Introduction

Share-Net Netherlands invited its members to meet Katja Iversen, Women Deliver’s CEO and Evelyne Guindon, Women Deliver Managing Director of External Relations on 2nd of October 2019. The meet and greet took place at Kit Royal Tropical Institute. During this meeting, we discussed the outcomes and ideas of the Women Deliver 2019 Conference (held in Vancouver, Canada in June 2019). Katja and Evelyne shared Women Deliver plans for the future and have invited Share-Net members to share their priorities. Also, we looked into key gender equality moments ahead, namely the Nairobi summit and Beijing 25+. We also discussed the challenges that awaits us at these conferences and the importance of aligning our messages and working together.

About Women Deliver:

Women Deliver is a leading global advocate that champions gender equality and the health and rights of girls and women. Our advocacy drives investment – political and financial – in the lives of girls and women worldwide. We harness evidence and unite diverse voices to spark commitment to gender equality. And we get results. Anchored in sexual and reproductive health, we advocate for the right of girls and women across every aspect of their lives. We know that investing in girls and women will deliver progress for all. For more information, see Women Deliver’s website here.
REFLECTION ON WOMEN DELIVER CONFERENCE 2019

Highlights of the Conference:

There were a lot of spaces available to be occupied by young people and young leaders. This is something which Women Deliver should be proud of as it is often lacking at other international conferences. Having high level political figures present and active. Such involvement results in crucial response, such as Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau pledging 1.4 billion per annum to SRHR and women’s empowerment. There was a strong presence of the private sector at the conference. This is also very crucial and is another area in which Women Deliver should pride themselves in. Private sector inclusion is essential in the fight for women and girl’s empowerment and they often do not engage with advocate organisations. The presence of so many high level private companies at the reinstates the power and importance of advocate organisations such as Women Deliver. The Fuelling Station which was present at the conference was one of people’s favourite spaces. There was a lot of energy present in this area.

Constructive criticism:

It was felt that perhaps the conference is very North American oriented. It was also mentioned that although the conference addressed women’s empowerment and the labour market, there was not a lot of information on informal labour. Furthermore, there is a need to promote exhibitors more. Cross-sectional partnerships that will promote working together for women’s empowerment and SRHR and against the backlash we are suffering now. There should be a stronger emphasis put on the link between profit and non-profit. Regarding safe abortion, it was brought up that the approach should be more bold and edgy. The language used around this important topic was almost the same neutral language that we have used for many years. It could be stronger. A positive criticism was that it was too difficult to choose between sessions in the conference

Key outcomes:

Key outcomes of the Women Deliver 2019 conference are wide ranging. They include the pledge of 1.4 billion from Prime Minister Trudeau, commitment to eradicate FBG, commitments from the private sector, empowerment of participants and newly formed partnerships.
Women Deliver’s Priorities and Plans for the Future

Women Deliver intend to keep fueling knowledge with the power of knowledge and to connect the knowledge based evidence that they already have with advocates and movements. They aim to translate knowledge in a way to appeals to the oppositions’ emotions, which is an effective way to change people’s opinions or at least open them up to other opinions. They are going to use their power to keep up their advocacy and bring evidence to the next level.

They have developed a research team to identity research gaps that need to be investigated. Women Deliver will then advocate for funding for researchers to do this necessary research. They will use their position and opportunities when sitting with donors to push them to fund such research initiatives.

While the Women Deliver conference is a big part of what Women Deliver do, it is by no means the only thing that they do. Women Deliver also run a Young Leaders programme which is growing in popularity with each passing year. They are also responsible for a policy and advocacy programme for women’s’ voices and participation on SRHR and Humanitarian settings. They act as an advisory body to governments and research institutes. They will also be active at the Nairobi summit.
The upcoming Nairobi summit is a great opportunity to reinstate commitments to gender equality and links with the Beijing 25+ conference which will also see the needs and rights of women and girls at the forefront. Furthermore, we need to make use of and occupy space at other world forums, such as Davos. Davos is the world economic forum and Women Deliver engage with Davos and try and bring men in to talk about gender equality.

However, with these important events comes contestation and aggressive strategies from the Opposition. We need to better understand how the opposition strategize and operate. We notice their movement and feel it when we see it but it is imperative that we cooperate together to navigate their arena better. This co-operation will not only protect frontline activists but the entire SRHR community. It is also possible to look at the opposition and benefit from their strategies. One such example of this is that of Populism. By understanding populism as a strategy, we can learn a lot about the anti-movements who use it and further gauge how they will use such tools to undermine us.

We can use topics which are of common ground to connect with conservative and oppositional groups. Issues such as that of infertility are of interest to both sides and is a great way to get conservative people involved. Discussing infertility is also a good way to get more men involved.

A good way to continue the collaboration between conservative organisations and individuals is by recording success stories which shows the benefit of working together.
CLOSING

Women Deliver asks that if any Share-Net member has any reflections on the Women Deliver conference 2019 to please send them to Women Deliver.

Katja and Evelyne are hoping to return to the Netherlands again next autumn.

Join Share-Net!

and become part of the knowledge platform on SRHR as either a member or a sponsor. When joining Share-Net, you will not only be contributing to our mission and vision, but you will also be able to enjoy specific member benefits:

- Have free access to all the meetings that we organise. (Non-members participate at cost research-price)
- Participate in our working groups or CoPs, which is exclusive for members. These groups are crucial for agenda setting, organizing meetings and executing small projects. For more information on the Share-Net Netherlands working groups and thematic groups please visit www.share-net.nl/working-groups.
- Be elected in one of our governing bodies, the Steering Committee of the Netherlands or the Board of Share-Net International. All members are invited to our annual business meeting.
- Be eligible for our yearly call for proposals for the Share-Net International Small Grants facility.

For more information about our work and how to get involved. Please contact our Share-Net Netherlands Coordinator, Meike Stieglis at M.Stieglis@kit.nl