Center on Gender Equity and Health (GEH)

2024–2030 Strategy

UC San Diego

CENTER ON GENDER EQUITY AND HEALTH

Dear Friends and Partners,

As the Center for Gender Equity and Health celebrates a decade of work, we are delighted to share highlights of our strategic vision for 2030. Our mission is simple but bold: we conduct collaborative, action-oriented research to understand and advance gender equity. We do this by combining research with action to create equal opportunities for all.

GEH is a collective of researchers, policy specialists, and development experts whose ideas and input form our strategy. We build on past work while aiming to deepen and expand our impact and live our values. Our strategy has four focal areas: equitable social norms and agency; economic inclusion and opportunity; health and reproductive rights; and dignity and respect.

We recognize that achieving our vision cannot be done alone. We are committed to working closely with other researchers, policymakers, funders, and community leaders to leverage collective expertise and resources.

We believe gender equity, health, and dignity for all people is achievable. We believe in the power of community and conversation. That's why we invite everyone interested—whether you're a researcher, practitioner, or someone passionate about gender equity—to share your ideas and insights on our strategy, and to explore how we might work together for greater, sustained impact.

Katherine Hay and Rebecka Lundgren, Co-Executive Directors

UC San Diego

CENTER ON GENDER EQUITY AND HEALTH

WHO WE ARE

The Center on Gender Equity and Health is an action-oriented collective of researchers, policy specialists, and development experts working to eliminate gender inequities through impactful research, intervention testing, and capacity building and bridging.

Our goal is collective impact at scale in partnership with communities, governments, NGOs and INGOs, and collaborating academic institutions.

OUR MISSION

We conduct collaborative, action-oriented research to understand and advance gender equity and address related health disparities, locally and globally.

OUR VISION

We believe gender equity, health, and dignity for all people is achievable.

OUR COMMITMENTS

THE CENTER ON GENDER EQUITY AND HEALTH IS COMMITTED TO:

Respect

Positive interaction, grounded in empathy, generosity, accountability, and respect

Equity

Research that contributes to dismantling inequity to empower historically under-represented communities

Innovation

Creative action-oriented research informed by communities to solve gender inequities

Collective Care

Individual and collective actions that support people's whole lives

Data Democratization

Making knowledge accessible to all to bring about change

Integrity

Research that positively impacts communities and protects the rights and welfare of study participants

Inclusivity

Addressing power imbalances by valuing the needs and insights of communities, sharing knowledge and resources, elevating our partners

WE BUILD EQUITY ACROSS RESEARCH TO POLICY SYSTEMS.

Designing for Impact

We coordinate with key actors at global, national and sub-national levels to inform existing policies, programs, and thinking with new data and evidence.

Testing and Scaling

We partner to design and test what works on the ground using implementation science, with a focus on scaling evidence-based approaches.

Innovating and Creating New Methods

We develop and use cutting-edge approaches to analyze and model gender and health data that informs policy making, discourse, and fields of knowledge.

Training, Mentoring, Capacity Bridging

We build the next generation of scholars, link them to global spaces and partners, and amplify and learn with emerging global scholars.

Fostering Relationships and Networks

We build connections and linkages and are building a center focused on collaboration.

WE ADVANCE THESE GOALS THROUGH OUR WORK ACROSS FOUR FOCAL AREAS.

Equitable Social Norms and Agency

Health and Reproductive Rights

Dignity and Respect

Economic Inclusion and Opportunity

OUR FOCAL AREAS

EQUITABLE SOCIAL NORMS & AGENCY

WE WORK TO EXPOSE, INTERROGATE, AND TRANSFORM HARMFUL GENDER AND SOCIAL NORMS.

We bridge data on global patterning of inequities and context-specific understandings of identity and oppression. We work to discover the factors that influence agency and how agency influences the health and well-being of individuals and communities.

Rigid gender norms restrict individuals' opportunities, cause power imbalances, and lead to persistent and harmful inequities in health, social, and economic outcomes. The intersection of gender and other macro norms related to age, class, religion, race/ethnicity, and sexuality creates imbalances in individual and collective agency—or the ability of individuals and communities to identify opportunities and work to achieve their goals.

By 2030, GEH will:

- Understand the mechanisms of change to shift harmful/inequitable gender norms and increase agency across populations and contexts.
- Generate and apply evidence on the differential ways that norms, agency and health/well-being outcomes influence each other across populations and contexts.
- Partner with local communities and national stakeholders to utilize evidence for improved program impact and policy change.

Our Niche

We are the global leader in applied research and practice on the nexus between agency and norms. Our interdisciplinary work strengthens the diverse field of global public health's understanding of how agency affects health and well-being. GEH research advances the science of norms measurement by generating culturally relevant measures of agency and gender norms. Our experts provide technical assistance for global program and policy partners to implement gender norms-shifting strategies and to improve individual and collective agency for sustainable behavior and policy changes.

OUR FOCAL AREAS

HEALTH AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

WE WORK TO DISMANTLE BARRIERS AND CHALLENGE HARMFUL NORMS

to create a future where all individuals can exercise their sexual and reproductive rights, access quality care, and achieve optimal health. We seek to understand, inform, and improve programs, policies, and systems to expand choice, dignity, and equal opportunities related to sexual, reproductive, maternal, and adolescent health.

Discrimination, systemic inequalities, limited access to care, and restrictive health care services hinder the ability of people to exercise their reproductive rights and negatively impact their overall health and well-being. These obstacles are exacerbated by harmful norms and societal expectations that perpetuate gender inequities, stigmatize sexual and reproductive health, and limit opportunities for women as formal and informal health care workers.

By 2030, GEH will:

- Develop and share robust, practical agency- and norms-related measures that are widely used in sexual and reproductive health research and evaluation.
- Generate and apply evidence on the effectiveness, cost, and scalability of health policies and programs that expand the consciousness and capability of individuals and collectives to exert control over their own lives.

Our Niche

We work in partnership with researchers, program implementers, policy makers, and communities to generate and promote the utilization of context-specific evidence that interrogates health and reproductive rights through a lens of power, explicitly considering gender, agency, social norms, and structural factors. We prioritize complexity-aware approaches, holistic, and systemic perspectives with the highest levels of scientific rigor.

OUR FOCAL AREAS

DIGNITY AND RESPECT

WE WORK TO CREATE SAFE AND ENABLING RELATIONSHIPS, FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES, AND ENVIRONMENTS

where all people can freely move and thrive. Our research, measurement, and programming activities aim to break cycles of normative violence while addressing its root causes. We seek to promote, enable, sustain, and measure people's ability to explore and flourish.

All people have the right to pursue self-determined goals free from fears of physical, sexual, or psychological harassment or harm. Current approaches to addressing gender-based violence are not working at the scale or speed needed to catalyze change and sustainably eliminate violence. Existing measurement and programmatic approaches focus on documenting and mitigating experiences of gender-based violence and safety in public spaces. This problem-focused perspective compromises our ability to aspire to achieve full bodily autonomy, dignity, and opportunity.

By 2030, GEH will:

- Lead and support research, measurement, and programming activities that aim to not only understand and break cycles of normative violence, but to address the root causes of violence.
- Catalyze movement beyond the goal of reducing GBV and toward enabling people to flourish, encompassing full bodily autonomy, dignity, and respectful relationships.
- Identify, develop, and test measures and interventions that help individuals build respectful, healthy, positive relationships, and move freely in public spaces.
- Expand research on norms around masculinity and patriarchy to understand equitable and respectful relationships.
- Generate new knowledge on what it means to thrive in communities around the world.

Our Niche

GEH faculty and staff are among the world's leading researchers on GBV. We work to collaboratively test how to move beyond reducing negatives to visioning and actioning a landscape of opportunity. This requires a deep and nuanced understanding of the structural, cultural, and life course complexities in which these transitions are occurring. We apply these lenses within equitable and long-standing research relationships with implementors and local partners.

OUR FOCAL AREAS

ECONOMIC INCLUSION & OPPORTUNITY

WE WORK TO RESHAPE NORMS, CREATE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, AND FOSTER MORE EGALITARIAN ROLES

for men and women at home and in the economy. We support women and girls in their efforts to achieve their aspirations and economic potential. We shape, inform, and test evidence-based interventions and identify programs and policies that close gendered economic gaps and create more shared and equal roles for all genders.

Women's and girls' economic lives are hindered by a complex web of barriers. Deep-rooted gender norms and stereotypes shape ambition and limit access to opportunities, education, skills, and assets. Work opportunities and progress are constrained by burdens of unpaid care and domestic work, which disproportionately falls on women and girls. This limits their time to do paid work and stifles career advancement. Discrimination, harassment, and inadequate representation in leadership roles further perpetuate disparities in paid work. Economic barriers extend into entrepreneurship, as women—particularly those from more marginalized communities—face both normative barriers and systemic challenges in accessing funding, networks, and markets. Efforts to improve economic opportunities for women and girls are hampered by research and data gaps.

By 2030 GEH will:

- Test and bring new measures into global and country statistical systems to close measurement and data gaps.
- Work with in-country (US and global) researchers to analyze existing data and uncover patterns and solutions.
- Work with government, private sector, and service delivery organizations to test and refine initiatives that enhance economic agency.
- Bring empirical evidence to policy discussions.
- Expand the diversity and skills of researchers working on gendered economic aspirations, norms, and outcomes.

Our Niche

Our expertise in this space includes building a deeper understanding of the nature and role that norms and agency play in shaping economic lives. We look at the role of norms in shaping opportunities and aspirations of adolescent girls and boys; how norms shape unpaid work and care work for men and women; and how gender norms interplay with, create, reinforce, or challenge systemic barriers to education, employment and entrepreneurship. Our parallel strengths in SRH and health also position us to shape and test policies and programs that combine normative, economic, and health dimensions.

WE GRAPPLE WITH COMPLEXITY AND INTERSECTIONALITY WHILE BUILDING CLEAR AND ACTIONABLE INSIGHT.

OUR APPROACH TO FOCAL AREAS

When we understand how norms and agency shape systems and behavior we can shift those norms to improve well-being.

GEH examines and generates evidence-based solutions to the multifaceted challenges that influence gender equity in health at all levels—from individual to national to global. We use research to understand context, identify problems and test solutions,and bring evidence to inform program and policy change and bridge capacity through education and training. Across this work, we strive to make complex ideas simple and actionable with an eye toward sustainability and scale.

OUR APPROACH TO GENDER

GEH prioritizes action-oriented research that explores the dynamic and contextual ways in which social and structural realities influence people's rights, opportunities, and achievement of self-determined goals throughout their lives.

Gender is at the core of our work. Addressing gendered vulnerabilities, whether in people's economic lives or their health requires taking an intersectional approach that acknowledges the distinct challenges faced by different groups. Our work encompasses all genders and considers how race, class, caste, and other sites of exclusion create distinct structural and normative challenges. Our strategy is focused on understanding and closing, pressing areas of vulnerability and exclusion in our focal areas.



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LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR STRATEGY AND RESEARCH, AND HOW TO WORK WITH US.

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