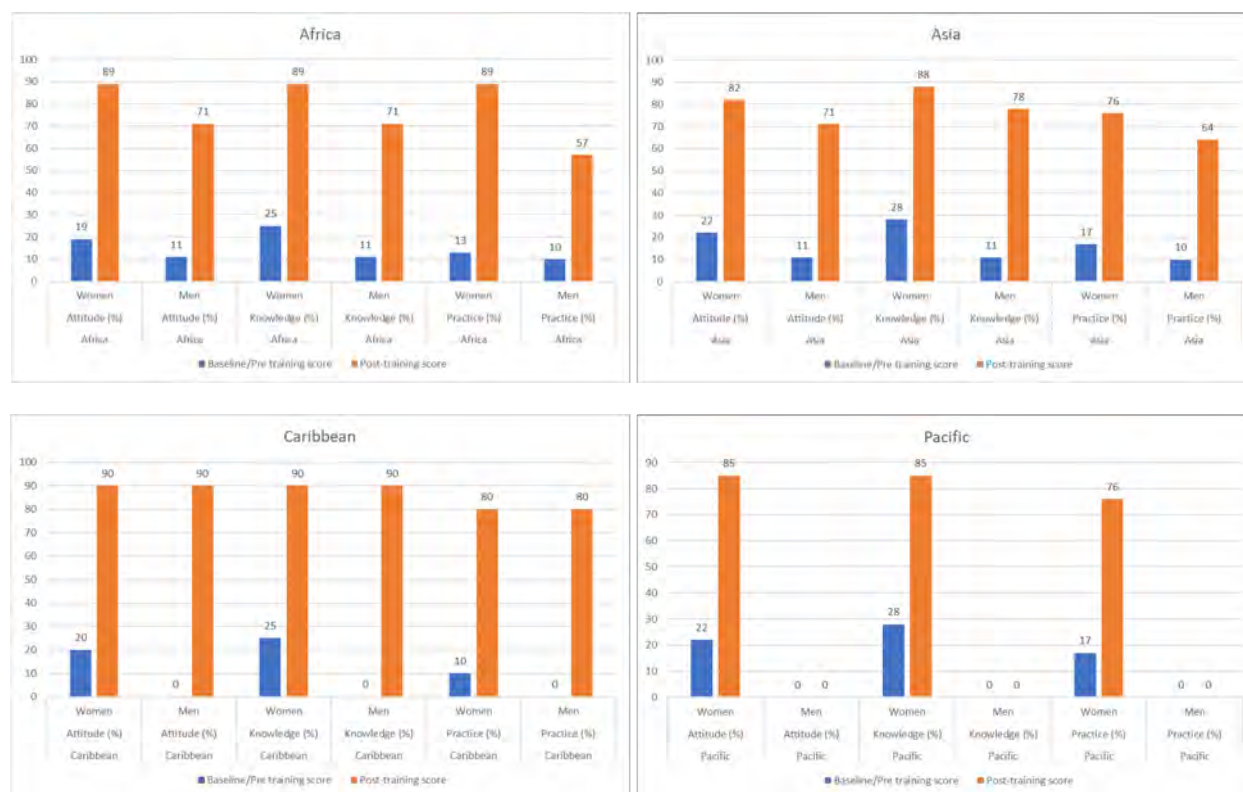
Figure 4: Core Competence – Gender Analysis and Strategic Planning – Pre- and Post-Training

Gender Concerns in Humanitarian Crises

Overall, KAS scores present a two-fold increase in recognising the disproportionate impact of humanitarian crises on women, girls and other vulnerable groups and the priorities in response and recovery plans (Table 5 and Figure 5). There is an increased knowledge that the vulnerabilities and capacities of communities in humanitarian crises vary by context and intersectional identities. Increased awareness of the consequences of humanitarian crises for women in restraining their economic independence and decision-making was also noticed among the participants. Most of them consider capitalising on the positive opportunities arising from the crises to influence new policies for redistribution of unpaid care work within the household and public sphere. However, the response to 'rights-based solutions' and women's economic independence as a core priority in recovery plans remain diffused across regions and sex.

The literature confirms these learning objectives. The Virtual Gender in Humanitarian Action course states that the participants will be able to use their knowledge and skills in integrating gender into humanitarian action with improved targeting of the most vulnerable people (OCHA, 2016). Gender leadership training in the humanitarian sector can enable personal transformational changes among trainees to put gender equality and women's rights at the heart of humanitarian action, positive practices to save more lives and livelihoods and attitudes to promote an equal balance of power between women and men (Oxfam, 2017). Studies by UN Women (2015 a, b) demonstrated the impact of gender equality programming on a wide range of humanitarian interventions. They found significant evidence of improving access to and use of services, increasing effectiveness and inclusiveness of humanitarian outcomes and reducing gender inequalities.

Table 5: KAP/S on Gender Concerns in Humanitarian Crises

Region	Baseline/Pre-Training Score (%)						Post-Training Score (%)					
	Knowledge		Attitude		Practice		Knowledge		Attitude		Practice	
	W	Men	W	Men	W	Men	W	Men	W	Men	W	Men
Africa	37	22	31	11	25	11	78	71	78	71	78	71
Asia	39	22	33	11	28	11	76	71	76	64	76	64
Caribbean	40	NR	25	NR	25	NR	80	80	80	80	70	80
Pacific	44	NR	39	NR	28	NR	84	NR	77	NR	69	NR

NR = No Respondents; W = Women
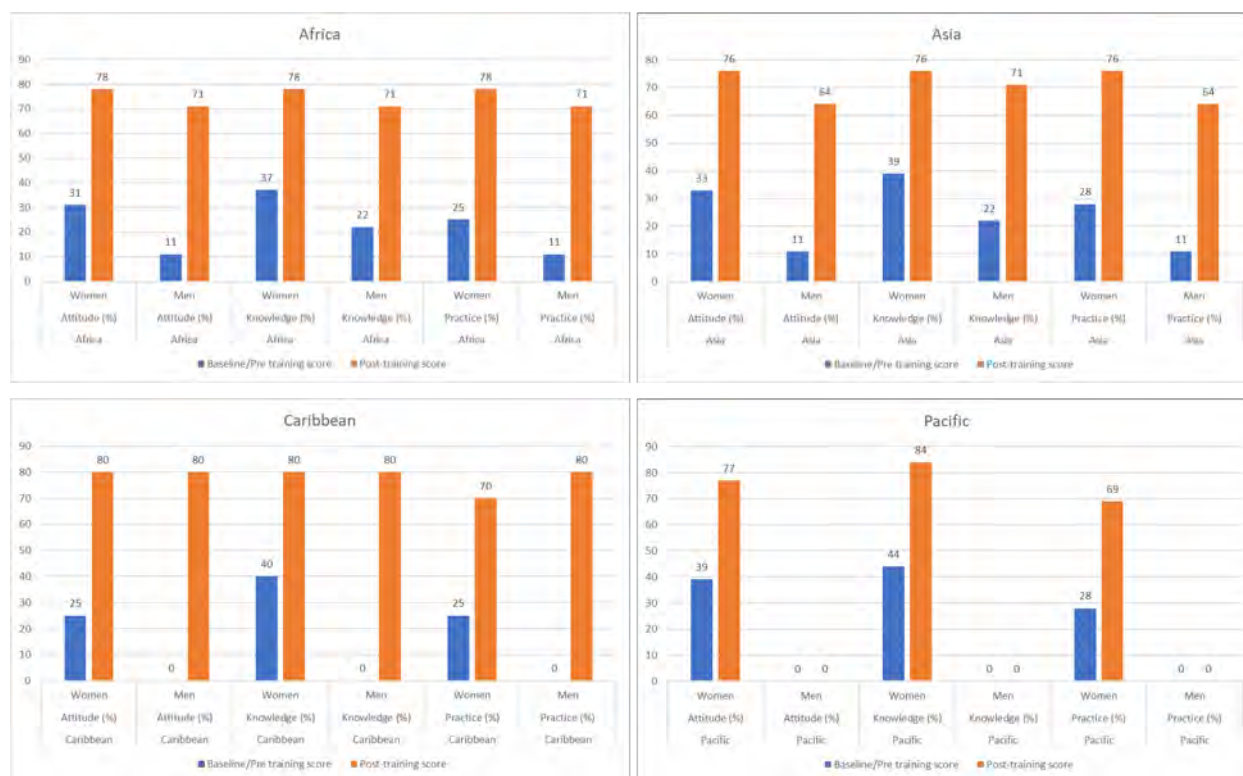
Figure 5: Core Competence – Gender concerns in Humanitarian crises – Pre- and Post-Training

Gender-Responsive Programming

Post-training KAS scores on this core capacity indicate an upward movement (from an extremely low knowledge and proficiency) across all four regions and among women and men in integrating a gender perspective in development programmes (Table 6 and Figure 6). The respondents registered a substantial increase in their knowledge of feminisation of poverty and the human rights-based approach. There is an increased awareness of integrating the gender perspective to analyse and address the gendered violation of human rights, women's strategic gender needs and challenging existing gender power relations. However, the latter two aspects of the knowledge dimension register a relative difference across regions.

The participants acknowledge that denial of human rights is caused by structural factors and recognise men and boys as allies in achieving gender equality. Most of them demonstrate commitment to empowering women against unjust gender relations and monitoring gender transformative changes. However, these changes in attitude are relative across the regions. On the other hand, the respondents are positive about practicing gender-transformative programming to address the underlying causes of gender inequality and foster progressive changes in power relations between women and men. They consider development work to address the capacity of people to assert their human rights and fundamental freedoms. The response to these practices is strong across regions and sex. However, there is a docile response to engaging men and boys to deconstruct gender roles and to act in gender-equitable ways.

The above findings are consistent with the literature on evidence-based gender equality programme models successfully tested in at least 22 developing countries. This presents the transforming ways of

engaging men and boys on Gender Equality and encouraging them to challenge the negative gender stereotypes (USAID, 2021). Such intervention holds promise to reconfigure gender roles, foster positive behaviour changes in caregiving and household labour and promote responsibility for the reduction in gender-based violence. The literature also revealed that gender blind extension services and training did not transform or challenge learners' world views, including the perception of gender norms and roles. Virtual capacity building on gender-transformative programming for Canadian organisations articulates that the participants will be confident to use concepts related to gender equality, design and execute gender transformative approaches, and use accountability tools (Canadian Partnership for Women's and Children's Health — CanWaCH, 2020). Another training on integrating gender into HIV/AIDS reveals that the participants will be able to reflect on unequal power relations, how gender inequalities increase vulnerability, identify institutional and personal barriers in addressing gender inequalities, link gender, sexuality and human rights, and engage men as partners (World Health Organisation — WHO, 2009).

Table 6: KAP/S on Gender Responsive Programming

Region	Baseline						Post-Training Score					
	Knowledge (%)		Attitude (%)		Practice (%)		Knowledge (%)		Attitude (%)		Practice (%)	
	W	Men	W	Men	W	Men	W	Men	W	Men	W	Men
Africa	31	22	25	11	19	11	89	86	89	71	78	71
Asia	33	22	28	11	17	11	82	79	76	71	70	64
Caribbean	25	NR	10	NR	10	NR	90	90	90	90	80	80
Pacific	33	NR	28	NR	22	NR	84	NR	77	NR	69	NR

NR = No Respondents; W = Women
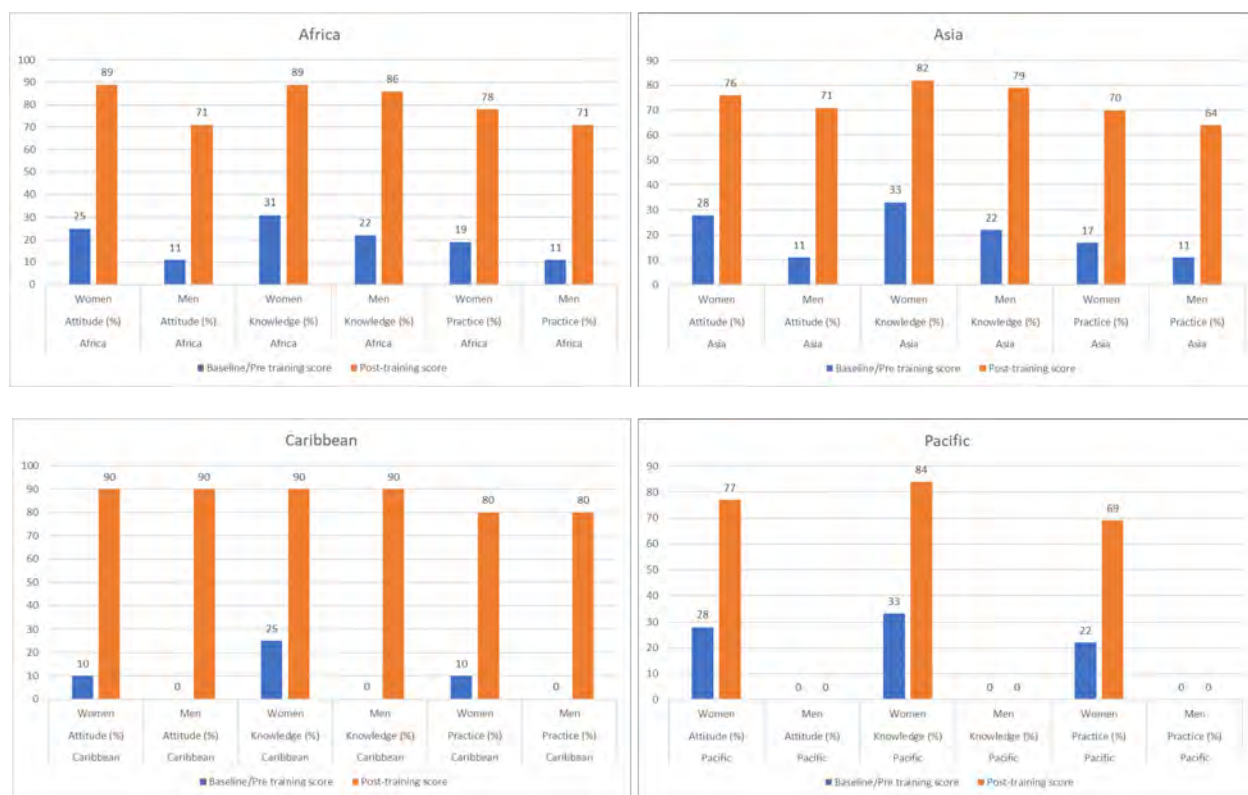
Figure 6: Core Competence – Gender Responsive Programming – Pre- and Post-Training

Efficacy of Online Training in Gender Equality

Satisfaction

All the seventy-four respondents (74) have rated the training curriculum as either relevant (24%) or most relevant (76%). The reasons for this rating (from 67 respondents) were that the inputs were timely, met their capacity needs and addressed the knowledge gaps. The content was easy to understand, appropriate to the context and helpful in realising equal rights for women and men. They expressed that the training has widened their knowledge and provided a holistic understanding of gender issues and approaches to tackle them. They are able to link the concepts of gender equality and women's empowerment to work at the community level and to work on the gaps in policies and practices. Some respondents considered it a wake-up call to mainstream organisation's work on gender issues.

On the other hand, the quality of methodology was rated as either engaging (48%) or most engaging (52%). The reason for this rating (from 61 respondents) was that it was participatory and interactive, and guided by adult learning principles. It helped challenge their understanding and reinforced the learning from training. The feedback during and after each session encouraged the active participation of trainees and provided them with an opportunity to express their views. The material was learner-friendly, and the PowerPoint presentation was shared earlier to each session to introduce them to the topic. They acknowledged that the synthesis of inputs done by the trainer at the end of each session could improve their clarity and refresh their learning. The respondents considered using digital platforms for learning a great idea.

Most respondents rated the efficacy of methods positive (only 2-8% rated low). The videos helped strengthen the inputs, while the exercises allowed reflection on critical elements of the topics taught. The respondents claimed that the assignments helped them gain greater clarity on gender issues, a deeper understanding of the current situation and gaps in government response (policies and programmes). It provided them with an opportunity to review official reports to the CEDAW Committee (Mozambique 2007, Malawi 2015, Tanzania 2016, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh 2017, Guyana and Pakistan 2018, PNG 1995), national policies (National Education Policy — 2015 Malawi, 2019 Pakistan, National Gender Policy – Mozambique and Tanzania, National Plan of Action to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls for 2017-22 Tanzania, Policy to prevent abuse against girls under sixteen — Guyana, National Girls' Education Strategy 2014-18 Malawi) and public budgets. In some cases, the report to the UN CEDAW committee was compared and contrasted with a study by OXFAM (SPARC) or an analysis by a local newspaper (CMES) and referred to the analysis of the national budget by a local budget advocacy group. The staff acknowledged becoming more aware of formal spaces available to promote gender equality and could reflect on the deprivation women in leadership positions face in exercising their autonomy and power. This exposure seems to have reinforced their commitment to reach out to communities and to apply the learning in the local context.

> *"Training was beyond theoretical constructs – assignments have provided an ability to think of the issues out of box – gained deeper insights and helpful for use in development programmes" — Participants from YAPO, Africa*
>
> *"Looked back at our work and gained greater insights at the individual as well as institutional level on gender equality and its linked challenges" — Participants from CMES, Asia.*
>
> *"Comprehensive in nature and required research that contributed to more awareness and sharing and learning from each another" — Participants from YCG, Caribbean*

These satisfaction levels are coherent with other training experiences in the literature. In an empowerment-based training for Gender Equality in Global health leadership, on average, women and men reported higher than moderate satisfaction with learning from the training (Yount et al., 2019). The trainees in Austria, Finland, Greece and Sweden identified 'the hands-on' element as a critical success factor in gender training programmes (EIGE, 2013). Video lectures, readings, assignments and feedback significantly impacted participants' learning on the course and in applying their learning to their professional practice. Such activities aligned with task-based principles were helpful for a pedagogical construct and benefitted the participants (Domingo et al., 2019).

Table 7: Level of Satisfaction by Gender and Region

| Region	Total		Relevance of Training Curriculum				Quality of Methodology			
			Relevant		Most Relevant		Engaging		Most Engaging	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Africa	12	8	3 (25)	1 (12)	9 (75)	7 (88)	8 (67)	2 (25)	4 (33)	6 (75)
Asia	18	18	2 (11)	9 (50)	16 (89)	9 (50)	8 (44)	11 (61)	10 (56)	7 (39)
Caribbean	3	1	1 (33)	0	2 (67)	1 (100)	2 (67)	1 (10)	1 (33)	0
Pacific	14	0	2 (14)	0	12 (86)	0	4 (28)	0	10 (72)	0
	47	27	8 (17)	10 (37)	39 (83)	17 (63)	22 (47)	14 (52)	25 (53)	13 (48)

Figures in parenthesis are percentages.
No responses for Least Relevant and Not Engaging
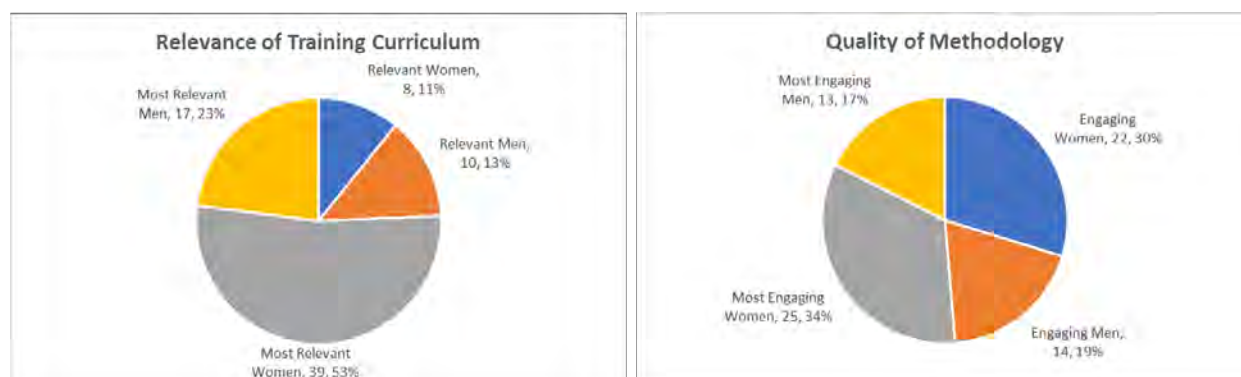
Figure 7: Level of Satisfaction on Curriculum and on Methodology

Table 8: Efficacy of Methods in Reinforcing the Learning from Training

Method	Low		Some Extent		Large Extent	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Videos	4 (8)	1 (4)	16 (34)	8 (30)	26 (55)	17 (63)
Exercises	1 (2)	0	8 (16)	3 (12)	36 (76)	23 (85)
Assignments	2 (4)	0	10 (21)	5 (19)	35 (74)	22 (81)
Total	47	27				
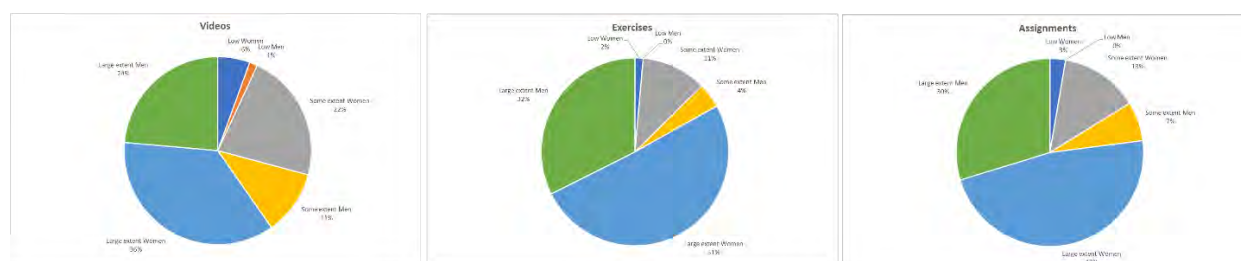
Figure 8: Efficacy of methods in reinforcing the learning

Learning

The participants across all four regions — women and men — demonstrate learning advancement from the training experience. There is an apparent increase in knowledge, attitude, and practice on the six core capacities linked to gender equality, recognising women's rights as human rights, understanding unequal gender power relations and designing and monitoring gender-transformative programming. The achievement of learning outcomes presented in the previous section clarifies this learning advancement in detail.

Behaviour — Knowledge Transfer

Most respondents (70 out of 74) across regions and sex have expressed their level of confidence as either medium (34%) or high (61%) to transfer new knowledge. They attribute this confidence to the knowledge and skills acquired from training and to their ability to apply the newly learnt concepts and tools on the ground in their work with communities. They believe this can help transform gender relations and improve the lives of communities. Some referred to their confidence in analysing poverty, policies, and budgets with a gender lens and understanding the gaps for action. Some others referred to their ability to communicate on gender issues, deal with gender issues in communities independently, and engage with state actors. A few mentioned confidence in using the training curriculum and methodology in their community-level training and in writing development proposals that integrate a gender perspective. A few more relate this confidence to taking responsibility to challenge prejudices, being sensitive to women's issues, targeting the most vulnerable sections of their communities and applying the new knowledge in their context to deepen their understanding of gender issues and making strategic choices for actions. A few have expressed keen interest in expanding their learning on gender by reading the additional material provided and accessing other available literature.

> *It is a big challenge, given the male-dominated society. But actions for gender equality are truly relevant and urgently needed. A participant from Servants of Saint Joseph (SSJ) Papua New Guinea.*

This training on Gender Equality targeted staff in organisations as individuals. Nonetheless, it is likely that the group (which participated in the training) from each organisation induced a collective dynamic that could influence their private lives, workplaces, and communities. The individual responses to confidence are testimony to this influence. However, it is important to recognise that translating this individual change into institutional change requires an organisation to be supportive in enabling staff to apply their new knowledge in work. This could entail encouraging staff to discuss and seek a gender-sensitive culture within the organisation while applying their new skills to programmes. Other enabling measures could include (a) setting up a support group for discussion on issues relevant to gender equality; (b) using trained staff as mentors for other colleagues, and (c) a leadership team demonstrating the practical relevance of gender equality that encourage other staff to work on related issues. Most respondents expressed the primary enabling factor as the supportive organisational leadership committed to transformation. Staff are encouraged to avail opportunities for training and also access online resource material. Periodic staff meetings are common that involve review and sharing of experiences. Some organisations have gender policies, and a few have a

platform to mentor others in the organisation that could promote an enabling climate for this post-training support.

Another dimension of this knowledge transfer was noticed in some cases, where it became a Training of Trainers (TOT). Youth Aid Education Possible Changes Organisation (YAPO), ADPP and Women Development Centre (WDC) reported having cascaded the acquired learning from training within their organisations to other colleagues. In YAPO, at least ten staff were thus covered, while in ADPP, there is a plan to train its national staff and the other ten (10) project staff. ADPP also shared the training modules with the gender focal person of its USAID-funded project to roll it out to twelve (12) district managers and 750 community mobilisers. Further, SSJ and ADPP have translated the curriculum into the local language despite the challenges due to multiple dialects. Concerned Youth Organisation (CYO) used their staff meeting to brief other colleagues about the learning from training on gender equality and women's empowerment. In the Society for Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) case, one of the participants debriefed its executive committee on gender equality training.

The above perception of the transfer of their newly acquired knowledge is consistent with what has been reported in the literature. EIGE's (2016) in-depth study on gender training in the EU found that improved individual gender competence leads to positive gender mainstreaming. In the case of ASHAs (grass-roots level health workers in India), training enabled them to envision taking a more active role and increased their confidence (Garrison-Desany et al., 2021). Teachers who participated in training to promote Gender Equality in schools were less sexist and promoted autonomy to a greater extent (Kollmayer et al., 2020). In another study, women were as likely as men to report higher career agency with respect to professional confidence, leadership ability and professional advancement (Kathryn, 2019). The impact of leadership training on health professionals in Bangladesh demonstrated that changing knowledge and attitude helps learners to motivate others and explore new possibilities (Hossain et al. 2018).

Table 9: Level of Confidence to Transfer Knowledge in Work by Gender and Region

Region	Total		Low		Medium		High		No Response	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Africa	12	8			2 (17)	1 (12)	8 (67)	7 (88)	2 (17)	0
Asia	18	18			7 (39)	7 (39)	11 (61)	10 (55)	0	1 (6)
Caribbean	3	1			2 (67)	0	1 (33)	1(100)	0	0
Pacific	14	0	1 (7)	0	6 (43)	0	7 (50)	0	0	0
	47	27	1 (2)	0	17 (36)	8 (30)	27 (57)	18 (67)	2 (4)	1 (3)

Figures in parenthesis are percentages
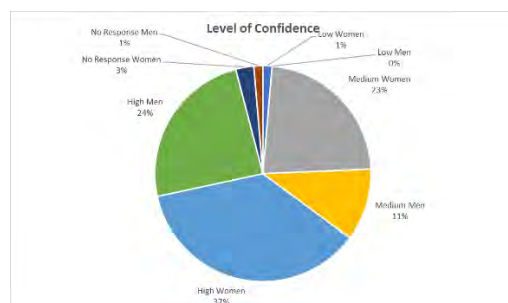
Figure 9: Level of confidence to transfer the knowledge

Impact

Immediate impact relates to changes in practices as a result of attending this training programme. About three-fourths of the respondents reported the immediate impact at a personal level. Only ten have shared the nature of actions resolved in gender-equitable ways. This included equal participation of both spouses in major decisions of the household, shared domestic responsibilities, and reaching out to a relative and discouraging him against a gender stereotype practice. It is essential to recognise that gender relations are dynamic and highly dependent on multiple identities and the complex realities of those who benefit from training. It is also imperative to acknowledge that establishing the attribution of those results to this training is difficult. Nonetheless, the reported actions provide evidence that trainees learned from the training and applied that knowledge in practice.

On the other hand, 50 out of the 74 respondents reported immediate impact at the workplace (reflection of roles and responsibilities and review of development proposals and M&E with a gender lens). Only 16 out of them have shared the nature of actions for gender equality in the organisation and programme. This included a review of workplace policies and employment, creating women-friendly work environment practices (notifying toilets, special provisions), commitment to ensure equal representation of women and men in all positions, promoting gender-sensitive language, adequate resource allocation for gender equality work, challenging gender stereotype in recruitment, and tracking changes with sex-disaggregated data. Further, there were actions to mainstream gender in the programme. This included the inclusion of gender for all future programmes, equal participation of girls and boys in project implementation, including skill training, and involvement of men and boys as allies in the fight against gender-based violence. Some participants claim that the training generated a quest for responding to gender inequality, challenging gender discrimination, and being a change agent.

The literature corroborates the immediate impact that participants reported. The research evidence also confirms that such changes at the individual and organisation levels are interlinked and inter-dependent. The REFLECT training on Gender Equality led to an increased number of teachers reflecting on their gender stereotypes and their influence on their work. Such teachers are believed to be capable of changing gender differences and promoting change as they work with hundreds of

students in their professional life (Kollmayer, 2020). In another agency-based empowerment and leadership training, the women trainees expressed a strong sense of self and greater motivation in their work. It also acknowledged that investing in gender equality and women's empowerment can unlock human potential on a transformative scale. Moreover, this training observed that systematically implemented gender training in an organisation makes a significant difference in its work and facilitates positive change in the attitudes in a gender-sensitive working culture. Two more studies have reported professional transformation from training and its positive relationship with job performance (Klibthong, 2018; Ofojebe and Chukwuma, 2015; Oguntimehin, 2001).

Table 10: Individuals' Perception about the Immediate Impact of Training by Gender and Region

Perception on Immediate Impact	Africa		Asia		Caribbean		Pacific	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Personal								
Reflection on Roles/Responsibilities.	9 (75)	6 (75)	18 (100)	16 (89)	1 (33)	1 (100)	6 (43)	0
Act in gender equitable ways.	9 (75)	8 (100)	18 (100)	16 (89)	3 (100)	0	8 (57)	
Total respondents	12	8	18	18	3	1	14	0
Workplace								
Reflection on Roles/Responsibilities.	7 (58)	6 (75)	16 (89)	16 (89)	2 (67)	1 (100)	6 (43)	0
Gender Perspective in Development.	9 (75)	6 (75)	18 (100)	14 (78)	2 (67)	1 (100)	7 (50)	0
Gender sensitivity in M&E.	7 (58)	7 (87)	18 (100)	15 (83)	0	1 (100)	7 (50)	0
Total respondents	12	8	18	18	3	1	14	0

Note: Figures in the table are the number of respondents. Figures in parentheses are percentages.

Lessons from the Online Training

Online Training Approach

This online training reconfirmed its cost-effectiveness by reaching out to 100 people from different geographical locations. The blend of synchronous and asynchronous learning formats could add to the success of the training. A real-time login schedule allowed regular interactions and provided opportunities for feedback and for seeking clarification. The exercises and assignments of the course design could open up collaborative learning and enable the participants to engage in training fully. On the other hand, the assignments helped the participants to gain practical experience and identify areas for improvement. An integration mechanism that ensures those who have jobs that clash with class catch up with lessons becomes imperative and hence requires attention.

Training Design and Delivery

The training focused on human rights, and social justice must encourage critical reflection on power relations and existing inequalities. This brings the desired social and political change at the individual and institutional levels. The powerful messages have a more appealing influence to deepen a sense of association among participants to the concepts and create an interest in the curriculum. A guiding

principle enables the design of courses supporting the participants to integrate their commitments to gender equality.

Curriculum Development is an Iterative Process

The curriculum development must be recognised as an iterative process with openness to upgrade it with additional insights at the time of implementation. This is relevant for such complex subjects as gender equality and women's empowerment. This must be a principle.

Dealing with Ambiguity and Diversity

Some concepts may remain as ideas, and their practice may neither exist nor be available in the literature. Despite this gap, those concepts hold true to the current context of issues and have critical importance. In this training experience, the concepts of such nature include recognising women's unpaid care work as an economic contribution to the national economy, shared responsibilities within the household, freedom of choice in sexual and reproductive health, engaging men and boys as allies for gender equality, and not equating authority and leadership to masculinity. The training input was not adequate to generate internalisation and acceptance. This has created ambiguity and confusion among the participants. It was realised that there should be focused debate on such concepts that allows the participants to share their ambiguity or diversity, raise questions, and include experiences to rewire the thought process and reach a consensus. This indicated a need for a dedicated discussion forum in the course design. This could benefit from adequate research on the scope and practice of each of these concepts from grounded experimentation. The discussion could be facilitated with a key question.

Value and Scope of Continuing Education on Gender Equality

It is important to recognise that training by itself cannot bring change. Effective learning is an ongoing and continuous process in which 'learning' is not a linear trajectory of acquisition of capacities. It is embedded in a broader set of measures to influence change. Therefore, the reflection initiated on gender through this training requires further deeper analysis and firm conviction. This must be supported by harnessing the existing organisational processes (staff meetings, annual reviews), promoting peer-led learning circles and sharing the communities of practice. These measures must present challenges and lessons in applying gender concepts and integrating a gender perspective in the organisation. This enables individuals and organisations to adapt and become resilient in transforming the complex gender power relations (Goel, 2017).

Conclusions

This capacity-building initiative registers a clear trend of outcomes at the individual level regarding increased knowledge, attitude and skills on Gender Equality that could be applied in their work. On the other hand, these organisations demonstrate an enabling environment for more gender equal policies, structures and practices. Although the actual impact is too early to measure at this point, the level of changes sparked by the training in gender equality at the individual and organisational level is perceptible. This conforms with EIGE's research evidence on the effectiveness of gender equality training at the individual, organisational and societal levels. The post-training data and analysis demonstrate such potential and scope. Further, the high reach of this online training (in terms of the number of participants and geographical spread) has established a return on investment in building

capacity on gender at a reduced cost. It is now essential to convert the power of this achievement and efficacy of training in linking to a broader gender equality agenda and communicating across the sector.

Moreover, gender competence development does not end with gender equality training. It should integrate into the broader gender equality strategy of these organisations. To make the best use of the new knowledge that staff acquired from training, follow-up processes must be set up that offer them opportunities to continue upgrading their gender equality competencies. This must consider distributing handouts on issues related to gender equality, online iterative learning material (quiz, question/answer), organising online workshops at regular intervals and even fostering networking among these organisations for shared knowledge and collaboration in tackling constraints for gender equality and women's empowerment. We must recognise that the effectiveness of training is likely to be limited unless accompanied by sustained interventions to address discrimination (Casey et al. 2018; Williamson & Foley, 2018).

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