



ADVANCING SEX AND GENDER EQUITY IN RESEARCH



Annual Report 2020

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dr Shirin Heidari

The Founding President of GENDRO

Year 2020 was a year that turned our world upside down. As SARS-CoV-2 took foothold in every single country on the planet, the COVID-19 pandemic challenged us to adapt to new realities.

GENDRO was no exception. As a relatively new non-for-profit association, we had to rearrange our priorities, mobilise our limited resources and keep a watchful eye on the way new data and evidence was produced. We were increasingly concerned about gender aspects being conspicuous by absence in the rapidly growing body of evidence that was produced by all actors. As the gender implications of the pandemic unfolded, it compelled us to voice our concerns and promote gender-sensitive COVID-19 research and data analysis to inform a more effective and equitable response.

This common cause strengthened and expanded our Gender, Evidence and Health (GEH) Network. As our breakfast meetings transitioned to online platforms, we witnessed a rapid organic growth of the GEH Network, with members joining us from all over the world. Together, we convened meetings, issued call for actions, released statements, published articles, and conducted research and analyses. As a member of the Civil Society Mechanism of the World Health Organization (WHO), we engaged with the WHO Director-General, by co-convening the first of a series of dialogues, during which we highlighted our expectations from WHO towards a gender-transformative pandemic response and offered our support. This Annual Report is a testimony of the unwavering commitment of our volunteers, interns, board members, partners, GEH Network members, sponsors and donors that enabled all these activities and outputs in 2020. We are truly indebted to you all.

COVID-19 pandemic reminded us of the importance of our mission. It also reveals how easily progress can backslide, and how much work remains to be done for sex and gender integration in research and analysis becoming a rule rather than an occasional exception. Until then, GENDRO is committed to join forces with partners and individuals from all over the world to make this change happen. Looking ahead, and entering our third year of existence, we are shaping our strategy and future directions. Mindful of our limited resources, but proud of the wealth of expertise, commitment and passion in our team and our networks of members and partners, we continue to aim high and strive for making long-lasting impact. And we count on you to join us in this journey.

GENDRO AT A GLANCE

GENDRO was conceived in 2018 by a close group of accomplished professionals from diverse backgrounds who are all passionate about advancing sex and gender equity in research, innovation and society. GENDRO is a dynamic and innovative non-governmental association based and legally registered in Geneva, Switzerland.

OUR VISION

An equitable world built on research and innovation that integrates sex and gender dimensions.

OUR MISSION

To advance equity through the integration of sex and gender in research and data analyses across disciplines.

OUR VALUES

In GENDRO, we strive to apply a feminist approach to the way we work and in the work we do.

What brings the different strands of feminisms together is the fundamental belief in the equality of women, men and gender non-conforming people. Feminism recognises that the quest for equity and social justice is through challenging systems that reinforce gender inequality and addressing intersectional power hierarchies. As such, feminist approach embraces diversity and is inherently decolonial and anti-racist. The following values are part of our feminist approach and indicate what GENDRO cares about, how it wants to be recognised, its methods and approaches, what others can expect of it, what guides its actions, and what underlies and permeates its behaviour. These values:

Equality: GENDRO believes that women, men and gender non-confirming people are entitled to the same respect, dignity, safety and security as all other members of society and are equal before the law.

Diversity: GENDRO believes that society benefits from the contributions of people with diverse characteristics and backgrounds, including but not limited to gender, race, ethnicity, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, religion, geographic location, and type of disability.

Evidence-based: GENDRO shall base its actions, decisions and positions on quality evidence.

Collaborativeness: GENDRO collaborates with individuals, groups and organisations and promotes collaborative efforts internally and externally.

Integrity: GENDRO shall be trusted, reliable, and authentic in all its dealings. It will carry out its work transparently and honestly.

Independence: GENDRO's actions, decisions and positions shall be guided by its Vision and Mission as well as its Strategic Objectives.

Accountability: GENDRO shall be accountable for its actions and decisions, particularly to the ultimate beneficiaries of its work, partners, funders, staff, volunteers and interns, and society as a whole.

Human Rights: GENDRO recognises that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights and it shall be sensitive to the values, religion, customs, traditions and cultures of those it interacts with. GENDRO will respect individual freedom of thought, conscience and association.

2020 TIMELINE



MARCH

APRIL

MAY

Women in Power Challenging Gender Inequality in Global Health and Beyond: A Conversation with Female Leaders

On 9 March 2020, on the occasion of International Women's Day, GENDRO chaired the panel discussion where female leaders from The Global Fund, GAVI, Stop TB Partnership and UNITAID discussed ways in which global health organisations challenge gendered barriers as part of their work, thus advance gender equity and equality across global health.

A Call for Urgent Action: A Renewed Commitment to Gender Responsive Research for Health Equity and Human Rights in the Context of COVID-19 Pandemic

On 17 April 2020, GENDRO launched a call for an urgent action to produce robust gender-sensitive data and evidence in response to the pandemic. The call for action was endorsed by more than 90 professionals and global health advocates.

Sign the Call for Action [here](#).

GENDRO at the WHA73 Gender Data: The Unlearned Lessons of Global Pandemics

On 19 May 2020, GENDRO hosted a panel discussion on the gendered aspects of data collection and analysis, and the ways in which equitable knowledge production can contribute to an equitable health response. The event was organised as part of the World Health Assembly Week (WHA73), and sponsored by Think Tank Hub Geneva.



MAY

GENDRO at the WHA73 Masked Heroines? Building Resilience Begins with a Gender-Equitable Health Workforce

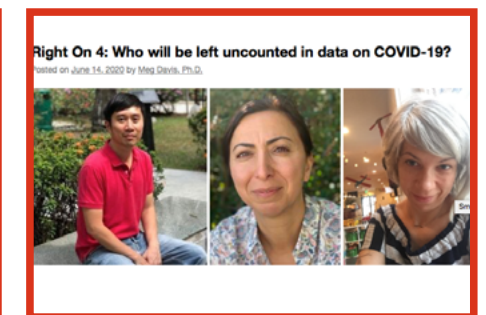
On 22 May 2020, GENDRO in partnership with Women in Global Health, organised an online event, hosted by Global Health Centre, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, focusing on the implications of the pandemic on the predominantly female health workforce, raising concerns about the scarcity of data in understanding the multilayer gendered impacts of the pandemic on health workforce. The event was organised in the sidelines of WHA73.



JUNE

The Uncounted: Politics of Data in Global Health

On 11 June 2020, GENDRO and Geneva Centre of Humanitarian Studies co-hosted a book launch. The Uncounted: Politics of Data in Global Health was authored by GENDRO's long-term partner and member of its GEH Network, Dr Sara Meg Davis.



JUNE

Right On 4: Who Will Be Left Uncounted in Data on COVID-19?

On 14 June 2020, members of the GEH Network, Geneva-based Dr Sara Meg Davis, Marina Smelyanskaya and Dr Shirin Heidari, and Singapore-based social worker and human rights activist Jolovan Wham convened to discuss the question: Who will be left uncouncted in data on COVID-19?, where they addressed the global need for feminist and human rights approach to gather data during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2020 TIMELINE



JUNE

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

Ethical and Gender Considerations in Remote Data Collection within Research in Humanitarian and Refugee Settings

On 29 June 2020, GENDRO and Global Health Centre co-hosted an interactive research seminar bringing together over 50 participants, in which Dr Chi-Chi Undie (Population Council) and Dr Michelle Lokot (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine) discussed ethical considerations of remote data collection in humanitarian and refugee settings in the context of COVID-19 pandemic.

GENDRO at the Global Gender Summit

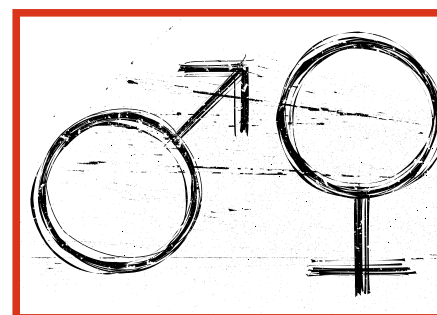
On 20 August 2020, at the Global Gender Summit, Dr Shirin Heidari gave a presentation on advancing best practices to incorporate gender analysis in health research. Among other measures, she highlighted the role of health research gatekeepers and ways in which SAGER guidelines could be used to incorporate gender considerations in research.

Civil Society Organisations and WHO Director General Dialogue: Achieving a Gender Transformative COVID-19 Response

On 1 September 2020, GENDRO and Women in Global Health launched the first, in the series of dialogues between civil society and the WHO Director General Dr Tedros, session on a gender-responsive approach to COVID-19. [More info.](#)

The session was concluded with the set of expectations on what measures WHO and civil society could and should take to address some of the gendered implications of the pandemic. **10 takeaway actions** resulting from the event are made available [here](#).

BMJGH



HHR

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

Towards the Real-Time Inclusion of Sex- and Age-Disaggregated Data in Pandemic Responses

On 7 October 2020, GENDRO and GEH Network published a commentary in the BMJ Global Health on the importance of sex- and age-disaggregated data in pandemic response.

Gender and Health: Implications of Covid-19

On 30 October 2020, Dr Shirin Heidari gave a talk to the students of the University Westminster on gender-related shortcomings in research and policy environments, highlighting the moral and scientific responsibilities to integrate sex and gender dimensions into the ongoing pandemic response.

Advancing Gender Sensitive Research: The Role of Ethics Committees

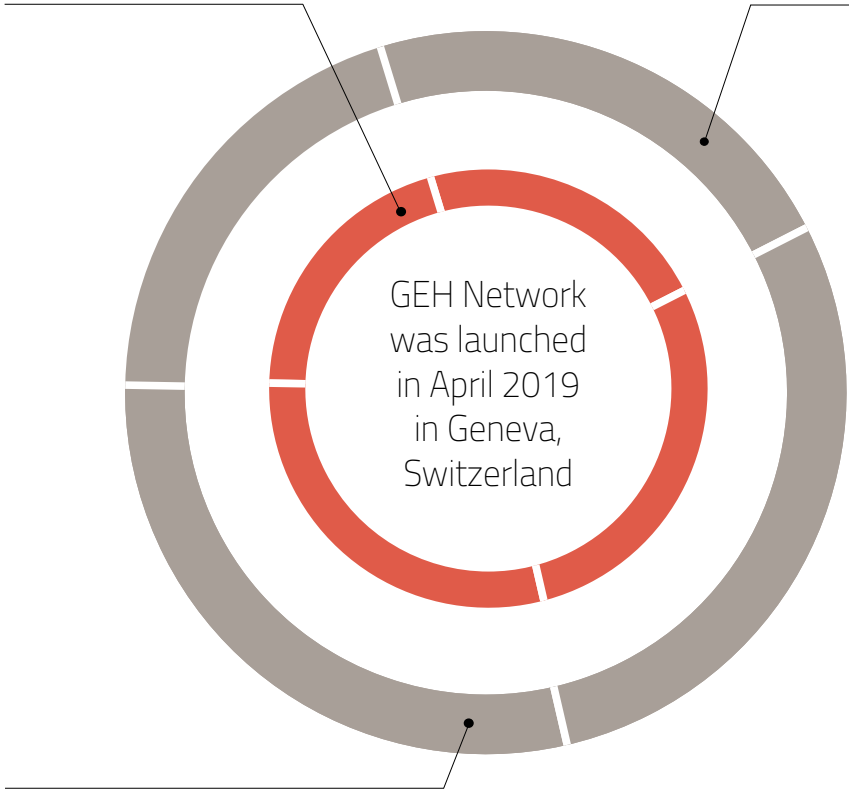
On 23 November 2020, Dr Shirin Heidari, Dr Abha Saxena presented preliminary results of the research on the role of ethics committees in furthering gender considerations in research to the students and faculty of the Institute for Ethics, History and the Humanities of the University of Geneva.

An Invitation to a Feminist Approach to Global Health Data

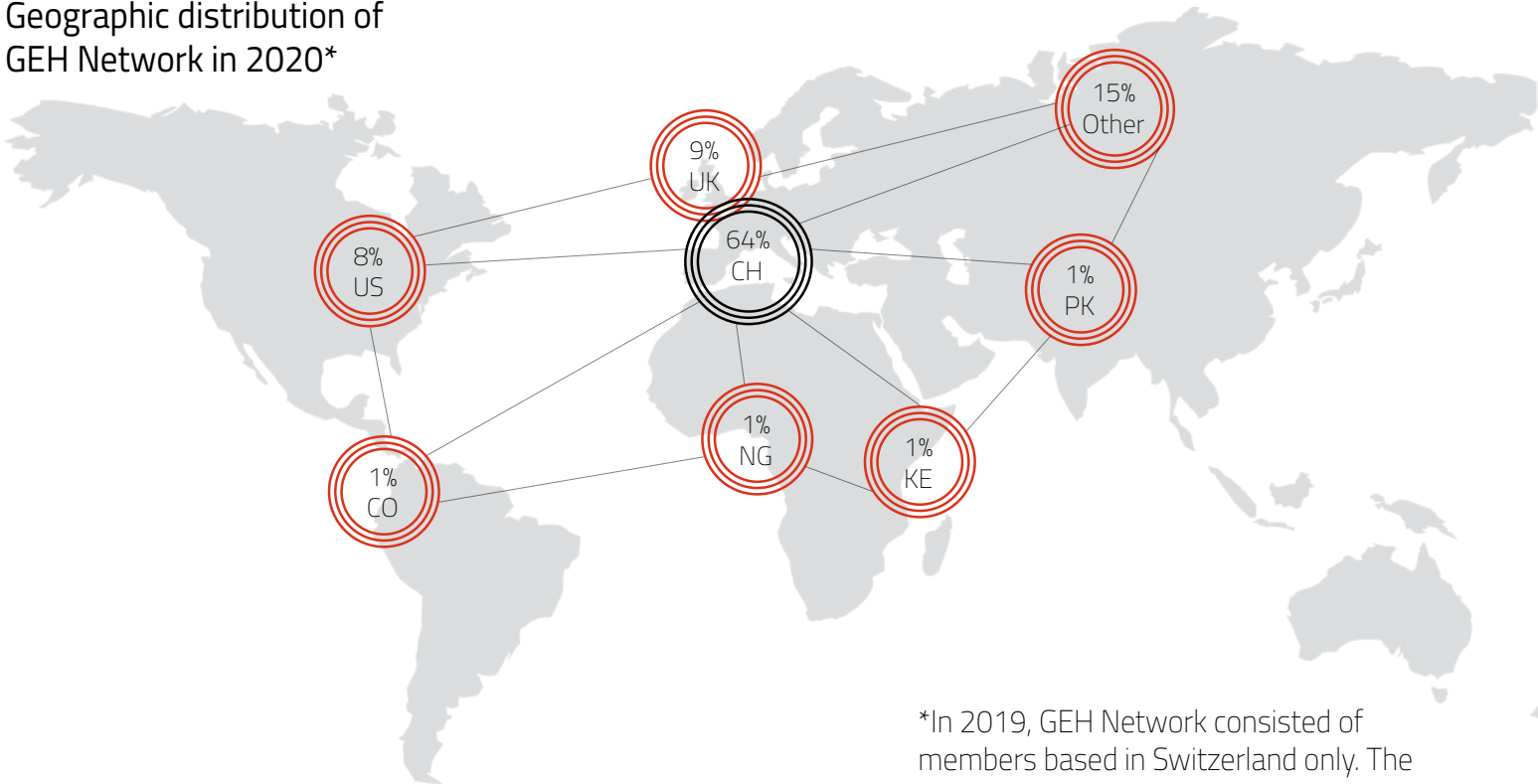
On 8 December 2020, GENDRO's president, Dr Shirin Heidari and Heather Doyle, a member of the GEH Network published the commentary - An Invitation to a Feminist Approach to Global Health Data - in a special issue of the Health and Human Rights Journal, which was launched at the International Day of Human Rights.

GENDER, EVIDENCE AND HEALTH (GEH) NETWORK

2019
40 MEMBERS



Geographic distribution of GEH Network in 2020*



2020 IN NUMBERS

2020
81 MEMBERS

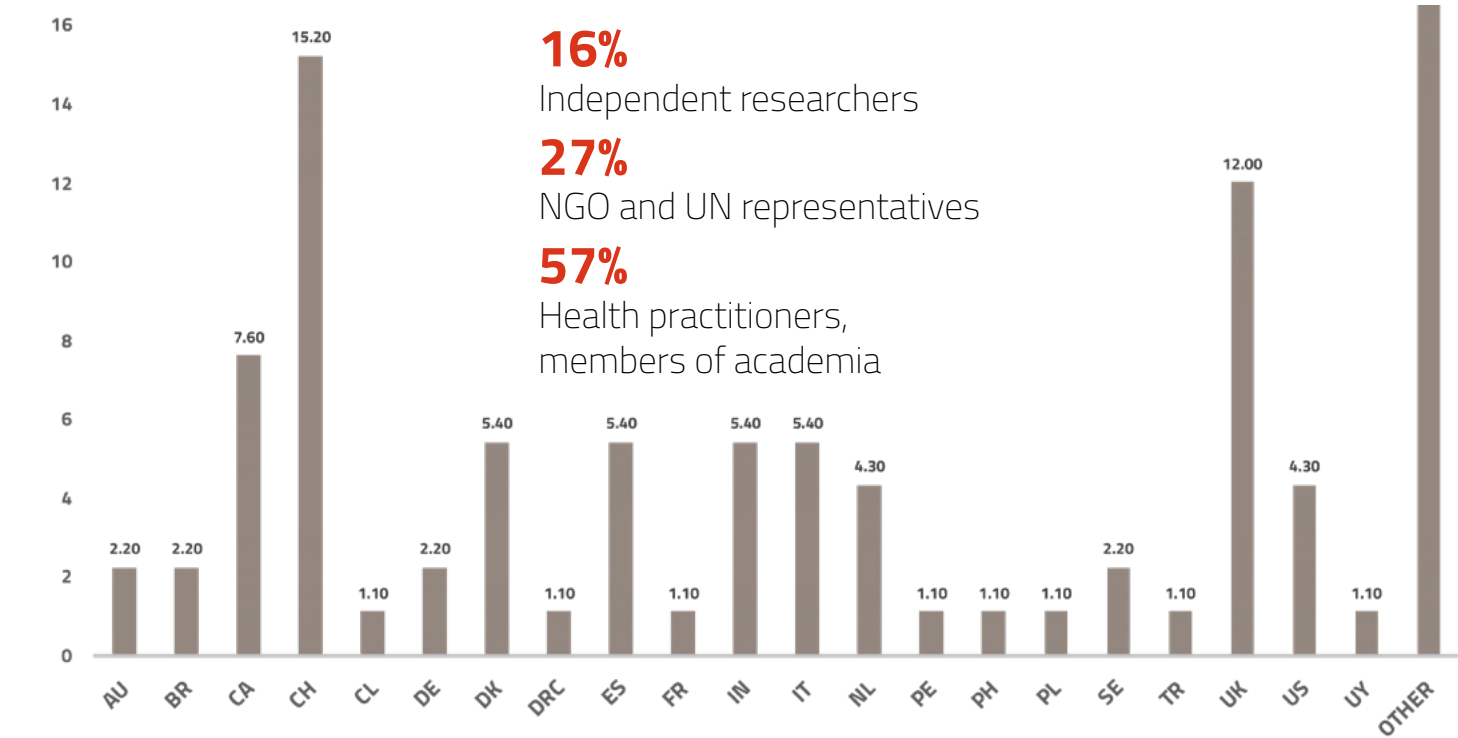
- GEH Network members by affiliations
- 29% Representatives from health, research and academic institutions
- 29% CSO and NGO members
- 20% Independent researchers
- 22% Representatives from UN agencies

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Endorsements by country and affiliation (in %) to [A Call for Urgent Action: A Renewed Commitment to Gender Responsive Research for Equity and Human Rights in the Context of COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

92 ENDORSEMENTS

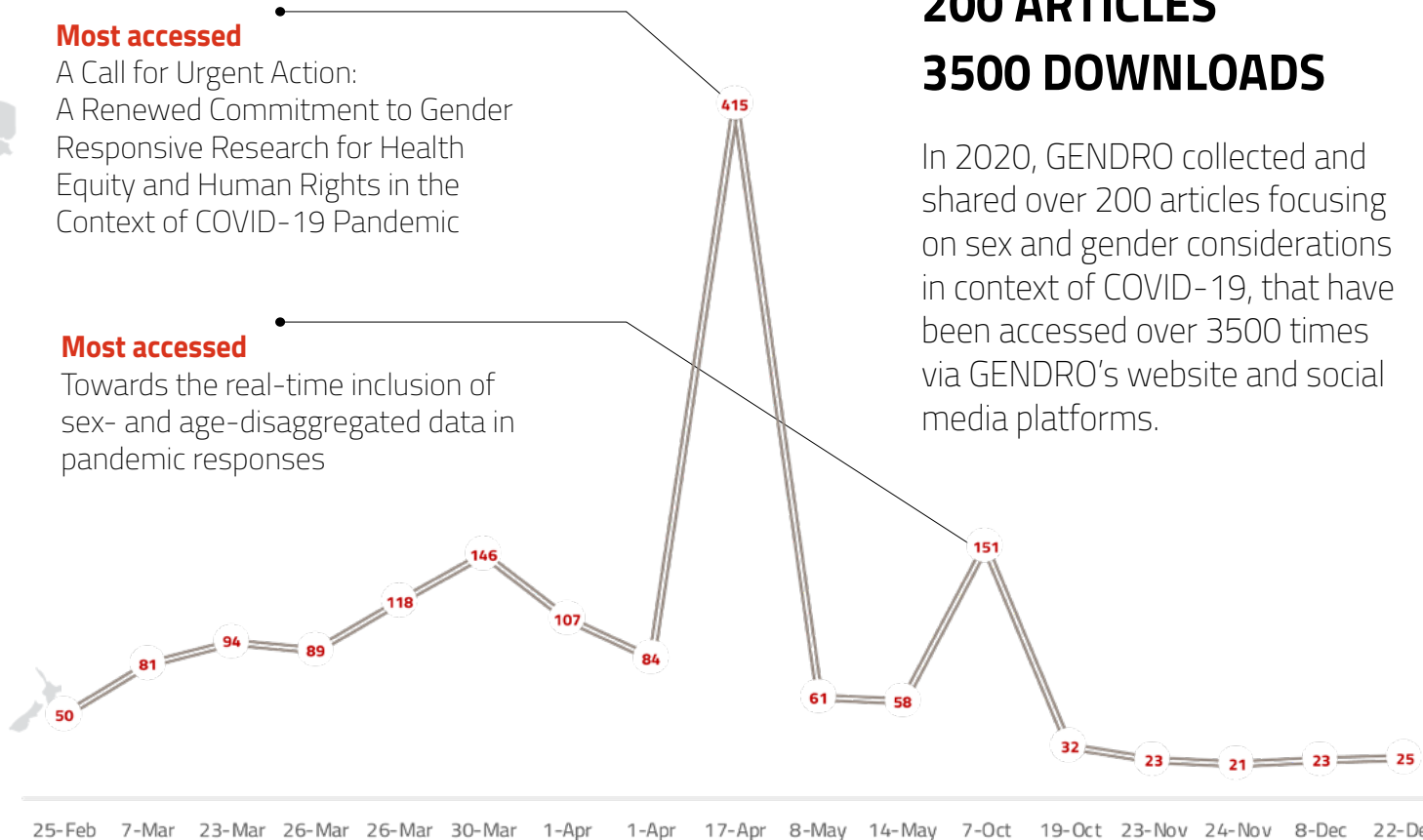
- 16% Independent researchers
- 27% NGO and UN representatives
- 57% Health practitioners, members of academia



200 ARTICLES
3500 DOWNLOADS

In 2020, GENDRO collected and shared over 200 articles focusing on sex and gender considerations in context of COVID-19, that have been accessed over 3500 times via GENDRO's website and social media platforms.

- Most accessed
A Call for Urgent Action: A Renewed Commitment to Gender Responsive Research for Health Equity and Human Rights in the Context of COVID-19 Pandemic
- Most accessed
Towards the real-time inclusion of sex- and age-disaggregated data in pandemic responses



*In 2019, GEH Network consisted of members based in Switzerland only. The COVID-induced realities encouraged GENDRO expand its GEH Network internationally.

GEH NETWORK MEMBERS' TESTIMONIALS

“GENDRO has created an important and dynamic platform for a diverse group of researchers, health officials and other practitioners thinking critically about gender, power and data. Margaret Mead said that a small group of like-minded people has the power to change the world - and networks like GENDRO are an example of this in action.”

*Dr Sara Meg Davis
Senior Researcher and Special
Advisor, Global Health Centre*

“The lack of attention to gender and sex related issues in the field of health research has resulted in the systematic exclusion of women from health research. This is not only a scientific concern but also an ethical one. When women are under-represented in research studies without a valid scientific justification, it draws attention to injustices and unfair research practices. It also excludes them, unfairly, from having access to the benefits of research. I feel privileged to be involved with GENDRO which has been instrumental in raising attention to the inequities in this area. My

*Dr Abha Saxena (MD)
Independent Bioethics Advisor,
Adjunct Professor
University of Geneva*

involvement with GENDRO has raised my own awareness of the gaps in research ethics vis-à-vis the conduct of gender sensitive research. Gaps such as a lack of focus on gender within research ethics guidelines and lack of information on the awareness of research ethics committees about gender issues and the intersectional dimensions of gender equality. Ethics committees have an important role in promoting gender sensitive research through highlighting the ways by which research design, methodology and data analysis can disadvantage women in various ways, and requiring researchers to strive for gender sensitive research practices that are inclusive and fair. I look forward to a continued involvement with GENDRO in order to strengthen research ethics and research ethics committees vis-à-vis gender issues, and support GENDRO in its mission to advance equity through the integration of sex and gender dimensions in research across disciplines.”

“Global Action on Men’s Health is very pleased to be a member of the GEH Network. It is hugely helpful for us to meet other researchers in the gender field, to share information about our own work and to help advance the cause of gender mainstreaming in health data and research. It is also a great opportunity for us to raise and discuss men’s health, an issue that still too often is overlooked by many other organisations in the gender field, and to learn from colleagues who work mainly in women’s health.”

*Mr Peter Baker
Director
Global Action on Men’s Health*

**GEH Network
is a think tank
dedicated to
convene actors
and facilitate
joint actions
toward improving
integration of
sex and gender
research
and data
analysis.**



“The GEH Network has been a catalytic forum for knowledge sharing and knowledge dissemination around gender, data and health research. The presentations by different Network members provide an opportunity to expand the discussion beyond Network and across global health topics and geographies. As an example, further to the GEH Network meeting in December 2020, the gender focal points of the WHO Polio Programme were able to raise awareness on the SAGER Guidelines with both the vaccine research and outbreak response working groups. As a result, GENDRO President and SAGER Guidelines lead author, Dr Shirin Heidari, presented the SAGER Guidelines to the vaccine working group on January 19, 2021. This working group includes WHO and 3 other partners in vaccine research. This is a clear demonstration of the impact of knowledge sharing and knowledge dissemination to affect change. A case study on the SAGER guidelines in polio outbreak response in DRC is being followed up.”

*Ms Michela Manna
Gender Specialist
Global Polio Eradication Initiative
World Health Organization*

“As a researcher in the Area of noncommunicable diseases and access to care in low- and middle-income countries for more than 10 years, issues of gender have always been present in the research I have implemented. Whether it is the stigma associated to having diabetes if you are a woman and bringing diabetes “into the family”; gender roles in the household; or risk factors and health seeking behaviours in men and women. Despite these findings being part and parcel of my research, the issue of gender has not always been at the forefront of how my results are presented or how these topics are addressed in proposals or papers. This is arguably due to a lack of tools to apply a gender lens on my research results, a lack of prominence of gender in funding proposals and a lack of exposure to the ongoing discourse around gender, health and research. GENDRO in its work is trying to address these gaps by both providing a network of like-minded people as well as trying to change how the issue of gender is addressed in the research process.”

*Dr David Beran
Researcher and Lecturer
Division of Tropical and
Humanitarian Medicine,
Geneva University Hospitals and
University of Geneva*

“I have dedicated my life to working to advance gender equality. When I discovered GENDRO, I knew I wanted to join. It stands out because of its commitment to advancing equity through the integration of sex and gender dimensions in research. Why is this exceptional? Because typically if you are a woman and bringing what one sees is gender advocates on one side, and data scientists and researchers on another. GENDRO brings these two together in a way that is unique. It has created a space for dialogue and ongoing horizontal learning that bridges the collection and knowledge of data, with the actual use of it for advocacy and accountability purposes. Upon joining GENDRO, I have been impressed by the organisational culture of respect and cherishing of diversity. It is truly an organisation that values diverse backgrounds, perspectives and expertise, and that is continuously learning and evolving. Looking towards 2021, I am eager to continuing collaborating with GENDRO to strengthen its partnership base and reach.”

*Ms Claudia Ahumada
Partnerships and Knowledge
Management, GENDRO*

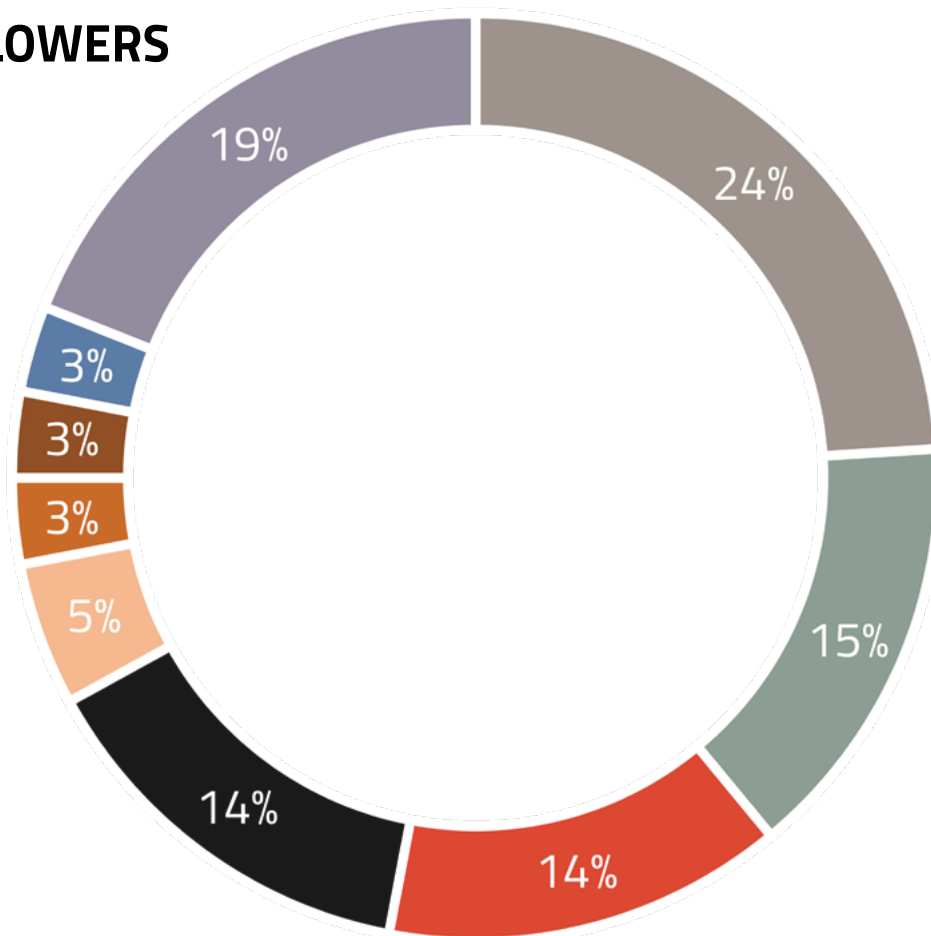
SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS

TOP USED HASHTAGS

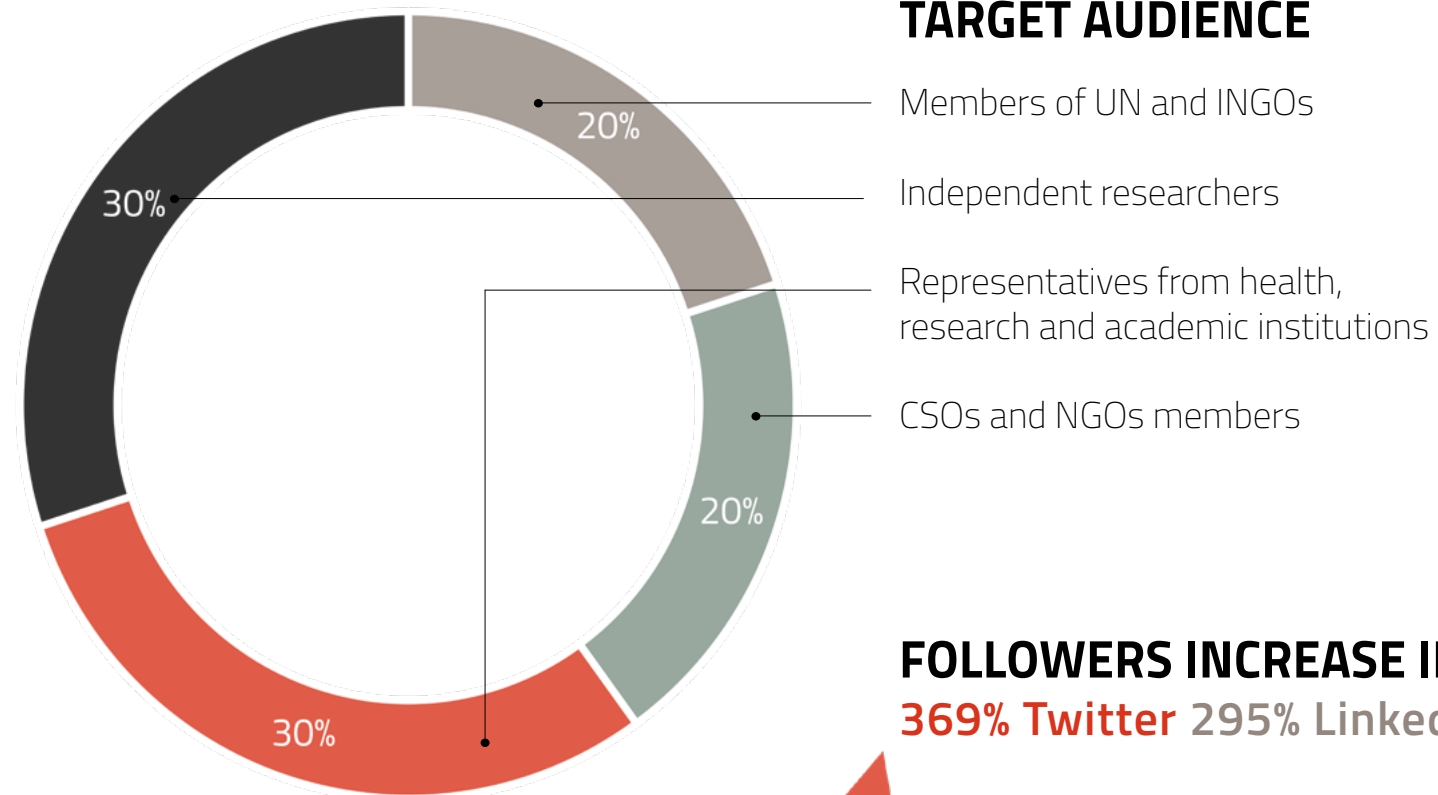
#AccesstoHealth	#HumanRights
#AgeData	#InfectiousDisease
#ClinicalTrials	#IWD2020
#COVAX	#PrecisionMedicine
#COVID19Response	#ResearchforHealth
#CovidData	#Vaccine
#GenderBias	#SexData
#GenderData	#SexDifferences
#GenderEquality	#WHA73
#GlobalHealth	#WHO
#HealthEquity	#WomeninGH

GEOGRAPHY OF FOLLOWERS

24% United States
 15% Switzerland
 14% United Kingdom
 14% Canada
 5% Spain
 3% Uganda
 3% Somalia
 3% Kenya
 19% Other countries

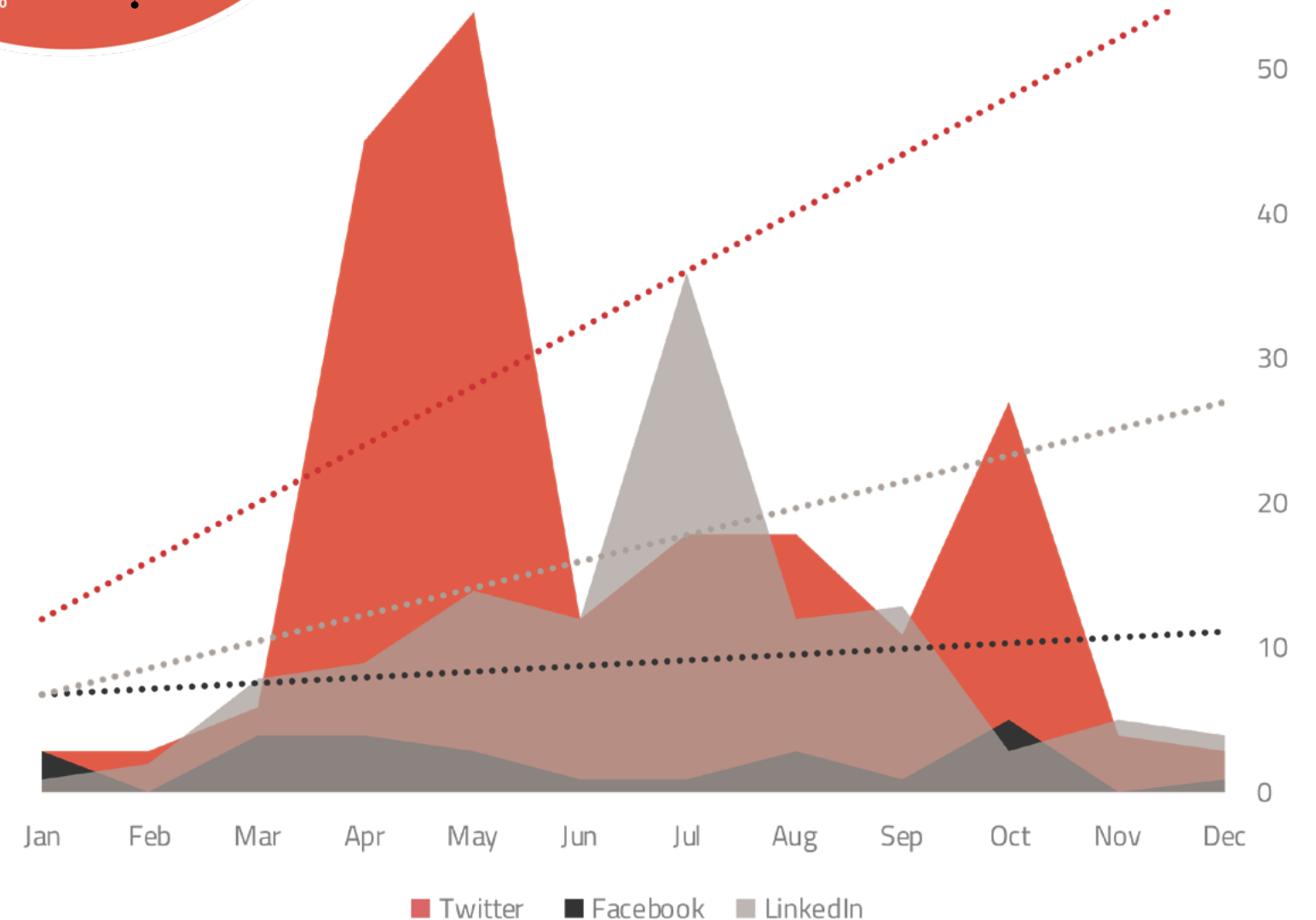


TARGET AUDIENCE



FOLLOWERS INCREASE IN 2020

369% Twitter 295% LinkedIn 63% Facebook



OUR BOARD

Dr Shirin Heidari
The Founding President

Dr Maria Halkias
Member

Mr Bernard Kadasia
Member

Ms Olivia Mettler
Treasurer

OUR TEAM

Ms Aida Mechkene Chourou
Human Resources

Ms Claudia Ahumada
Partnerships and Knowledge
Management

Ms Ziyoda Kurbanova
Communications

Ms Kala Madhav
Web Design

Ms Yana Daneva
Partnerships and Resources

Ms Zineb El Ouassini
Fundraising

Ms Alice Palmer-Ross
Intern

Ms Emily Lasher
Intern

MOVING FORWARD

As we embark on our next strategic journey, the following three years will be a defining period for our evolving organisation. Regardless of what new trajectories will emerge as part of this journey, one thing will remain certain and that is GENDRO's irreversible commitment to address the gender data gap.

With the pandemic having exposed many old and new challenges, our growing community of advocates for equitable data have witnessed a worrisome amount of gender-blind practices in a multitude of the response efforts and called for immediate actions to address them. Concrete solutions to make evidence and knowledge production more gender sensitive that GENDRO proposed at the pandemic's early phase, have received a heartening support among civil society, health researchers and practitioners and thus manifests the importance of our collective efforts in addressing the gender data gap.

Considering the lessons that 2020 had to offer, we made a strategic decision to focus on one broad yet specific priority area as part of our 2021-2023 strategy: Health Research.

In doing so, GENDRO will continue working towards its mission by using its unique position to promote gender equity in evidence production by mobilising its expertise and networks within and beyond the international Geneva.

In 2021-2023, we will continue strengthening our partnership frameworks with members of the GEH Network and beyond. As a relatively new association, GENDRO will continue streamlining its internal and external operational strategies. To deliver on our strategic goals and achieve our mission, in 2021-2023 GENDRO will be also focusing on strengthening its fundraising efforts.

The unique composition of GEH Network will enable GENDRO in advocating for better practices in health research. The GEH Network has benefited from a membership of outstanding scholars and practitioners and GENDRO welcomes all those involved in bridging the gender data gap in joining forces to make Health Research more inclusive and equitable.



WE COULD NOT HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU!

We extend our sincere appreciation to all partners, supporters, interns and volunteers for their time, dedication and for their invaluable contribution to our activities in 2020. We extend our gratitude to Dr David Beran, Researcher and Lecturer at the Division of Tropical and Humanitarian Medicine, the Geneva University Hospitals and University of Geneva (UNIGE) for discretionary research funds to cover open access publication fees of GENDRO's publication in the BMJ Global Health. We genuinely appreciate the support of Oak Foundation for discretionary contribution and Geneva Think Tank Hub whose technical support made our online events possible. We are also very grateful to members of GENDRO's GEH Network for their active engagement. We look forward to a continued successful cooperation with you in 2021.



Prepared by Ziyoda Kurbanova

GENDRO

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www.gendro.org