

Share Net International Mid-term review

Final report

May 2022

Acknowledgments

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Abbreviations

BMGF	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
CCC	Co-Creation Conference
CoP	Communities of Practice
CRM	Client Relationship Manager
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EKN	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations
IDI	In-Depth Interview
KII	Key Informant Interview
KIT	Netherlands Royal Tropical Institute
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTR	Mid-Term Review
MoFA	Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SHIRIM	SNI Rapid Improvement Model
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SN	Share-Net
SNI	Share-Net International
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
ToC	Theory of Change
UNFPA	United National Fund for Population Activities

Executive summary

This final mid-term review (MTR) report on Share-Net International (SNI) covers the first half of a four year programme period supported by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), 2020 – 2021. The report serves as a critical mid-step in SNI’s current programme with MoFA, and will provide key insights that will help to guide SNI’s new strategic plan that will run from 2023-2027. The MTR covers the SNI programme globally, including the Secretariat, as well as the seven Share-Net (SN) country hubs: Bangladesh; Burkina Faso; Burundi; Colombia; Ethiopia; Jordan, and; the Netherlands. Several research questions were formulated against key criteria including relevance; effectiveness; efficiency; coherence and sustainability.

A mixed methods approach was used to conduct the MTR between November 2021 and May 2022. The MTR incorporated secondary analysis of SN documents and data, including inputs from SNI Secretariat staff, country hub staff and members, and selected board members. Primary data was collected through four main methods: an online survey that was shared with all members; interviews with key respondents in all country hubs and at the Secretariat level; reflection and sense-making workshops in each country hub and globally, and; a final global learning workshop. The MTR was carried out through a diverse team of subject matter experts in each country, who were supported by research assistants and international experts.

Key findings

- 1. Relevance** SN, its products and services and the SRHR topics that are covered are highly relevant to many audiences and members, including governments, the MoFA, researchers and practitioners. Websites, conferences, newsletter and communities of practice (CoPs) are especially valued by members. SN members are typically young, well-educated and of mixed genders. More is needed, however, to expand the membership to more diverse audiences and to become more inclusive. Communication channels should also be modified to increase the relevance to more a more diverse and inclusive membership, especially to reach young people, marginalised groups and those with disabilities. SN adds value to the SRHR landscape, especially at the country hubs levels. There is potential to add more value at the international level, however.
- 2. Effectiveness** SN is very effective in providing members with SRHR knowledge, and the ways in which knowledge is shared is generally seen to be effective by members. SN effectively fills gaps in SRHR knowledge and helps bring some researchers, policy makers and practitioners together. However, knowledge needs to be translated more into influencing practice and policies, especially at the country hub level. There are only small examples available in the first half of the programme of how some policies might have been influenced by SN activities.
- 3. Efficiency** SN has delivered most of the main activities in an efficient manner. The digital platform for example has enabled SN to expand its reach to many more members in an efficient and low cost way. The overhead/management fees to support SN are low. SN staff time at the headquarters in the Netherlands is very low and therefore considered very efficient. The majority of results have been delivered as per the results, framework, although the targets could have been improved between 2020 and 2021 so that they were more ambitious.
- 4. Coherence** SN is coherent with MoFA’s SRHR policy and global agenda, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals. SN is complementary to the SRHR landscape, both globally and in

the countries. The Theory of Change (ToC) is generally a coherence framework, but should be updated to better reflect the specific country contexts.

5. Sustainability There is an urgent need for SN to focus more on strengthening the financial sustainability by expanding and diversifying funds. While funding targets and priority partners and donors have been identified, SN has had to focus on other priorities in 2020 and 2021 such as setting up new country hubs. The future funding from the MoFA is unclear, although SRHR is likely to be maintained as a priority. The situation is volatile, however. It was recently made clear to SN that Bangladesh and Jordan will not be SRHR focus countries for MoFA from 2023 onwards, which put both country hubs in a volatile position. Some efforts are underway however to increase the financial sustainability of SN at the Secretariat level and the older country hubs. Burundi has managed to secure additional funding from MoFA in-country.

Lessons learned

a. Put sustainability at the front from the start - and do not assume that future funding is secured

While efforts have gone into expanding SN and delivering first two years of the current programme phase – especially during COVID-19 - sustainability and especially the diversity of funding streams has lagged behind. A clear and actionable sustainability plan with clearly dedicated roles and responsibilities could have been developed at the start of the programme phase. Equally, an important lesson is that funding and the current status quo regarding donor support is rarely constant and never fixed: SN has learnt that Bangladesh and Jordan will not be SRHR focus countries for the MoFA from 2023 onwards. Both country hubs do not have alternative funds in place and so could be in a challenging position regarding their future financial sustainability.

b. Governance is important, but there is no perfect solution and there are more important priorities

A significant amount of time at SN has been spent discussing governance over the last four to five years, and especially within the two years which this MTR covers. While governance is vital, discussions on the subject have not led to any changes or improvements, largely because the governance is fit for purpose. Time would be better spent on other critical priorities that require significant time and effort, especially strategic partnerships and diversifying funding to increase sustainability within the next two years.

c. Digital is key to scaling up membership but has heightened divides among members

Investments in the digital platform have produced significant results in terms of the reach to significantly more members and contacts. SN is now able to track website users in 187 countries globally and generally is now capable of conducting important analysis of members and users. Country hubs are now more digital than ever before. However, as the digital platform has expanded, it has inadvertently heightened a digital divide between members who have access to the internet and who can participate in online activities, and those who have no access.

d. Localised, personalised and nuanced approaches are still critical to complement digital advances Localised approaches to knowledge products and services are also still key in increasingly regionalised and international platforms, including materials in local languages, through channels that reach locally marginalised members and in formats that are culturally sensitive.

e. Tracking outcomes is critical to determining SN's larger impact on improving policies, programmes and practices While SN has supported a comprehensive range of products and activities, it is challenging to determine the contribution that these have had on the expected programme outcomes: changes in policies, programmes and practices. Specific and intentional ways of tracking and measuring how all activities contribute to outcomes is required. While the SN

monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan does have outcome level indicators and targets, a lesson is that a wider system and personnel that track activities against outcomes has not been in place.

Recommendations

1. Relevance

a. Increase the focus on the membership to be more diverse and inclusive – and make materials relevant to more members SN's membership needs to diversify and become more inclusive. To be more inclusive, content and materials must be developed in local languages and designed in locally acceptable ways. SN communications should also expand to other channels than largely written and digital communications. SN should also diversify its membership beyond more urban, educated researchers to community and grassroots organisations and networks, who play important roles in advocacy. **This recommendation should be considered a top priority for 2022 – 2024.**

b. Engage more with members, hubs and organisations in the global South While the digital platform has been effective in expanding the number of members, too great a focus on this has inadvertently created a “digital divide” between those that have access and can use technology, and those that cannot. The digital platform is quite limited in how effectively it can bring together meaningful discussions, relationships and partnerships. After almost two and half years of COVID-19 restrictions, members are requesting more face-to-face engagements again, which are recommended as important ways to strengthen the membership. **This recommendation should be considered a top priority for 2022 – 2024.**

c. Modify some small improvements to governance - if absolutely necessary The governance at SNI and the country hubs is fit for purpose and does not need any major reworking or overhauling. There are some considerations on how to potentially improve this, such as making the board more independent. Some changes will need to be made if a regionalised approach is pursued. It will be important to keep the conversation going on governance, but this should not be at the distraction of more critical issues such as funding, sustainability and tracking how knowledge leads to outcomes.

2. Effectiveness

a. Advance strategic partnerships at all levels, including in country hubs and internationally Strategic partnerships are important to the next phases of SN's growth and direction. They will support SN's ambitions to diversify its funding, especially through new institutional donors. Strategic partnerships will also increase SN's collaborations and coherence on important SRHR issues, increase global visibility and will support SN to contribute more to positive changes in policy and practice. **This recommendation should be considered a top priority for 2022 – 2024.**

b. Develop clearer pathways for enhanced collaboration and sharing of knowledge between hubs The frequency and ways in which country hubs work together can be strengthened, especially with regards to how knowledge is shared and used. Communities of Practice between the country hubs could be explored and clear plans for regular sharing of knowledge between hubs should be developed. Knowledge sharing between countries could be added to the ToC and added to the M&E plan so it is intentionally tracked each quarter.

c. Increase the focus on using knowledge to focus on outcomes and positively change practice and policies There is a need to increase the focus on using the generated knowledge, the SN platform and members and extensive expertise to improve and change practices and policies. Attributable change to practices and policies needs to occur and be tracked at the national level in which SN and members work, including being able to determine to what extent CoPs are indeed the

main intervention that can lead to changes in outcome. Grants should have a greater focus on supporting implementation and effective changes in policy and practice. The M&E of such interventions will need to be strengthened so that activities targeting policy and practice can be tracked, measured and attributed. Demonstrating changes in policy and practice will be critical to engaging in new strategic funding opportunities, and will be key to SN developing value propositions for new donors. **This recommendation should be considered a top priority for 2022 – 2024.**

d. Strengthen the digital platform further While good progress has been made on the digital platform between 2020 and 2021, further improvements can be made. Websites and online materials should aim to be more inclusive and reach more diverse groups of members. Social media posts have increased significantly over the last two years, but SN should also focus on tracking the outcomes from these.

e. Consider piloting a regionalised approach It is recommended that further exploration of the feasibility and costs and benefits from a possible regional approach be conducted by SN in the second half of 2022. While regional approaches could offer some important benefits, this should not be at the expense of increasing the sustainability of SN.

f. Provide further capacity to applicants of grants In line with the SN grant making manual, it will be important for future rounds of grants to be continuously supported by more extensive capacity building and support on how to apply for grants, including perhaps sessions on how to write funding applications.

g. Consider a sharper focus more on innovations While there are some examples of how SN has innovated over the last two years, there is arguably the potential to do more, especially with regards to innovations that stimulate and drive change within the SRHR sector.

3. Efficiency

a. Reconsider if the most efficient ways of delivering results are the most effective SN is an efficient platform that delivers knowledge in a comparably low-cost way. Management costs and the level of effort are low. However, SN should reconsider the level of efforts across core positions against the planned 2022 – 2024 delivery, and consider any areas that need to be strengthened. For example, a greater focus on outcomes and tracking positive changes in policy and practice may need an increased level of effort on staff to support monitoring and evaluation.

4. Coherence

a. Review and modify the ToC to contextualize it more with the next phase of SN delivery The ToC should be updated and modified to reflect the 2022 – 2024 phase of SN's delivery, such as strengthening diversity and inclusion of members, improving knowledge sharing between country hubs, potential regional approaches and increased sustainability. Additional components such as linking knowledge to policy advocacy and changes in practice should be added, thereby ensuring that the ToC is fully aligned with the M&E plan.

5. Sustainability

a. Treat the future financial sustainability of SN as the top priority for the 2022 – 2024 programme phase While the future of MoFA's commitment to SRHR seems likely, there are competing global health priorities and it remains unclear what proportion of funds will be ringfenced for SRHR. In addition, MoFA has recently indicated that Bangladesh and Jordan will not be SRHR focus countries from 2023 onwards, and no robust plans – or additional funding sources - are in place to ensure the financial sustainability of these two country hubs. This puts SN in a challenging situation, which is

exacerbated by the fact that there has been little progress in expanding and/or diversifying funding from other donor in the first phase of the programme. **Given this situation, and the long lead times that raising new finances usually takes, it is strongly recommended that the SNI Secretariat and SN country hubs treat the future financial sustainability as the top priority for 2022 – 2024.**

b. Develop a medium-term financial sustainability plan and use it to guide the next three-five years of SN's growth and development SN needs to develop a simple, pragmatic but ambitious sustainability plan that will guide how it approaches the next three – five years of growth in an intentionally sustainable manner. The plan should be developed with country hubs and other stakeholders, including MoFA in the Netherlands. The plan will need to consider a number of options for increasing and diversifying funding sources. **This recommendation should be considered a top priority for 2022 – 2024.**

c. Diversify and expand funding sources at all levels to increase financial sustainability The sustainability plan will need to comprehensively cover and assess a full range of options to expand and diversify funding sources at all levels, including internationally through the Secretariat, through the country hubs and even through new, regional approaches. Given the importance of future financial sustainability, and how much time it can take to secure additional funds, it is recommended that SN start as soon as possible. All options should be explored to spread risk and likelihood of success if the required time and resources are available. **This recommendation should be considered a top priority for 2022 – 2024.**

1. Introduction.



1.1 Purpose of the mid-term review

The purpose of the mid-term review (MTR) is to provide a critical mid-step in the current Share-Net International (SNI) programme and strategic plan. The MTR will also inform the delivery of the second half of SNI’s programme in partnership with the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) (2020-2024), as well as input for the new strategic plan that will run from 2023-2027. The MTR also seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of how SNI’s products, activities and platforms are valued and used by its members. The mid-term review covers the seven country hubs: Bangladesh; Burkina Faso; Burundi; Colombia; Ethiopia; Jordan, and; the Netherlands. The review period covers 2020 to 2021.

Box 1. MTR objectives

Objective 1. Assess how SN has been relevant, effective, efficient, coherent and sustainable in serving the global sexual, reproductive health and rights (SRHR) community through the global knowledge platform on SRHR

Objective 2. Facilitate a reflection among SNI staff on the what is working well and what can be done differently in the coming years (2022-2024) to serve the needs of the SN members best

Objective 3. Provide succinct and validated recommendations to SNI that can be used to modify and improve strategies

Against the three MTR objectives, several research questions have been formulated against key criteria including relevance; effectiveness; efficiency; coherence and sustainability. These make up the MTR framework which is provided in full in the annexes¹ and provides the architecture against which the MTR has been carried out.

1.2 Methodology summary

The evaluation was conducted in five phases. Please see table 1 below that breaks down the phases and activities involved. Full details on the phases and full methodology used are provided in the annexes.

Table 1. The five phases of the MTR

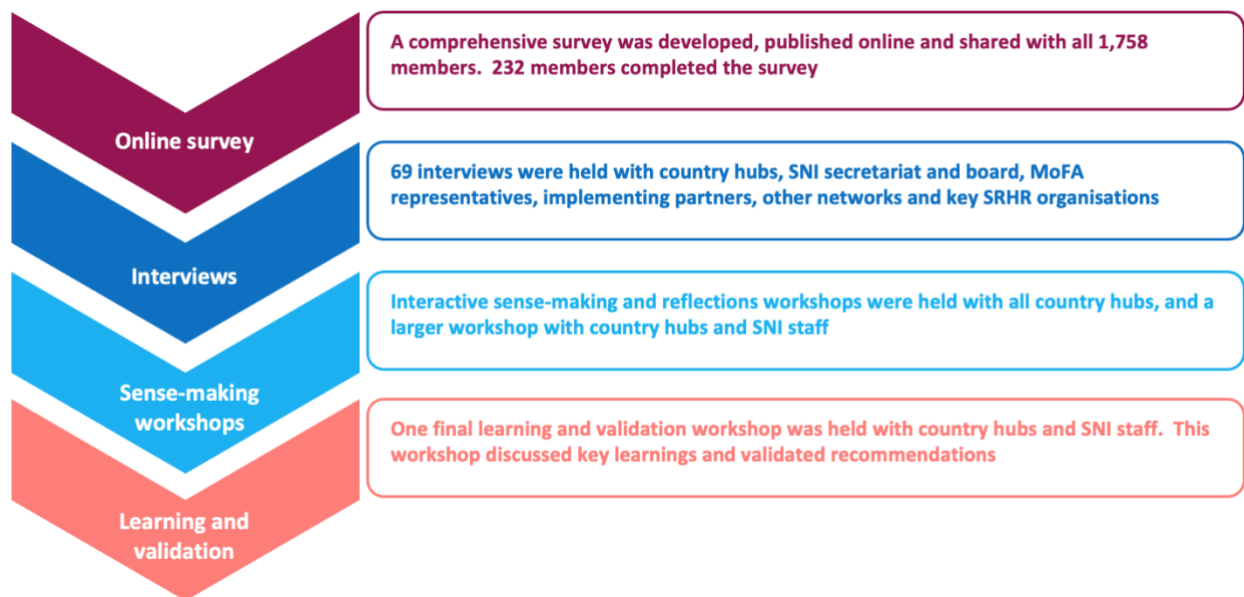
Evaluation phases	Activities
Phase 1: Inception	a. Consultative kick-off meeting
	b. Collection of key documents and comprehensive desk review
	c. Development of inception report
Phase 2: Primary data collection	a. Identification and hiring of Research Assistants
	b. Orientation and testing of tools
	c. Orientation of the Research Assistants and testing of the evaluation tools
	d. Primary data collection from online surveys and key informant interviews (KIIs)
	e. Country level participatory reflection and sense making workshops
	f. Reflective learning workshops

¹ Given the length of the annexes, they are provided in a separate document that accompanies this report.

Phase 3: Preparation of preliminary results	a. Analysis of primary data findings
	b. Secondary data analysis, including website and social media analysis
	c. Analysis of findings
Phase 4: Development of the mid-term report and review	a. Preparation of the draft evaluation report
Phase 5: Learning and dissemination	a. Final learning workshops

A mixed methods approach was used. The MTR incorporated secondary analysis of SN documents and data, including inputs from SNI secretariat staff, country hub staff and members, and selected board members. Primary data was collected through four main methods, as summarised in figure 1.

Figure 1. The four primary data collection methods used in the MTR

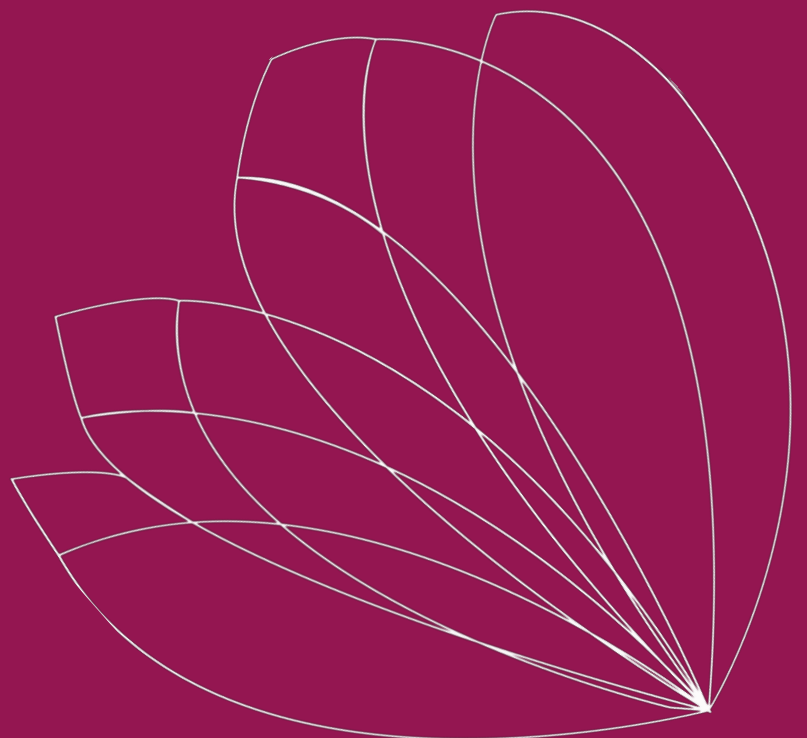


To address objective 1 of the MTR, primary data was collected through an online questionnaire that was shared with all SN members and interviews with a selection of members, staff from the hubs, boards and other stakeholders including MoFA and other knowledge platforms. Primary data collection was carried out in each country by a Country Lead and one Research Assistant selected from a group of young people — primarily undergraduate and masters students- or marginalised groups such as an assistant with albinism. The MTR was piloted in one country – Bangladesh – before being scaled up to the remaining countries. Learnings from data collection in the first country were used to inform the data collection processes in the remaining six countries.

To address objectives 2 and 3 of the MTR, the analysis of findings from the online survey and the interviews were used to hold one in-country sense making workshop with each country hub, which

included SN staff, MoFA and selected SRHR partners (please see the annexes for further details on attendees). One larger sense-making workshop was held with country hub and SNI staff and selected board members at the end of March 2022. To share learnings widely, interactive sessions were held with SN and others to validate the MTR findings and recommendations in early May 2022. Throughout the MTR process, a Reference Group oversaw all stages of the review and provided feedback, inputs and guidance, including on draft reports.

**2. Relevance,
effectiveness,
efficiency, coherence
and sustainability.**



2.1 Introductory note on findings

The findings presented in this section of the report are based upon the different methodologies used to carry out the MTR, as outlined in section 1.2 above. Before presenting the main findings, it is important to note a few observations and potential limitations.

2.1.1 Differences in age and maturity of the country hubs

Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Colombia are the newest country hubs, having been established within the period under review and with financial support from the MoFA within the current 2020 – 2024 grant period. As a result, the number and breadth of members in these countries is smaller and potentially less diverse than country hubs who have been operational for several years. In some instances, the topics and activities that these country hubs have focussed on may have a slightly different focus to the old country hubs of Bangladesh, Burundi, Jordan and the Netherlands, albeit in such cases the views and priorities are no less important.

2.1.2 Overall response rate for the online survey

The response rate for the online survey was slightly lower than potentially anticipated. While no specific target was officially set, the final response rate was 14% of all members that the survey was sent to, compared to a response rate of 17% for a similar online survey that was used as part of the evaluation of SN in 2017. It is not evident why the response rate was lower than potentially anticipated as multiple channels were used to disseminate the survey and to also communicate to members to encourage them to complete the survey. There was arguably a difference in the level of buy-in for different hubs, with some members more invested and more active, which might affect survey responses. It was also suggested in a sense making workshop that the response rate in Bangladesh might be relatively low as a proportion due to lower literacy levels and more limited access to technology. However, it is difficult to verify these claims. However, the total number of responses was sufficient and is not interpreted to have limited the depth and importance of the feedback from members. The feedback from the 232 members has been extremely important and have provided rich insights that have informed this MTR. It is also important to highlight that the online survey was one of several research channels that were used to inform this MTR.

2.1.3 Variable response rates between countries for the online survey

The response rates were quite varied between country and country hub locations. Some countries such as Jordan (72%) and Colombia (73%) had much higher response rates than others, notably Bangladesh (4%) and Netherlands (7%), both of which have large membership bases, but whose response rates were arguably lower than anticipated. There are no clear reasons that explain these trends. Response rates could be varied due to numerous reasons, including the availability of time among members to complete the survey; levels of interest and engagement among members; levels of literacy to complete the survey and the amount of access to and use of online tools in some countries and country contexts. However, as noted above, the online survey was one of a few key methods that members across all country hubs were engaged with to inform the MTR, and in no way has this factor hampered, limited or skewed findings.

2.1.4 Negligible differences between countries in terms of survey responses

The online survey produced many very interesting findings which are provided as extensively as possible through the report. However, in most cases, the difference in findings between countries

are not very significant, and not significant enough to merit producing multiple charts and tables per country. Indeed, a striking feature of this review is that despite the great diversity of country contexts and memberships survey responses across countries are broadly consistent. However, to the best extent possible, and where online survey data is available, interesting findings per country are provided throughout the report.

2.2 Relevance

Summary of key findings

- a. SN, its products and services and the SRHR topics that are covered are highly relevant to many audiences and members, including governments, the MoFA, researchers, practitioners
- b. SN adds value to the SRHR landscape, especially at the country hubs levels. There is potential to add more value at the international level
- c. Websites, conferences, newsletter and communities of practice (CoPs) are especially valued
- d. SN members are typically young, well-educated and gender conforming
- e. More is needed to expand the membership to more diverse audiences and to become more inclusive
- f. Communication channels should also be modified to increase the relevance to more a more diverse and inclusive membership, especially to reach young people, marginalised groups and those with disabilities

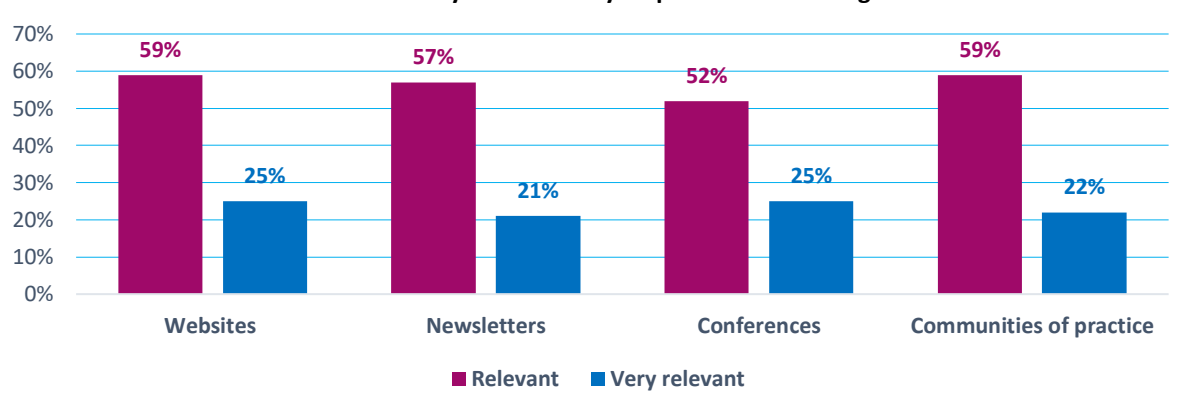
2.2.1 SN is highly relevant and valued by members

SN is undoubtedly seen by its members as being highly relevant and adding value to the SRHR landscape. SN provides an important and largely accessible platform for generating, sharing, and accessing SRHR knowledge – both globally and in the country hubs – in one single place.

Its membership is diverse and reaches many more locations than the seven country hubs alone, as explained further in 2.2.6. In the online survey, 53% of respondents agreed that they have obtained new knowledge, experience, or expertise as a result of being a member, and 26% strongly agreed with the same statement. 49% of respondents from the online survey agreed that SN activities or resources have helped them improve or enhance their own work or that of their organisation and almost 25% strongly agreed with the same statement. These results are broadly consistent across all countries.

The specific areas of SN that online respondents highlighted as being relevant and very relevant can be seen in chart 1. The overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that SN products and services were relevant. More than 70% of respondents from the online survey agreed or strongly agreed that websites, newsletters, conferences, CoPs were relevant their SRHR interests, and similar proportions indicated that SN services and products are aligned with priorities and objectives of the organisation they work for. The websites and CoPs are seen as the most relevant to members that responded to the online survey.

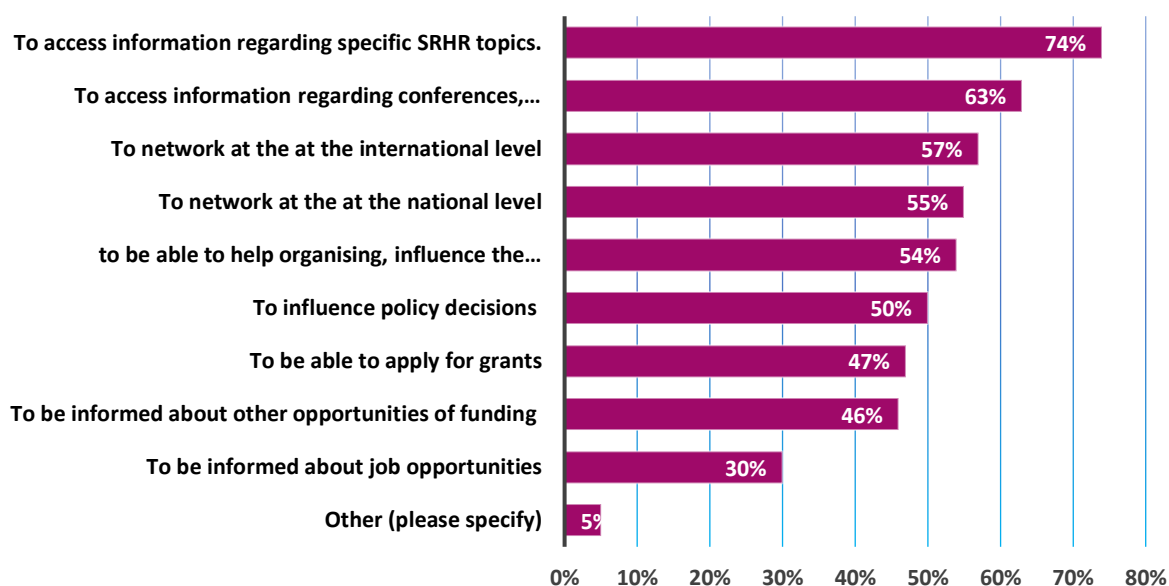
Chart 1. Areas of SN’s work that is seen by online survey respondents are being more relevant



2.2.2 The main reasons people and organisations become members is to access SRHR information and to network

The online survey indicates why members join SN, as shown in chart 2. 74% join to access SRHR information, and 63% to access more information on SRHR workshops and meetings. Networking is also important. 57% of members join because they are interested in networking at the international level, and 55% because of national networking opportunities. Only half of members joined to influence policy. 46% indicated they joined to access funding and only 30% for job opportunities.

Chart 2. The main reason(s) for you or your organisation being a registered member of Share-Net



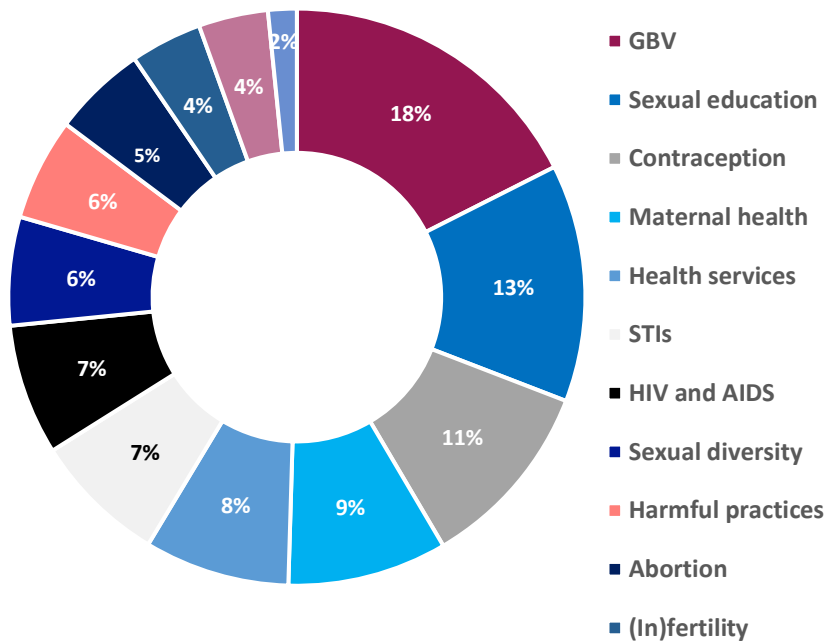
2.2.3 Various SRHR topics, products and services are of particular relevance to members

Building on the high relevance of SN overall to its members, certain SRHR topics and agendas are reported to be of particular interest. Feedback from respondents to the online survey indicates that gender based violence (GBV) is currently the most important topic to members (18%), followed by sexuality education (13%) and contraception (11%). Further details are provided in chart 3.

There is some variance and diversity of interest between the country hubs. In Bangladesh, for example, SRHR for adolescents and young people was repeatedly highlighted as being critical. Based on the online survey feedback, there is particularly high demand for material on sexual diversity in Colombia, and on key SRHR programming issues such as accountability in Jordan. The intersections of climate change and health are also emerging areas of growing interest among members, according to the online survey. At the end, some of the SRHR topics are less supported. Some online survey respondents and certain conversations during the sense making workshops indicated that there was some hostility towards SNI focusing on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI+) issues as part of their SRHR knowledge priorities. Indeed, there was some denial among some members that such issues existed in some countries, such as Ethiopia, suggesting that

certain topics that are relevant for some countries, are perceived to be less relevant for some members in other contexts.

Chart 3. SRHR areas members are most interested in



In terms of the products and activities that are the most important to members, grants are clearly very important. As seen in chart 4, 58% of online survey respondents indicated that small grants are the most important, and 47% highlighted research grants were the most important. This finding is also backed up by examining data from the digital platform. Between February 2021 and February 2022, the SNI website pages related to the different

types of grants were some of the most popular, generating a total of more than 6,000 page views, or almost 40% of all website visits. In addition, the co-creation conference (45%), CoPs (45%) and round table/thematic meetings (39%) are also important to members. This feedback is interesting as it suggests that the reasons people join SN changes over time: accessing information on SRHR may be the most important to most members when they join, but as they learn more about what SN offers, what is most important changes to other products beyond information and knowledge only.

The results are broadly similar across all countries, although round table/thematic meetings are highlighted as the least important in Bangladesh. However, the sense-making workshops and follow up interviews with selected members indicated that given a possible easing of COVID-19 restrictions, there is a strong desire for more workshops to take place and which would focus more on networking, meeting people and general sharing of ideas. Such meetings would help take connections that were made online further and develop them into more meaningful and substantial relationships.

Chart 4. The most important services and products to members



2.2.4 SN is highly relevant in the country-hubs and adds value to the SRHR landscape

All data sources indicate that in the country hubs, SN is highly relevant, important and adds value to the SRHR landscape. More than 70% of respondents to the online survey indicated that SN products and services were relevant to country context, for example. As shown in table 3, when asked to state their main source of SRHR information, 44 (20%) out of the 215 respondents who provided a source, specifically named SN as their main source of SRHR information. According to the respondents of the online survey, SN is the main source of SRHR information especially in the oldest country hubs: Netherlands; Bangladesh and Jordan.

Table 2. SN as the only source of SRHR information to members

Country	Total responses	% of responses that stated SN is the only source of SRHR information
Ethiopia	0 (from 28)	0%
Netherlands	7 (from 17)	41%
Bangladesh	13 (from 40)	33%
Burundi	4 (from 20)	20%
Burkina Faso	2 (from 11)	18%
Colombia	1 (from 16)	6%
Jordan	22 (from 67)	33%
Unaffiliated	0 (from 7)	0%
International	8 (from 35)	23%

Box 2. Snapshot of other reasons why SN is especially valued in the country hubs²

- Capacity development and training on multiple aspects of SRHR
- Sharing and exchanging information on emerging SRHR issues
- Supports members at the country level to know about SRHR
- Initiating dialogues on SRHR to break the silence and taboo around sensitive issues within the country
- Horizontal exchange of knowledge, realities, and particular experiences around SRHR among actors who, in everyday scenarios, could not dialogue

² Please note that while there are some small and nuanced differences between countries, the overall reasons why SN is valued in the country hubs is largely common between countries.

- Provides critical impartial coordination support on SRHR matters
- Enabling collaboration and networking among various SRHR stakeholders and organizations to gather and share their experiences and skills.
- Strong international and national networking among the SRHR stakeholders
- Providing small grants to work on SRHR, and knowledge sharing on progress with SRHR nationally and globally.
- Conference and knowledge fairs which allows cross learning from other stakeholders as well as engagement in interactive discussion where they also share their work.
- Training which has developed clarity in understanding SRHR and the concepts of the social behaviour change.

2.2.5 The way knowledge is shared is largely appreciated by members and partners

The products, services and resources provided by SN are valued by members. They consider them to be relevant and useful. Globally 82% of respondents from the online survey agreed with the statement that information provided on SN websites, newsletters, and social media accounts is useful. The way in which knowledge is shared is appreciated. Respondents to the online survey and sense-making workshop participants indicated that they particularly value the online knowledge sharing channels – websites and newsletters - the opportunities to learn from what people are doing in other places and the national and international connections it affords.

“Share-Net is the kind of platform that we have been looking for a very long time...SRHR has many challenges and barriers. There are many organizations that work on SRHR. Each one disintegrated in different regions...There is no practice of sharing what we have learned from one another. So there is always resource wastage...So Share-Net help us to know what is being done everywhere, what changes have they made, what is the challenge.” Share-Net partner in Ethiopia

However, some members in the sense making workshops indicated that the main SNI website can be difficult to navigate, and that it was challenging to find specific content at times. This is something that SN is already addressing and the website is being revised and updated to improve accessibility. In the online survey, some members from several countries indicated that they would like there to be more academic work included on the digital platform. This is perhaps not surprising given that peer reviewed academic literatures are often difficult and expensive to access.

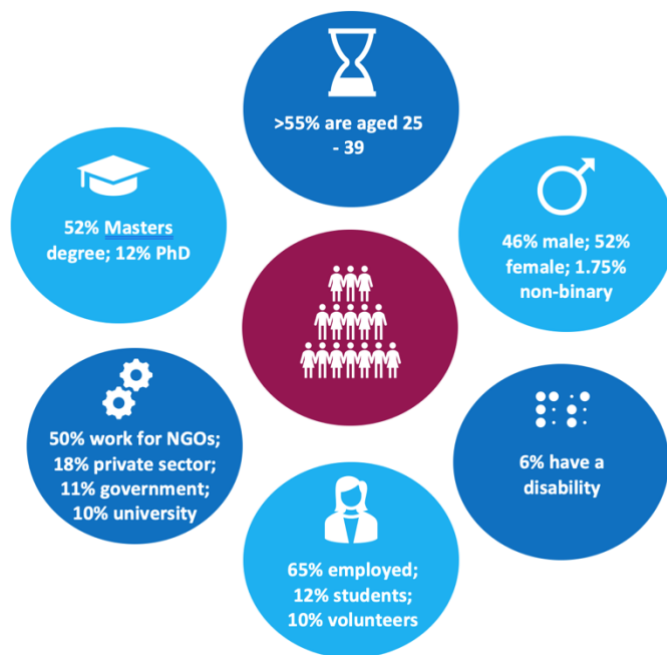
In addition to the website and digital platform, there is demand for more face-to-face interactions to develop these connections into meaningful partnerships and relationships. In sense making workshops some stakeholders expressed a desire for more face-to-face interactions within and between different countries. Members like the resources available online, but online connections seldom become meaningful or strategic relationships. As noted in other sections of this report, there is a need for different ways of engaging and communicating with members, especially those that do not have access to technology and the internet, and who may not be best reached through written documents only.

2.2.6 SN’s membership is reasonably diverse and inclusive, but efforts are required to extend the reach of the network to excluded and marginalized groups

In addition to the country hubs, SN’s membership is diverse and reaches multiple countries from across the globe. SN has expanded its reach to new country hubs, which have extended access to SRHR information and knowledge to new member groups and users. Responses show that there was some diversity in terms of private sector which accounted for 18% of the responses. However, almost half (49.8%) were from NGOs.

Over the last one year, SNI’s website has registered visitors from 187 countries out of 193 countries globally. The majority of top country website users are from countries where SN does not have country hubs, including countries in the global North such as the USA (4,126 users), Finland (1,003 users), UK (676 users) and many from the global South, including Indonesia (871 users), India (766 users), China (704 users), Kenya (656 users), Uganda (412), Nigeria (361 users) and Egypt (346 users).

Figure 2. Snapshot of SN’s current and typical member profile

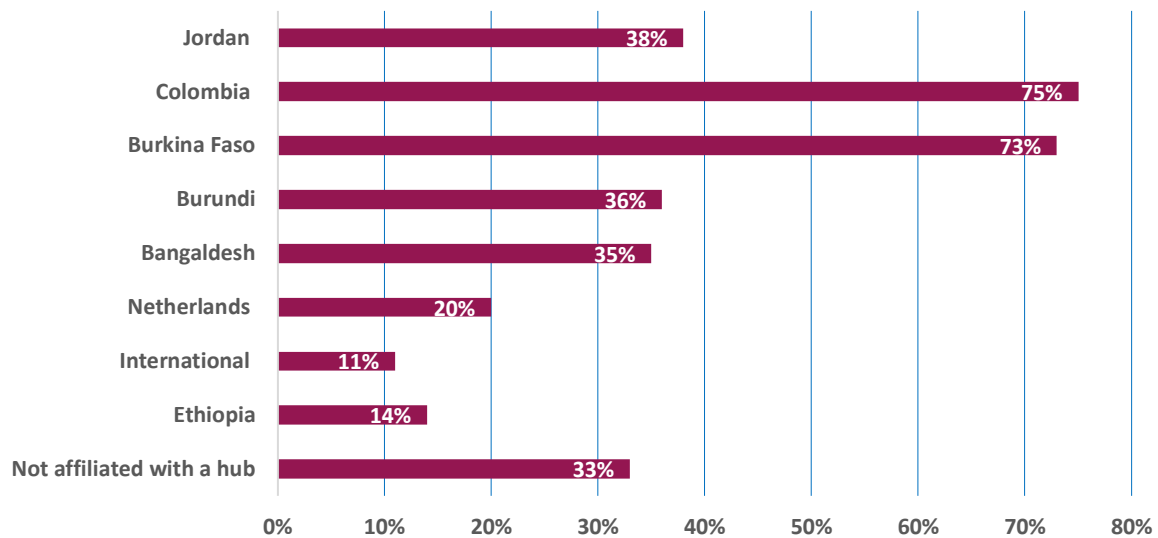


As summarised in figure 2 and chart 5, and based on respondents to the online survey, SN’s membership is overwhelmingly young and educated. 37% of respondents are under 30 years of age. Similar breakdowns across all hubs exist, with the exception of the international level where most members are over 35. In Ethiopia almost half (47%) of members are between 40 and 50 years of age and the Netherlands where 45% are under 35.

Globally 46% of members are male and 52% female. Only four (1.75%) respondents identify as non-binary which is so low there is the possibility that transgender and non-binary may be under-represented. Globally, only eight

people that participated in the online survey identified as being disabled. Education levels are high across all countries where vast majority of members have at least a bachelor's degree and most members a Masters degree.

Chart 5. Percentage of SN members that are under the age of 30



The online survey asked members “Do you identify as belonging to an ethnic, religious, or other groups that you consider marginalised in your country?” 27% indicated yes, stating a variety of groups, including religious, ethnic groups, LGBTQI+ and disability, with sexual orientation being the most frequently stated.³

However, there is a need for SN to expand its reach to become more diverse and inclusive. People identifying as LGBTQI+ or disabled reported to be under-represented in the survey, for example. All country hubs and members within them cited the need for more knowledge products to be available in local languages and available through a more diverse range of communication materials, instead of written documents and also online platforms.

Box 2. Some pros and cons of SN’s digital platform

While the online platform is critical and has helped SN to expand its membership, and to operate effectively during extremely challenging COVID-19 time, there is now a “digital divide” in SN’s members. In sense making workshops and comments in the survey, it was expressed that lots of people are unable to access SN products and services because they simply do not have the technology to do so. SN is only accessible to people with access to technology, internet, and a reasonably good command of English, especially in Ethiopia and Bangladesh, where English is the main language used on the websites (conversely Colombia is in Spanish, Burundi and Burkina Faso in French and Jordan in Arabic). In this way SN remains a network for the more privileged. In a similar vein, some criticism in workshops and the online survey suggest that SN activity and participation tends to be focused on major cities/urban areas where technology and internet connections exist.

³ This finding also applied to the feedback from online survey respondents in Ethiopia. While this report finds that some respondents in Ethiopia may have been uncomfortable with some of the SRHR subjects selected by SN, the online survey also shows that a number of participants from Ethiopia identified as being from various ethnic groups (such as Gambella and Afar).

2.2.7 SN’s content is generally inclusive, but improvements can be made

63% of the online survey respondents agreed with the statement that the information provided on the website, newsletters and social media accounts of SN is inclusive. However, there are quite varying responses between the specific country hubs, as summarised in table 3.

Table 3. Percentage of responses that agree or strongly agree that SN content is inclusive

Country	% of responses that agree/strongly agree SN content is inclusive
Jordan	72%
Colombia	60%
Burkina	100%
Burundi	82%
Bangladesh	77%
Netherlands	53%
International	70%
Ethiopia	59%
Not affiliated with hub	62%

In all countries, feedback from members is clear – there is a need for more materials to be made available in local languages rather than in English. This sentiment was especially strong in Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Jordan. Given that the majority of materials are written materials, they are not very accessible to people with visual and hearing impairments. As noted above, the use of the digital platform may exclude those who are not typically well educated, rural and do not

have access to, or unable to use, a smart phone or laptop. In Bangladesh, members representing the Dalit community reported there is a need to strengthen the ways in which marginalized and low educated members can be reached, such as through artistic channels. The Dutch government embassy (Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, EKN) in Bangladesh also stated that different forms of communications were needed to reach young people with SRHR messages, such as art and edutainment.

“We have two target groups that do not have access to the platform. When we take the remote areas which do not have access to the internet, which do not have access to smartphones, which do not have access to a computer, the illiterate, etc. It really is a platform for a privileged class of people.” EKN representative, Burkina Faso

In addition, tensions and diverse views are noted between global perspectives, or perspectives from global North/the Netherlands, on SRHR inclusivity and the realities on the ground and in the country hubs. For example, in workshops and the online survey, the desire to have more resources focused on LGBTQI+ communities, gender and sexual diversity was noted. In Colombia, sexual diversity was the second most important topic among online survey respondents, although feedback from Ethiopia for example indicates there is no interest among members on sexual diversity, which is partly due to socio-cultural beliefs as well as the law within which members and country hubs operate. Clearly, there is a balance to strike between producing appropriate and accessible materials attuned to local sensitivities, and advocating for the rights of under-represented, excluded groups.

“There are different kinds of tools we receive [from SNI] to facilitate trainings. If you try to use some of them in our sessions, well, you know, there might be difficulties...for example, there was also a specific knowledge product with lots of pictures on LGBTQ that we received. It was difficult to decide whether we should distribute these kinds of materials as this is culturally sensitive in Ethiopia” Country hub representative, Ethiopia

2.2.8 SN is highly relevant to MoFA and EKN and adds to their SRHR agenda

SN is highly relevant to the MoFA, and perceived as being centrally important and adding value to their SRHR agenda – globally and in the country hubs. MoFA sees SN as a key platform that has the power to convene and coordinate hundreds of voices from its members in the Netherlands and globally on SRHR, which enables the MoFA to extend its reach and consultation with infinitely more individuals, organizations, universities and the private sector than it would be able to alone. SN provides a critical learning and coordination function to the MoFA and its SRHR programmes and partners globally, for example the six SRHR partnerships⁴ as well in some country hubs, such as Burundi where SN plays a key role in supporting EKN to coordinate its integrated, multi-partner *SRHR Solutions* programme.⁵ MoFA staff interviewed to inform this MTR spoke unanimously about the important role that SN plays in their global SRHR agenda and the relevance of their work to the Dutch government and implementing partners.

“Share-Net is a key SRHR partner to us. They play a critical role in bringing together large numbers of members and organisations that we could not engage with without SN. They provide essential information on SRHR which is used by several of us, including our SRHR partners. Their work is always delivered to a very high and creative standard that we are satisfied with. Importantly, all the SN staff are highly accessible and responsive” MoFA representative

2.2.9 SN is relevant and important to the regional and global SRHR landscape, but more can be done to become *the* SRHR knowledge platform

SN has recently grown significantly globally and its international orientation is a key asset. New country hubs have been added, representing a doubling in the number of country hubs and with representation now in all major regions, but hubs tend to be nationally rather than regionally focused, which is a missed opportunity. The membership is now over 2,000 and the membership is international in scope, with users of the digital platform in 187 countries. On average, 51% of SN members that responded to the online survey are not part of another SRHR network, presumably as they find sufficient SRHR information and access to key knowledge products which means that they do not feel obliged to use other networks.⁶ In Jordan, 73% of members who responded to the online survey indicated they are not part of another SRHR network; 58% in the Netherlands and 56% in Colombia. At the other end, in Bangladesh 45% of members are not members of other SRHR networks; followed by 38% in Burkina Faso; 37% in Ethiopia, and 23% in Burundi.

There is much potential to build from here and to be fully realised in order for SN to be seen and valued more globally. SN’s proposal to the MoFA in 2019 outlines how SN will partner internationally with key SRHR platforms, networks and organisations, although it not evident that such partnerships

⁴ For further details please visit <https://share-net.nl/bridging-our-efforts-moving-to-the-srhr-partnerships-of-2021-2025/>

⁵ This is EKN’s principle SRHR programme in Burundi. It is a comprehensive and integrated SRHR programme that brings together major implementing partners who deliver a range of SRHR Solutions in the country. SN Burundi is a partner to this programme and plays a key role in facilitating knowledge and learning across the programme, and supporting EKN with the coordination of the programme.

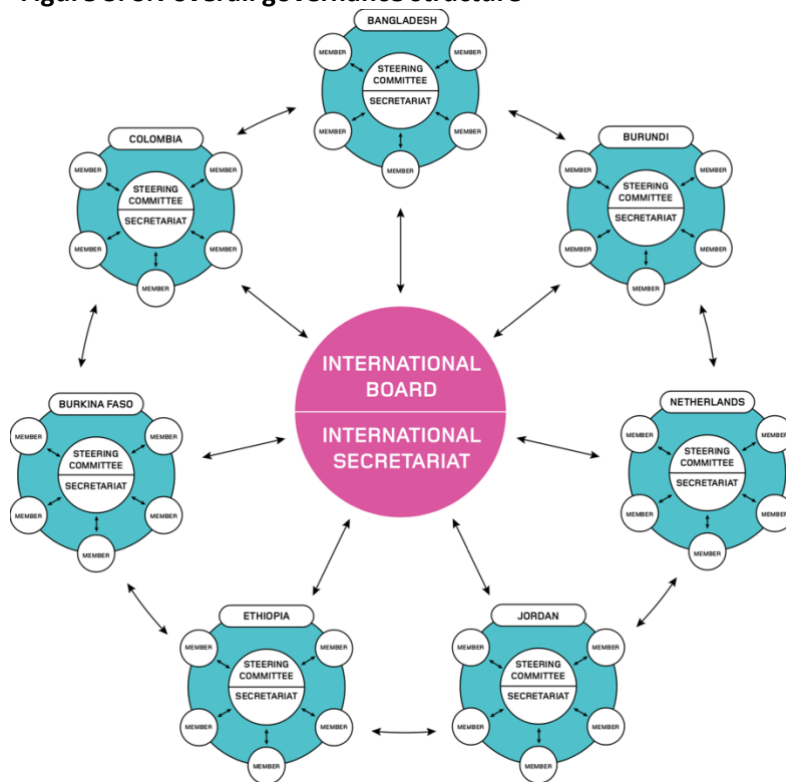
⁶ The online survey was not set up to ask follow-up questions on why members were or were not members of other SRHR networks, largely because it was assumed that more members would be members of other networks than was found overall.

have been formalized yet in the first half of the current programme phase. Sentiments among interviewed key informants in the Netherlands suggests that SN is still seen to be a Dutch-based SRHR platform which is not yet recognized enough internationally.

2.2.10 The governance of SN is largely fit for the current purpose, but may need revising in time if new approaches are pursued

In February 2017, a series of internal consultations resulted in a revision of the institutional framework and associated management arrangements, which are reflected in the comprehensive 2019 SN governance document, and illustrated in figure 3. The coordinating secretariat of SNI and the country-level secretariats are not autonomous legal entities. They are hosted by existing organisations that are governed in different manners in line with their respective mandates and institutional set-ups. SN operates as a network of autonomous organisations and individuals; it is not a legal entity itself. This does not preclude that SN and/or its national secretariats in certain countries seek legal registration at some point in the future, as this may strengthen their institutional base. Country hubs are free to deviate and organise themselves in a different manner. It is recommended they justify their choices and specify as much as possible the roles and responsibilities of each structure. Country hubs may be challenged by the SNI Board and other country hubs to consider alternative institutional arrangements.

Figure 3. SN overall governance structure



Since the revisions to the governance structures were made between 2017 and 2019, governance has remained an important and frequently-discussed topic at SN. Throughout the MTR, governance has emerged as one of the principle subjects that has been raised multiple times, especially by the secretariat staff and SN Netherlands. Interestingly, questions about the governance set-ups and structures has not been highlighted as major topic of discussion by country hubs during any of the primary data collection, including interviews and sense-making workshops. The current governance structure of SN is comprehensive, as detailed in the 2019 proposal and

the separate and accompanying document on SN governance and the many structures. Each country hub has their own steering committee which includes SN staff and other key SRHR stakeholders. Country hubs also have representation on the SNI board, which also includes SN staff and external

board members. Country hubs have their own visions and are well supported by SNI but are very much independent and autonomous.

Box 3. SN’s governance: “if it isn’t broken, don’t fix it”

This review has spent significant time exploring questions on SN’s governance and structures. We have spoken with many respondents on this in all seven country hubs and the secretariat and heard many quite different views and opinions. We have also interviewed other global knowledge platforms and international organisations to explore their governance and structural arrangements. In every case, there are differing views and opinions, and various models and considerations, including:

- a. In the Netherlands, there are questions being asked about whether or not the structure is too centralised and if the structure needs to be “decolonised.” However, these questions are not being asked in the country hubs. The country hubs are also quite autonomous in how they are governed and operate.
- b. There is some requirement for the secretariat to be currently based in the Netherlands, as the funding comes from the Netherlands MoFA. SNI’s proximity to the MoFA in the Netherlands is important as this is where the MoFA points of contacts are located, and the contact between MoFA and the Netherlands Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) is centrally managed.
- c. Some respondents have also suggested that the Dutch tax payer expects to see Dutch NGOs delivering SRHR programmes that are funded by Dutch tax payers, and being “closer to home” increases the visibility and support for continued SRHR programming through MoFA. The SNI Secretariat is based in the Netherlands and this is important to increase senior and strategic engagements with MoFA.
- d. Other knowledge platforms that were interviewed have divergent governance structures. One is very decentralized with regional and fully autonomous hubs leading the way, with multiple members and connections globally. Another is very centralised with a very small membership (i.e. less than 30) and with operations in a handful of countries in Africa. Neither network seemed to be performing better than the other because of their structure; just differently.

While various options and models exist, and which have been considered, the governance and structure of SN are generally fit for purpose, as expanded upon in section 2.2.10.

There are two main findings for further considerations regarding the structure of the board and the governance structure between SNI and the country hubs. Some feedback from existing board members suggested that the structure of the SNI Board may need to be re-examined so that it could serve more independently. This is being addressed by SN through the creation of an Advisory Board that will deal with matter complementary to, but distinct from, the SNI Board. Another consideration is regarding any potential changes in the governance structure in the future. If further autonomy is granted to country hubs, then there could be risks that important aspects of SRHR quality, diversity and inclusion, are potentially compromised. In some cases, it seems that greater autonomy and control to some countries could compromise on the SRHR topics that are covered. More risqué and sensitive topics could be dismissed or toned down, as suggested by the reaction from some members in some country hubs on topics such as LGBTQI+.

However, if new approaches to working are put in place, some modifications to the overall governance and structure will be required. The obvious consideration would be if SN goes on to pilot a regionalised approach, which would require new and additional structures to be put in place, although the same working relationships between SNI and a regional hub would be largely the same as the current model with SNI and country hubs.

2.2.11 Cross-learning between country hubs and host organisations can be strengthened

Sharing of knowledge and information between the country hubs does occur to some extent. There are some examples of knowledge being shared to strengthen new country hubs, or how certain research topics on SRHR and climate change in Bangladesh have been shared with other country hubs such as Colombia. The SNI Rapid Improvement Model (SHIRIM)⁷ has played a critical role in supporting new country hubs with learning from other country hubs, as have the Co-Creation Conferences (CCCs) and global webinars that have brought the country hubs together.

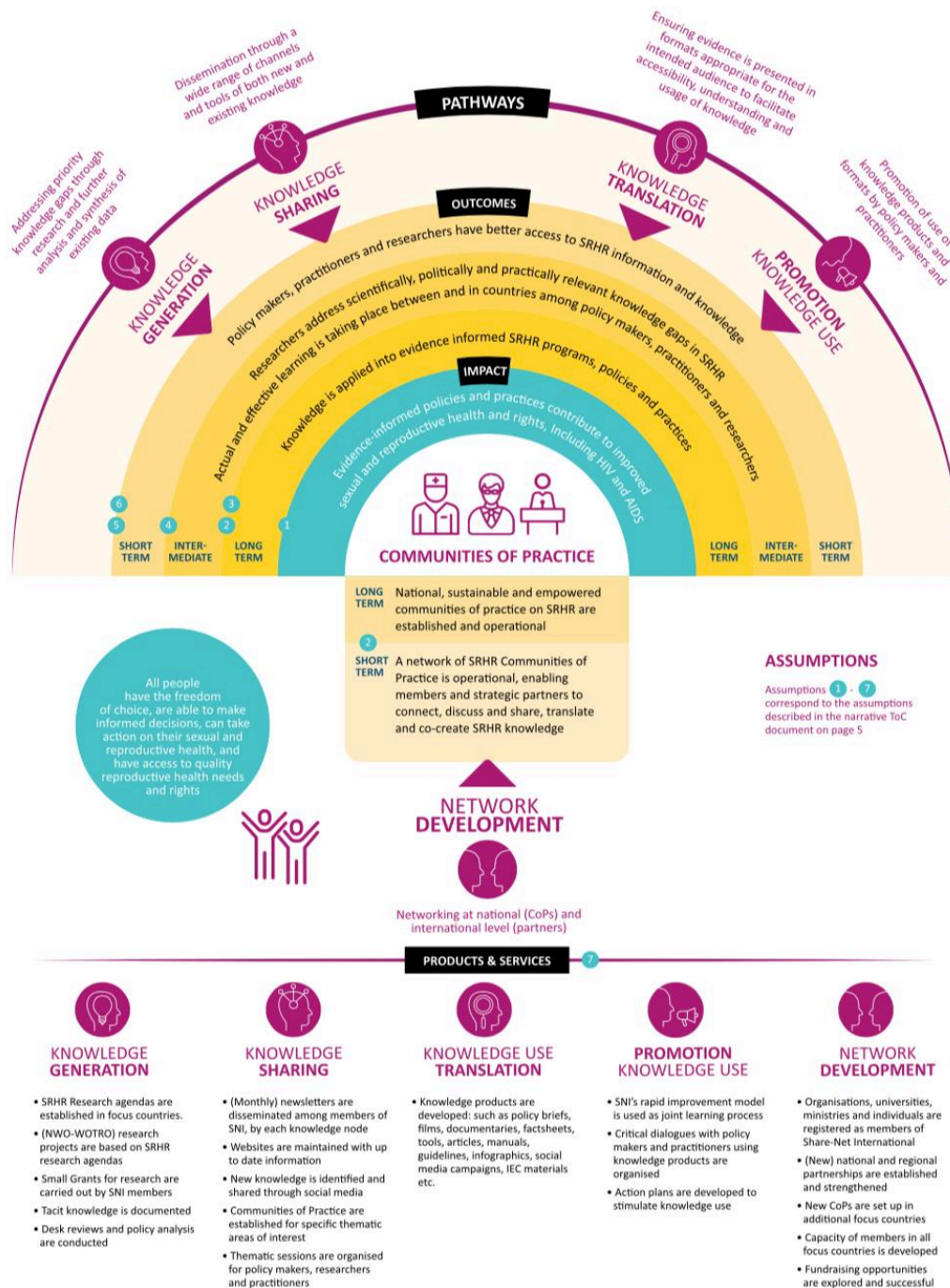
However, more can be done to build upon these smaller examples. The host organisations have been selected based on several criteria, including their position and influence in the country, as well as their SRHR expertise. Some organisations, such as Profamilia in Colombia, are part of large international networks (International Planned Parenthood Federation in the case of Profamilia). Expertise of the host organisations is being tapped into within the country hubs, although not intentionally or extensively enough between countries. In the sense-making workshops participants indicated they would welcome greater opportunity to interact with other country hubs. However, they did not think responsibility for this lay at the country hub level, but at the level of the global secretariat. The role of knowledge facilitator between the countries still largely rests with the SNI secretariat and the SN Netherlands country hub, both of whom work primarily internationally and in collaboration with international actors. On the other hand, country hubs focus almost exclusively on their own SRHR knowledge platform and country priorities, rather than looking beyond country borders.

2.2.12 The Theory of Change (ToC) is an adequate framework for ambition but should be simplified, updated and contextualised to the country hubs

SN's ToC is provided in figure 4. Generally, the ToC reflects SN's main pillars and approaches. The CoPs are central to the ToC which is reflected in the delivery of SN over the last two years, as are the key pathways. However, as described elsewhere in this report, given the current limitations on how effectively SN has influenced outcomes (i.e. changes in policy and practice due to the knowledge generated and translated by SN), it remains uncertain to what extent the pathways in the ToC and the platform do lead to outcome change. In most cases, the ToC has been reported by country hubs and the secretariat as being used quite often (ranging from within the last week to one month) by most respondents during sense-making workshops. In some cases, the ToC was reported by members and country hubs as being quite complicated to understand fully, especially for new country hubs who are less familiar with it than older hubs. In other instances, country hubs indicated that the ToC should be refined to reflect the specific contexts, challenges and opportunities in each country, in the same way as the country hubs have a specific vision that guides SN's work in each country. The current strategic planning exercise that is underway represents an important opportunity for the ToC to be revisited and reviewed with country hubs and refined accordingly.

⁷ The SHIRIM model was established to facilitate knowledge exchange between Share-Net Country Hubs, emphasizing translation of knowledge products for use in policy change and practice. Different Share-Net countries work towards implementing different change packages around a common theme over one to one and a half years. The results are written into a package of tested interventions that work under certain circumstances. Previously child marriage and teenage pregnancy were selected collaborative themes, and in 2021 SHIRIM focussed on knowledge translation. The theme for 2022-2023 is education and information.

Figure 4. SN’s current ToC, as per the 2020 – 2024 programme proposal



2.3 Effectiveness

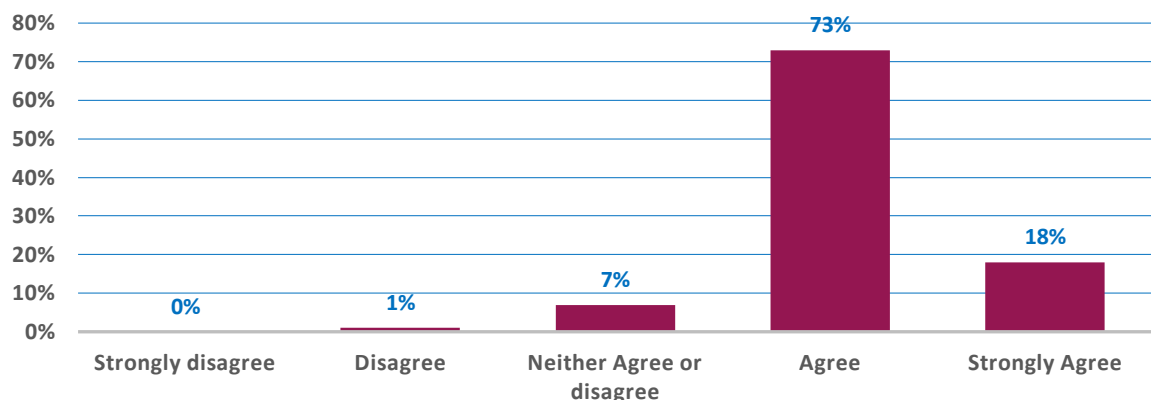
Summary of key findings

- a. SN is very effective in providing members with SRHR knowledge, and the ways in which knowledge is shared is generally seen to be effective by members
- b. SN effectively fills gaps in SRHR knowledge and helps bring some researchers, policy makers and practitioners together
- c. Knowledge needs to be translated more into influencing practice and policies, especially at the country hub level where SN has more influence. There are only small examples available in the first half of the programme
- d. SN monitoring systems need to sharpen their focus on tracking outcomes

2.3.1 SN is effective in serving members with SRHR knowledge

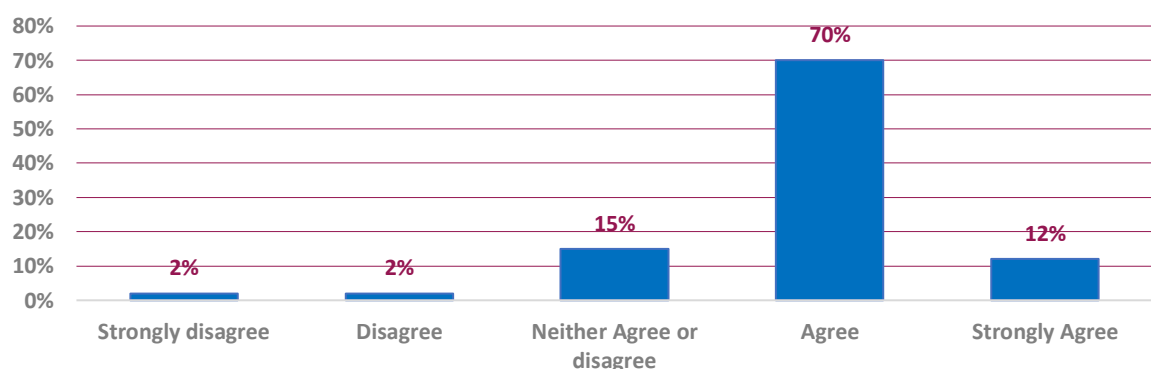
Overall, SN is effective in providing its members with important SRHR knowledge – both in the country hubs and at the global level. Responses from the online survey indicate that overall, 73% of members agreed that they have obtained additional knowledge, and almost 20% of members strongly agreed – as shown in chart 6.

Chart 6 . SN knowledge and expertise gained by being a member of SN



Going further, responses from the online survey also indicate that SRHR knowledge shared by SN improves and enhances members’ work. As seen in chart 7, 70% of respondents agreed that SN knowledge had improved and enhanced their work, and 12% strongly agreed with the statement.

Chart 7. Improvement and enhancement of work as a result of SN activities or resources



In Ethiopia, respondents from the online survey report that knowledge and information from various SN sources has informed program design and elucidated lessons learnt from different SRHR approaches. Additionally, in Ethiopia, researchers have utilised information from SN to feed into their literature review and proposal development. In Bangladesh, respondents acknowledge SN efforts in sharing knowledge to various stakeholders including government officials. This has resulted in researchers exploring cross cutting SRHR themes and identifying harmful social norms which members aim to tackle. SN Bangladesh has brought to the fore emerging SRHR issues such as climate change and mental health which has helped to create local ownership and increased awareness and understanding on the issues.

2.3.2 The digitalisation of SN’s communication has been highly effective in expanding reach

The digital platform has led to an effective upscaling of SN’s reach and communications with significantly more users than ever before. Between February 2021 and February 2022, the number of users to SNI’s website (www.share-netinternational.org) virtually doubled, with 23,454 new users compared to 24,913 existing users. More than half of these new users (12,229) were direct users, meaning that they went directly to the website, presumably by recently becoming aware about it. One third of new users (7,419) found the website through an organic search and one in ten (2,346) found the website through SN’s scaled-up social media profile.

In late 2021, SN migrated its newsletter to a new customer relationship management (CRM) system, which enabled SN to expand the number of contacts the newsletter was sent to and to track the use of its newsletter for the first time. Prior to this, the SNI newsletter was distributed to SNI contacts, and further distributed by the seven country hubs to their networks which made it difficult to track the total number of members that the newsletter was sent to. It was also not possible to track how many members the country hubs shared the newsletter with.

In January 2022, the newsletter was distributed through the new CRM for the first time, combining all databases from SNI and the country hubs into one system. This created significantly more trackable reach than all means used previously, as shown in table 4. In total, the newsletter was sent to more than 10 times as many contacts compared to each quarter it was distributed in 2021, and 10 times as many contacts opened it compared to the same time intervals. While the “open rate” for the newsletter dropped to earlier years, it is assumedly because of the quantity of newsletters sent increased significantly and, unless special measures were put in place to maintain the same rate of opening, would normally be expected to fall.

Table 4. SN newsletter performance, March 2021 to January 2022

Newsletter edition	Number of contacts sent to	Open rate	Total opens
January 2022	3,918	33.6%	2,794
September 2021	372	52%	266
June 2021	311	70%	356
March 2021	248	46%	189

2.3.2 Activities have been largely effective in facilitating knowledge exchange

As described in the key findings under “relevance,” SN has been very effective in facilitating SRHR knowledge on multiple topics, from GBV to infertility to linking climate change and health, and these have been covered through multiple channels, especially the digital platform. The development of the digital platform started in 2020 and was launched in 2021. Before the platform was launched, as a result of COVID-19, SNI were already forced to work more digitally. COVID-19 made the need for the development of the digital platform more evident.

In some ways, the use of the digital platform has enabled SN to reach more members than in previous years. The digital platform is appreciated by members and country hubs and is a key way for SN to continue to increase its reach, and therefore to facilitate knowledge further, and especially at a greater international scale. A challenge with the digital platform, and assumedly this is not unique to SN, is how to meaningfully translate increased quantity of members with quality engagements, relationships and partnerships that result in greater outcomes. Respondents from the online survey also suggested that knowledge management could be more effective through simple and low-cost measures, such as sharing monthly calendars of events that would enable members to know in advance what events are coming up within country hubs, and between them.

While the digital platform has been very effective in reaching more members and facilitating knowledge, it has inadvertently enhanced a digital divide meaning that the less urbanised, wealthy, educated and tech-savvy members are excluded. From all countries, members indicated through the online survey and workshops that there is now a need for SNI, and through the country hubs, to re-start in-person and face-to-face meetings and conferences to translate knowledge further than online channels alone are able to. This is reinforced by respondents to the online survey in all countries who indicated that effective partnerships and networking require face-to-face interactions. The online is the engine for growth, but there is a risk that it gets too far ahead and leaves those less able to access the online behind.

2.3.3 SN has supported some knowledge gaps in SRHR to be addressed

SN has supported researchers to address important knowledge gaps in SRHR through multiple means, including the CCCs and the research grants, both of which are very important products and services offered by SN to members. It is also important to note that the SN total budget for grants increased from EUR140,000 in 2021 to EUR250,000 in 2022. The 40 allocated grants have enabled a significant amount of new research and knowledge products to have been supported between 2020 and 2021, including specific awards that supported COVID-19 research in 2020, some of which are summarised in table 5. Also, as shown in table 5, several grants that have been awarded enable important SRHR topics and knowledge to be presented in appealing formats, such as chatbots, interactive games and podcasts, that enabled greater reach to and engagement with young people.

Table 5. Selected examples of grants awarded by SN, 2020 – 2021

Year	Country	Grant summary
2020	Bangladesh	Digital open access peer educator training module to help promote the practice of peer education models in SRHR and comprehensive sexuality education programmes in Bangladesh

		Investigate and test a chatbot based approach to identify the knowledge gap and disseminate contextual and customized knowledge and support on SRHR issues among the youth and adolescents
	Netherlands	Investigating if gamifying online sexuality education content increases young people’s engagement and SRHR knowledge acquisition.
	Burundi	To provide technical support in the development of life skills for adolescents in Burundi, and test a digital library model for SRHR among young people aged 10-24
2020, COVID-19	Nigeria and Cameroon	Improving SRHR services in fragile and humanitarian settings in Nigeria and Cameroon during COVID-19 pandemic
	Egypt and Kenya	Menstruation Shouts: Exploring the menstrual experiences influenced by the COVID19 pandemic in disadvantaged communities in Egypt and Kenya
	Netherlands	Trans and Hijra lives in times of COVID-19
2021, CCC	DR Congo and Burundi	The mapping of the fields of law on SRHR services and LGBTQI issues, case of Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi
	Burundi	Checklist for promoting disability inclusion and accessibility in the SRHR Sector
	Nigeria, India and Kenya	Increasing access to youth SRHR generalized data for evidence- based advocacy through involvement of young people with diverse backgrounds on SRHR research
2021	Nigeria	Climate Change and SRHR: Exploring the Linkages
	Ukraine	Trans women's needs in the context of SRHR
	Burundi	Kuziko game: Promote sensitization and education on sensitive SRHR topics between young people and parents
	Bangladesh	Be Your Daughter's Superhero: a comprehensive period guide for dads to help daughters to be empowered with needed knowledge, confidence and self-esteem ensuring their menstrual wellbeing
		Cholo Kotha Boli - youth to youth podcast

It is interesting to note that over the last two years, SN grants have diversified. There has been a shift towards activation grants, participatory grant making and grants that specifically focus on knowledge generation, knowledge collaboration and knowledge translation. The focus on such types of grants is important because feedback from many members – as noted elsewhere in this report – suggests that alternative and more engaging methods of sharing knowledge are needed. However, while such shifts are welcomed, there is little evidence on the impact of the grants and how their intended outcomes have – or have not – been realised.

2.3.4 Some learning takes place among policy makers, practitioners and researchers, but more should be done

According to the online survey, six out of 10 respondents agreed that SN helps them and their organisation to collaborate with other people or organisations internationally. There is a lot of interest in cross learning discussions and project collaboration between SN country hubs, especially from the newer hubs – Burkina Faso, Colombia and Ethiopia. There are several examples of effective learning that takes place in countries due to SN activities, such as the CCCs, CoPs, research grants

that have supported many learning-related activities, sharing of learnings through the digital platform and many other learning activities, such as dissemination events, workshops, youth investigators group, expert meetings, core group meetings, that were highlighted through the online survey and other primary data collection methods used in this MTR. Learning occurs at different levels within country hubs, although it seems that the majority of learning occurs mainly at the central level where SN offices are located as are most researchers, practitioners and policy makers.

“Not only does [SN] facilitate the production of information, it also facilitates its use, it facilitates research and research results by disseminating them and it also facilitates networking between the various stakeholders.” EKN representative, Burkina Faso

There are examples of learning between SN country hubs, which the SHIRIM process helped to support as new country hubs were established in Burkina Faso, Colombia and Ethiopia. SN Bangladesh’s webinar on climate change and gender equality resulted in the broadening of perspectives and acknowledgement of existing problems in other country hubs and how they deal with them. However, the active learning and CoP model between SN country hubs could be strengthened, as evidence in some of the interviews with SN staff in both the Netherlands and the country hubs showed, and as discussed during the sense-making workshops. Discussions with some members following the online survey from countries without a hub indicated it was difficult to access specific country hubs, presumably as the country hub is mandated to primarily support members within their specific country, as opposed to facilitating learning regionally, which may mean some important opportunities are missed. There is a lot of dependency on a small SNI Secretariat to facilitate any cross-country learnings between country hubs. Members recognise that the SNI Secretariat does support some cross-country learning when possible through various channels (e.g. CoP, CCC) but it is more difficult to access nearby country hubs if a member is not from within that country. For example, a member in Rwanda whose organisation has partnerships with organisations in Burundi found that SN Burundi was not receptive to partnerships, exchanges and learning with organisations outside Burundi. It was only through partnering with an organisation in the Netherlands that the member in Rwanda was able to engage more with SN and subsequently access a small grant.

Members in Bangladesh provided interesting feedback during an active sense-making workshop that the problem is not generating new knowledge or filling gaps, but capturing local knowledge, examples of best practice and disseminating them widely. They indicated that fewer resources are needed for knowledge generation and more resources for capture, sharing and supporting implementation.

2.3.5 The SN knowledge platform contributes to policy makers, practitioners and researchers having better access to SRHR information and knowledge

As highlighted in the section on “relevance”, there is a lot of praise among members for SN in providing a centralised, and relatively accessible repository of SRHR knowledge. The websites are a go-to resource and many of the products and services offered by SN are important to members. Half of SN members are not a member of other platforms, which suggest that SN is seen by many members as a “one-stop” SRHR knowledge platform that serves the needs of many members, including researchers, practitioners and policy makers. In Bangladesh, for example, discussions from

the sense making workshops highlighted that over the last 10 years, SN has engaged with development partners, government policymakers, researchers and practitioners to progress with establishing SRHR in Bangladesh. SN has been able to bring such actors together and has helped to facilitate knowledge and learning which have contributed to policy dialogues on SRHR. For example, in Ethiopia, policy makers and prominent influencers within the SRHR community are utilising disaggregated data on SRHR information from SN websites. While the country hub is only a few months old, members and staff from the country hub indicated that the SN platform is the right kind of vehicle that is needed in the country to impartially share and create more access to SRHR knowledge.

However, some members indicated that it can be difficult to know how or where to share knowledge and experience with other members. Some formats may not always be accessible to members, and members may not be fully aware of when key events are coming up that they can participate in. As noted elsewhere in this report, the language barrier remains a challenge in many country hubs, as does the “digital divide”. More face to face engagements and alternative formats of sharing information are important to many members.

2.3.6 Knowledge is occasionally used to influence some outcomes, but more attention is needed on tracking and measuring programme outcomes

The outcome level of the SN monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan/results framework that guides the delivery of the project as contractually agreed with MoFA indicates three primary outcome level goals – as in table 6.

Table 6. SN outcome indicators

Monitoring Area	M&E question	Indicators
SN members apply knowledge into evidence informed SRHR programs, policies and practices	To what extent have SN members influenced programmes, policies and practices?	O1. # and description of changes in policies (incl. national action plans) and laws SN is associated with
		O2. # and description of changes in programmes that are associated with SN
		O3. # and description of changes in practices that are associated with SN

Box 4. Examples of how SN influenced outcomes, 2020 - 2021

The MTR team has invested time to try and identify a breadth of examples of how SN has influenced changes in policies, practices and programmes. While there are not many tangible examples currently available in the first half of the current programming phase, a few can be highlighted:

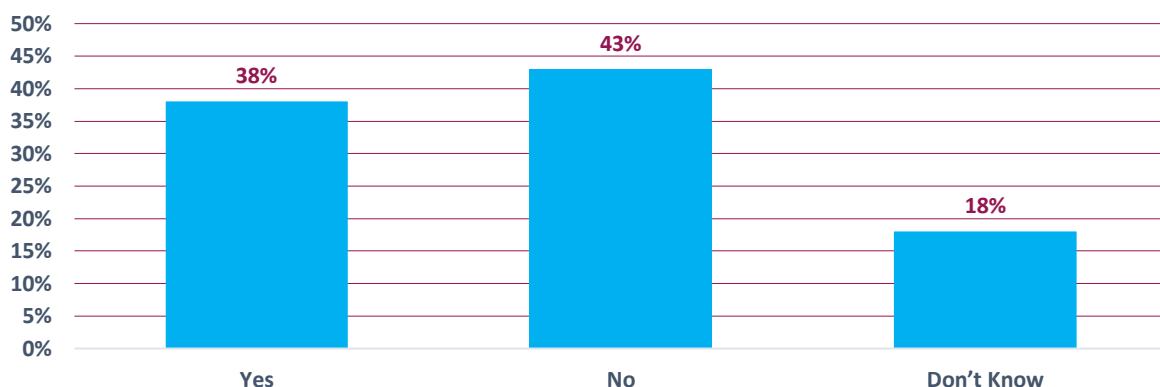
- a.** SN Jordan contributed to the implementation of national standards for youth-friendly services in five centres affiliated with the Institute for Family Health Care, four of them funded by the

Dutch Embassy in Amman and one funded by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which was implemented in 2020-2021

- b. SN Burundi plays a key role in the EKN *SRHR Solutions* programme regarding the translation of knowledge into practice, alongside other implementing partners
- c. SN Netherlands has coordinated the inputs and views of members to increase the policy engagements with the Netherlands MoFA
- d. SN Jordan has partnered with three universities which has increased the number and depth of academic discussions on linking research to practice and policies

As seen in the ToC, CoPs are seen as being central to the pathways and the influence of SN on changing outcomes, although it is not evident to what extent the CoPs in practice have directly contributed to outcomes. As shown in chart 8, 38% of respondents from the online survey indicated that policies, practices or activities have changed due to the information they have acquired from SN. Many of these changes, however, relate to changes at an individual or organisational level and not with regards to policy or practice improvements at a larger scale in countries. 43% of members indicated that there was no change, and 18% replied that they did not know if any changes had occurred. Qualitative data in Ethiopia, Colombia, Burkina Faso support the above sentiments. This could be due to the fact that most of the hubs are still in the infancy stage and therefore it is too soon to draw firm conclusions. However, findings from all sources suggests that while some knowledge and learning is taking place in countries, more needs to be done on translating learning into tangible outcomes and tracking how learning and knowledge is effectively leading to positive changes.

Chart 8. Policies, practices, or activities change as a result of information acquired from SN



While Bangladesh has engaged with policymakers, researchers and practitioners to progress with establishing SRHR, members in the sense-making workshop indicated that more needs to be done with the local government and academic sector to further establish SRHR rights, building on a decade of SRHR knowledge learning from SN in the country. Participants shared that there is a need for more effective engagement with policymakers to unlock their commitment to SRHR at the local level. Additionally, in other established hubs like Burundi, members realised that more is needed to track the changes that come from the learnings and knowledge, which is partly why the hub has established a M&E position.

2.4 Efficiency

Summary of key findings

- a. SN has delivered most of the main activities in an efficient manner. The digital platform for example has enabled SN to expand its reach to many more members in an efficient and low cost way
- b. The overhead/management fees to support SN are low
- c. SN staff time at the headquarters in the Netherlands is very low and therefore considered very efficient
- d. Most activities could not be delivered in a more cost efficient way
- e. The majority of results have been delivered as per the results, framework, although the targets could have been improved between 2020 and 2021 so that they were more ambitious

2.4.1 Activities have been delivered efficiently

SN is an efficient platform and core activities in 2020 and 2021 have been carried out in a very efficient manner. SN operates through a lean staffing structure, both in the SNI secretariat and the country hubs. The model of cost-sharing staff time with the host organisations in the country hubs is also efficient. Only 3% of the total budget is spent on KIT’s management fee, which is low and therefore offers good value.

The use of the digital platform serves as an important way of sharing knowledge in a highly efficient manner and around 50% lower cost per person than face-to-face meetings and workshops. However, in some cases, some aspects of SN’s operations might be too lean. As noted in other sections of this report, while the digital platform has been critical during COVID-19 and has been highly efficient, there is a desire from members for more face-to-face meetings and engagements, which may not produce the same results in efficiency in the second half of SN’s current programme, but are expected to increase the effectiveness and contributions to expected improvements in policies and practice.

2.4.2 Most activities have been carried out according to plan and within budget

According to the draft 2021 expenditure report, SN spent 80% of its planned budget: EUR1,627,395 against a planned budget of EUR2,049,515. This underspend is primarily due to only EUR153,796 being spent on “knowledge management” activities, compared to a planned budget of EUR546,750, representing an underspend of almost 72%. This difference is primarily due to the SHIRIM on knowledge translation being pushed to 2022. All other budget categories have generally been spent as planned, with a maximum variance of only 2% on the “knowledge hub” budget line. Within the underspend on knowledge management activities, the main drivers are summarised below in table 7.

Table 7. Knowledge management expenditure against budget, 2021

Category/activity	Budget (EUR)	Expenditure (EUR)	Variance (EUR)
SHIRIM	325,000	-	-325,000
CCC	-	-	-
Grants	144,200	129,486	-14,714
Subcontracting knowledge experts	36,050	6,317	-29,733
Seed money	41,500	17,993	-23,507

COVID-19 activities	-	-	-
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Within the knowledge hub budget category, the overall variance is small. Spending in Bangladesh, Burundi and Ethiopia have generally been as budgeted, although there is some noticeable variance in some of the specific budget lines, as shown in table 8. The overspend on SRHR partnerships knowledge brokering is due to the additional personnel fees that have been utilised by SN Netherlands to play the knowledge broker role for the Dutch SRHR Partnerships. SN Netherlands have also re-allocated a third of their budget for CoPs in 2021 to small grants and campaigns in 2022. Additional funds for SN Jordan were used in 2021 to support SHIRIM, linking research to policy and practices and scoping a potential regional approach. Assumedly, the slight underspends in Burkina Faso and Colombia can be attributed to these country hubs being new and time being required for all activities to be executed as planned. Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, in-country support visits to the hubs were not possible, leading to an underspend of EUR24,000.

Table 8. Selected knowledge hub expenditure against budget, 2021

Category/activity	Budget (EUR)	Expenditure (EUR)	Variance (EUR)
SRHR partnerships knowledge broker	-	20,488	20,488
Income from members	-81,000	-49,555	31,455
Jordan	105,900	124,400	18,500
Burkina Faso	89,677	68,628	-21,049
Colombia	89,677	62,663	-27,014
Digital/regional approach	89,677	72,861	-16,816
Support to the hubs	24,000	-	-24,000

The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on travel plans and the possibility to organise in-person meetings also contributed to the under expenditure. With a peak of activities planned for the second half of the programme, together with the possibility to resume travelling again, SN expenditure against budget may catch up.

In terms of the delivery of activities and results as defined against the M&E plan/results framework, SN has performed well in certain areas, and some activities are behind schedule, as summarised in table 9. Performance in both 2020 and 2021 has been very strong and in most cases generally exceeded the annual targets. Given the year-on-year performance, however, it seems that the targets for 2021 could have been made higher as the performance against the targets continued to be extremely high, suggesting that the targets were not realistic enough or not set properly.

Table 9. SN summary performance against the results framework, 2020 - 2021

OUTPUT indicators	2020 target	2020 actual	Variance	2021 target	2021 actual	Variance
Knowledge generation						
1.1 # and description of small grants rewarded (per country)	19	26	137%	17	37	218%
1.2 # and description of research products prepared (e.g. desk review, policy analysis, studies, position paper, concept paper etc.)	11	15	136%	26	23	88%
Knowledge sharing⁸						
2.1a # of newsletters disseminated per year per hub	44	45	Please see footnote 8 below for an explanation of the variance in the 2020 results	51	46	90%
2.1b # of subscribers to the newsletter	0	3,113		2,129	4,412	207%
2.1c % of opened newsletters	40	36.5		27.8	16.7	50%
2.2. # of unique visitors to the website (per hub)	100	51,124		21,150	39,234	186%
2.3a # of social media posts	150	760		1,271	2,014	158%
2.3b # of views of social media posts	0	236,933		99,070	590,906	596%
2.3c # of likes of social media posts	0	13,432		9,170	10,378	249%
2.3d # of comments on social media posts	1	98	162	648	400%	
Knowledge translation						
3.1 # and description of knowledge products (e.g. policy briefs, news articles etc.) created by Secretariats	24	51	213%	17	27	159%
3.2 # and description of knowledge products created by small grant holders	22	22	100%	31	31	100%
3.3 # and description of knowledge products created by Communities of Practice	2	18	900%	39	20	51%
Promotion of knowledge use						
4.1 # and description of thematic sessions, round tables, webinars and plenary discussions organised by Share-Net for	5	71	1,420%	33	52	153%

⁸ As seen in table 9, in 2020 the indicators related to the website and social media did not have baselines or targets set in some country hubs. As a result, the performance against the targets specified in table 9 can seem to be very positive, although no variance is provided as the results can be skewed as no baselines and targets were actually set.

policy makers, researchers and practitioners						
Network development						
5.1 # and description of active CoPs	23	24	104%	33	33	100%
5.2 # of newly registered members (per sector) per hub	60	345	575%	368	523	142%
5.3 # and description of new (inter)national partnerships established	2	9	450%	14	26	186%
5.4 # and description of conferences/round tables organised independently from Share-Net that Share-Net staff joined as speaker/facilitator/expert	2	24	1,200%	10	23	230%
UPTAKE Indicators	2020 target	2020 actual	Variance	2021 target	2021 actual	Variance
U1. Selection of stories of how a representative sample of SN members incorporate SRHR knowledge acquired by SN activities/ products into member's personal/ organizational work, including a description of their main learning	11	13	118%	23	26	113%
U2. Description of how CoPs on SRHR are functioning 1. What are the ongoing processes and practices that contribute to the liveliness and keep the members engaged? 2. How could Share-Net facilitation be improved? 3. How could the functioning of the CoP be improved?	0	0		67	59	88%
Management and sustainability Indicators	2020 target	2020 actual	Variance	2021 target	2021 actual	Variance
6.1 # and description of financial collaborations to SN	0	72		6	8	133%
6.2 # and description of proposals submitted for seeking funds	2	22	1,100%	5	9	180%
Country hubs indicators						

7.2 # and description of sessions with MoFA (and Embassy) staff to review specific SRHR topics (e.g. pressure cooker sessions)	8	20	250%	13	33	254%
7.4 # and description of trainings/capacity building sessions followed by SN secretariats	0	8		16	44	275%

2.4.3 Some small improvements may increase efficiencies further

While SN is very efficient overall, a few areas for improvement were captured. Government representatives in Bangladesh indicated further partnerships with the academic sector would be important to increase the impact of SN by making the research more rigorous and robust. Some grass-root organizations highlighted that they struggle to adequately budget the activities that are required for their grant applications which causes challenges with implementation. This is an area of potential future support that SN Bangladesh could provide to grantees. Other researchers in Bangladesh indicated that payment terms and conditions, such as tax, that are imposed on the grants sometimes hinder their work and some respondents seemingly were not aware of earlier in the grant making process. Similarly in Burundi, the delay in disbursement of funds was cited as affecting the implementation of activities which end up being postponed to the following quarter.

“In the young fellowship program or small grants; SN takes out VAT which is high for a young researcher and for students. As a young researcher, it is difficult to manage funds when multiple instalments are in place. In the research project, Share-Net has provided research assistance but it will be better if it is also incorporated into the plan and the project assistant can be on board as soon as the project starts.” **Young researcher, Bangladesh**

In Colombia, having a more robust and potentially larger team to ensure the implementation of core activities was not outsourced would have arguably been more efficient. According to SN Burkina Faso, support from a more experienced hub that has more substantial experience and funds would have enabled them to be more efficient in the implementation of activities.

2.5 Coherence

Summary of key findings

- a. SN is coherent with MoFA's SRHR policy and global agenda, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- b. SN is complementary to the SRHR landscape, both globally and in the countries
- c. The ToC is generally a coherence framework, but should be updated to better reflect the specific country contexts

2.5.1 SN is very coherent with the MoFA policy on SRHR

In all countries and internationally, SN is very coherent with MoFA's SRHR policies. Coherence with MoFA's policy is evidenced by the close alignment that SN has to MoFA in the Netherlands and the country hubs. SN is *the* SRHR platform for MoFA internationally and the country hubs and plays a critical coordination, convening and knowledge function to the MoFA.

"It is coherent because when we take our sectors of intervention, there is access to information and Share-Net in these interventions aims to provide the right information for young people. Research results feed information. I think there are gender issues. At the level of the MoFA, taking gender issues into account is non-negotiable". EKN representative in Burkina Faso

In the Netherlands, SN plays a cross-cutting role to support the MoFA's SRHR partnerships and has recently started to play a similar role to the MoFA's *SRHR Solutions* programme in Burundi. In Ethiopia, the hub complements the SRHR partnerships MoFA have in Ethiopia. EKN in Ethiopia also envisions SN in the future to play a broader role in facilitating exchange of knowledge among the various SRHR partners funded by the Embassy. In some instances, such as Bangladesh, SN's knowledge is credited with supporting evidence to complement MoFA targets in the country, and to supporting dialogue on SRHR with the government of Bangladesh.

2.5.2 SN is very coherent with the SDG framework for action

SN is very well aligned with the SDGs, both in terms of its prominent role in SRHR and how this is aligned to the SDGs. SN's progress reports all strongly indicate how well aligned and coherent the platform is with the SDGs, including the broader impact on social and economic benefits for women, families and societies. For example, increases in women's and children's education, increases in women's earnings and reductions in poverty (SDG #3, #4, #5, and #1, #2, #10) as well as their role in supporting knowledge (SDG #17).

2.5.3 SN is highly complementary to the SRHR community

SN is highly complementary to the wider SRHR community, internationally and in the country hubs. It is seen by several respondents as a neutral facilitator and knowledge broker that supports the wider SRHR communities in an impartial manner, and typically offers important services and products that are complementary to others and co-defined by members. It is different to other knowledge platforms and research initiatives as it is a membership-based organisation and brings together members in a unique way that others such as the Population Council, Guttmacher or others do not.

“It has a unique position in bringing together SRHR researchers, policymakers, implementers, the private sector, advocates and media actors around the table to foster a continued dialogue, gather evidence and ensure state of the art knowledge and experiences to inform policies and programmes—the core business of the Knowledge Platforms’ knowledge management and match-making process. Share-Net International addresses both sensitive and neglected topics, offering a safe space for our members to discuss these.” SN proposal to MoFA, 2019

While SN is complementary to other SRHR platforms and stakeholders, more should be done on promoting SN strategically internationally and regionally. More strategic alliances and partnerships would help to further strengthen SN’s activities and impact on a larger scale. As noted in section 2.2.9, SN is largely seen to be a Dutch-centred SRHR platform as opposed to an international knowledge platform and SNI has not been very effective to-date in establishing new international partnerships as expected. Strategic partnerships would enable other international partners to better understand and appreciate what SN does and how it offers complementary value, and would ultimately enable SN and others to enhance SRHR globally together. SN might consider if there is scope for there to be a conversation about “values”, what and how they might be aligned across hubs.

At the country hub level, SN is also highly complementary to other SRHR organisations in the country. Qualitative data collected in Burkina Faso show that all actors within the SRHR community acknowledge that SN offers a platform that is complementary to others for sharing knowledge on SRHR. In particular, there are common objectives relating to access to information and knowledge on SRHR. The platform is perceived by the actors interviewed as a tool that helps to fill in areas that are forgotten about or neglected by the SRHR community. In Colombia, SN is complimentary to the SRHR community as it generates and translates knowledge around important topics such as sexual diversity. In Burundi, SN has played a significant role in building a knowledge sharing mechanism among key actors on SRHR, including MoFA-funded SRHR partners. In Ethiopia, members indicate that the SN platform is already filling gaps in SRHR knowledge that other organisations and platforms have not been able to in the past by providing information comprehensively but in a neutral manner that is not necessarily tied only to very specific topics of certain projects, such as HIV prevention or contraception only. SN Bangladesh is credited for providing a safe place to amplify voices and address the SRHR needs of marginalized communities on important subjects that are considered taboo, such as addressing GBV within the transgender community.

However, as noted elsewhere in this report, the country hubs might be perceived by others as not being as complementary to the neighbouring SRHR community outside of the country hub. There is the potential for SN country hubs to become more complementary if a regionalised approach is tested by SN in the second phase of their current programme.

2.5.4 SNI is coherent with the SN country hubs

SNI is largely coherent with the country hubs and there are many intentional efforts ongoing to ensure coherence and partnerships. Country hubs report a high degree of coherence between SNI and the SRHR priorities in the countries, and which are generally supported in a manner that enable country SRHR priorities to come to the forefront and then be supported.

“With the country hubs, I think they [SNI] consider the needs and the contexts of the different countries. So I think it is quite consistent and not everything is imposed. It is in concert with the other country hubs, what is happening on the ground, the policies at the national level. The country hub’s action plan is free for each country to be able to propose according to its context.” Country hub representative, Burkina Faso

Country hubs typically report that they are well supported by SNI, but that they have a lot of autonomy and independence. Most country hubs have their own vision, which is aligned with the SNI vision, but contextualized with the contexts in each country. Country hubs are able to set their own research and CoP agendas in alignment with SNI’s agenda, as well as work plans. On the other hands, some activities such as SHIRIM, CCC and grants are pre-defined by SNI. Country hubs have representation in the SNI board and the needs and opinions from the country hubs seem to be captured effectively and in a coherent manner, from co-developing the terms of reference for the MTR or helping to drive the 2023 – 2027 strategic planning process. The new country hubs of Burkina Faso, Colombia and Ethiopia all report being well-supported by SNI and the SHIRIM process as they set up operations and were supported with alignment to SNI and older country hubs.

However, as noted in other sections of this report, some SNI resources and approaches might require SNI to be more considerate of local contexts, especially regarding issues that are sensitive due to cultural and religious values. In Jordan, the country hub indicated that the national CoP should be able to engage regionally to develop and support a regional CoP that would cover other countries in the Middle East. In Bangladesh, the country hub is very keen to support more on SRHR programme implementation and not just facilitating knowledge and learning.

2.6 Sustainability

Summary of key findings

- a. There is an urgent need for SN to focus more on strengthening the financial sustainability by expanding and diversifying funds. While funding targets and priority partners and donors have been identified, SN has had to focus on other priorities in 2020 and 2021 such as setting up new country hubs instead of focussing on fundraising and financial sustainability
- b. The future funding from the MoFA is unclear, although SRHR is likely to be maintained as a priority. The situation is volatile, however. It was recently made clear to SN that Bangladesh and Jordan will not be SRHR focus countries for MoFA from 2023 onwards, which put both country hubs in a volatile position
- c. Some efforts are underway however to increase the financial sustainability of SN at the Secretariat level and the older country hubs. Burundi has managed to secure additional funding from MoFA in-country
- d. Much more is needed overall to increase the financial sustainability of SN and this should be seen as the top priority for the second half of the programme period

2.6.1 Sustainability may be a top priority in theory, but more practically needs to be done

According to the 2019 SN proposal to the MoFA, SN was encouraged by the MoFA to “to diversify its funding base and strive for increased sustainability, while seeking synergy and complementarity with similar global network initiatives.” The same proposal goes on to state that SN has started building relationships with several potential funders to see if they could support the platform such as Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and AmplifyChange. High targets regarding funding expansion and diversification have been set as seen in box 3.

Box 3. SN’s targets to increase funding and diversify funding streams

1. Increased funding available for the Knowledge Platform to 3 million euro annually by 2022
2. Increased revenue from members to 100,000 euro by the end of 2022
3. Increased income from sponsorship to 250,000 euro by the end of 2022

It can be argued that the funding targets are seen in box 3 are too ambitious, both when compared to previous successes and also given the last two years of COVID-19. The targets seen in box 3 have also been of some surprise to some of the SN Secretariat, particularly as due to COVID-19 disruptions, SN had difficulties in spending EUR2m in 2020 and 2021 so a EUR3m was not a target that was in mind. In addition, the targets have not been reviewed or revised over the last two years, suggesting that financial sustainability has not been at the forefront of SN in the first half of the current programme phase. This may not be surprising as in 2020 and 2021 SN has focussed on setting up three new country hubs, expanding to reach new members and working effectively during challenging times caused by COVID-19.

By the end of 2020, according to the annual report, no funding proposals had been submitted. It remains unclear which of the identified partners have been strategically engaged by SN to date. According to the draft financial report from 2021, a total of EUR49,555 in membership fees were generated, which is a significant amount and an important contribution to diversifying funds. SN only has revenues from Dutch members and discussions about membership fees in other countries are said to be challenging, but high on the agenda. Due to COVID-19, the revenue from Dutch memberships decreased over the last two years and, overall, the total membership fees raised was

short of the target of EUR81,000 forecasted for the same period. Other efforts are underway such as securing sponsorship for the CCC, but this is forecasted to perhaps raise around EUR15,000. While this is a small but important contribution to diversifying funding, it is expected that important amounts of time will need to be invested to secure such sponsorship.

Doing nothing or too little is not an option, and sustainability must be seen by SN as the top priority particularly as Bangladesh and Jordan were announced in May 2022 by MoFA as not being priority SRHR countries from 2023 onwards. This puts SN's operations in both countries in risk as no clear and tangible moves towards financial security and sustainability are in place.

No other contracts with other major donors have been secured during the review period and there is no clear sustainability and fundraising strategy in place for SN.⁹ Currently there are many divergent views on how best to sustain SN and, according to several key informant interviews that informed the MTR, some Board members are doubtful that MoFA will not fund SN again. While many conversations are underway, it is critical that SN advances these into a clear strategy that will drive forwards the second half of the programme.

2.6.2 The potential for future funding from MoFA is unclear

SN has been funded by the MoFA for more than a decade. It is one of a handful of knowledge management platforms that the MoFA supports, and it the only SRHR platform for the MoFA. SN is central to the MoFA's SRHR agenda, and as described in other sections of this report, SN is seen by MoFA representatives as being an important vehicle and platform that is viewed positively. However, the future funding of SN by the MoFA remains unclear. Discussions with several MoFA staff suggested an upbeat outlook on future Dutch government commitments to fund SRHR, which is seen to be a priority intervention by Dutch taxpayers and an important development topic that the Netherlands is well placed to continue to globally champion. Discussions were equally positive about the likelihood of future support from the MoFA to SN. However, funding commitments for future SRHR programming are not known or secured and it is likely that SRHR will also have to compete with new and emerging priorities including global health security, which may mean a reduction in funding for SRHR in total. Unpredicted emergencies such as COVID-19 and the recent but ongoing war invasion of Ukraine by Russia also cast doubt on the future reliability of funding quantities for SRHR from MoFA in the future.

2.6.3 Country hubs and members make some efforts to sustain activities, but more efforts are required

Country hubs are at varying stages of activity with regards to improving their sustainability. As a new hub, SN Colombia is focussed primarily on keeping its members engaged and expanding the range of products and services that are on offer. The involvement of the government with the SN Ethiopia platform from the onset has been done with a vision of contributing towards sustainability. The Ministry of Health is represented in the county hub steering committee through its Maternal

⁹ However, in 2022 SN has started to put in place some early thoughts on fundraising strategies and partners, which while this is outside the period under review, it suggests that efforts to expedite funding and financial sustainability are now in flow.

Newborn & Child Health Director, which is expected to help in the long-term ownership of the platform. Ethiopia seems buoyant about the potential for future financial contributions from other partners: stakeholders believe that SN can be well positioned as a pool of experts to mobilise additional resources and ensure the platform is sustainable. Burkina Faso is equally positive. Respondents expressed optimism about the ability of additional funding sources being able to support SN, perhaps through the MoFA embassy as well as other international partners.

“Share-Net Burkina must work on fundraising to be able to ensure the diversity of funding to enable the hub to exist. Because the more partners you have, the more sustainable you are. The more collaborations you have with people, members, the more sustainable it is”
Country hub representative, Burkina Faso

Older country hubs are making some efforts to increase their sustainability. Bangladesh is strengthening the engagement of its significant membership, which is one of the key assets it holds. One of the participants shared that SN should also consider developing a social business model to ensure the SN knowledge platform sustains itself without depending on funding. A participant representing the government recommended that to strengthen the SN knowledge platform, there is need for a systemic approach whereby every three months one meeting is organised and if possible, a physical networking event is held. In Jordan, the country hub is hosted by Higher Population Council, which is the government’s arm in dealing with population issues. This enables SN to partly ensure that SRHR goals are included into the executive program of the Jordanian government in a culturally appropriate manner. SN Jordan is working to attract additional funding to implement SRHR activities with the Higher Population Council (their host organization) and is exploring partnerships with the Institute for Family Health Care, funded by UNPFA. In addition, the SNI Secretariat has facilitated discussion and organized training to bring on board the hubs in partnership building and fundraising to support financial sustainability.

SN Burundi has arguably been the most successful country hub to-date that has been able to mobilise resources in-country. SN Burundi is a partner to EKN Burundi and their SRHR Solutions programme. SN Burundi plays a cross-cutting learning and knowledge management function on the programme, supporting both the MoFA and implementing partners. SN Burundi’s renewable contract runs for two years (July 2021 to June 2023) and is worth EUR179,283.

3. What is working well and what can be done differently between 2022 and 2024.



3.1 Key lessons learned

This section provides an overview of the key lessons learned that can be deduced from the 2020 – 2021 programme period.

3.1.1 Put sustainability at the front from the start - and do not assume that future funding is secured

While this is not necessarily a new lesson learned, it is important to SN. While this review recognises that efforts have gone into expanding SN and delivering much into the first two years of the current programme phase – especially during COVID-19 - sustainability and especially the diversity of funding streams has lagged behind. A clear and actionable sustainability plan with clearly dedicated roles and responsibilities could have been developed at the start of the programme phase. Such a plan could have enabled clear and accountable actions to be tracked against it each quarter. However, a sustainability action plan would have meant an alternative structure and level of effort between the management and coordination of the Secretariat and the country hubs would have been required, especially given the other programme priorities.

Equally, an important lesson is that funding and the current status quo regarding donor support is rarely constant and never fixed. A strong example of this is that SN has learnt that Bangladesh and Jordan will not be SRHR focus countries for the MoFA from 2023 onwards. Both country hubs do not have alternative funds in place and so could be in a challenging position regarding their future financial sustainability.

3.1.2 Governance is important, but there is no perfect solution and more important priorities that require significant time investments

As shown in the key findings of the report, a significant amount of time has been spent discussing governance over the last four to five years, and especially within the two years which this MTR covers. Governance is of course vital, but ongoing discussions on the subject have not led to any changes or improvements, largely because the governance is fit for purpose. Time would be better spent on other critical priorities that require significant time and effort, especially strategic partnerships and diversifying funding to increase sustainability within the next two years.

3.1.3 Digital is key to scaling up membership but has heightened divides among members

As seen in the main findings, investments in the digital platform have produced significant results in terms of the reach to significantly more members and contacts, and new CRM software now enables SN to track what happens to key communication tools, such as the newsletters and how many are opened, for example. SN is now able to track website users in 187 countries globally and generally is now capable of conducting important analysis of members and users. Country hubs are now more digital than ever before. However, while online connections are necessary and important, they are not sufficient alone for a successful network. There is still much to be done to turn online connections into meaningful networks and partnerships as well as to expand and diversify the membership base and better respond to the needs of marginalised groups. As the digital platform has expanded, it has inadvertently created, or heightened, a digital divide between members who

have access to the internet and who can participate in online activities, and those who have no access or capabilities to participate.

3.1.4 Understand not only why members join, but act on what is most important to them

Interestingly, the reasons that members join SN to begin are, in many cases, not the products and services that they subsequently find the most important. Most members joined SN for access to SRHR information, but find the grants to be the most important product that is available to them after they join. While SN should not focus its attention solely on expanding its membership too extensively, and should not shift too much focus on grants, the feedback from members from the online survey on what is important to them can provide some strategic insights on how SN can further engage members in even more meaningful ways. Data and analysis from the online survey and also the ongoing internal web analytics carried out by SN will be important in further identifying how SN can further engage new members from the outset.

3.1.5 Localised, personalised and nuanced approaches are still critical to complement digital advances

As noted throughout this report, the digital platform has been successful in many ways, but it has unintentionally created some new divides and excluded certain groups. It has also reinforced among members that while digital is important and has been highly effective during two intense years of COVID-19, localised meetings and face-to-face workshops are still critical, especially to reinforce partnerships and strengthen relationships. Localised approaches to knowledge products and services are also still key in increasingly regionalised and international platforms, including materials in local languages, through channels that reach locally marginalised members and in formats that are culturally sensitive to unique contexts. SN might consider making cross country dissemination and networking event a condition of all grants in order to further maximise the impact of grants and to combined this with networking events which have also been highlighted by members as being key for the second half of the SN programme period.

3.1.6 Capacity development must accompany effective grant-making

It is important to ensure some capacity development activity that specifically supports communities that traditionally find it difficult to access grants or are under-represented through the applications process. This will help new researchers and grantees to access important funding, support diversity and inclusion efforts and potentially enable additionally important research topics to be covered. The SN grant making manual emphasises the need for capacity building to be put in place to support all grants made. It will be important for this to be put into place throughout 2022 and 2023 to further support grantees and build important research capacity among some grantees that require support.

3.1.7 Tracking outcomes is critical to determining SN's larger impact on improving policies, programmes and practices

While SN has supported a comprehensive range of products and activities over the first two years of the programme period, it is challenging to determine the contribution that these have had on the expected programme outcomes: changes in policies, programmes and practices. Assuming that

activities will naturally lead to changes in outcomes is not sufficient. Specific and intentional ways of tracking and measuring how all activities contribute to outcomes is required. While the SN M&E plan does have outcome level indicators and targets, a lesson is that a wider system and personnel that tracks activities against outcomes has not been in place.

3.2 Challenges related to COVID-19 and how SN responded to them

The first half of SNI's current programme phase has been delivered throughout COVID-19. This brought several challenges to SNI and the country hubs, and required new ways of working to be found.

3.2.1 Flexible and adaptive programming

The SNI team and country hubs adapted quickly and effectively to new ways of working remotely as the COVID-19 pandemic took hold. Work plans were adjusted, reviewed and readjusted as required, serving as a "live" tool more so than in most usual situations. New ways of working remotely were quickly taken up, both for the SN teams, as well as with members around the world (see 3.2.3). However, as seen in the expenditure reports, travel was not possible during COVID-19 which has led to an underspend against the budget. In addition, members that responded to the online survey and who participated in the sense-making workshops indicate that more face-to-face meetings are also required to complement the newer ways of working that COVID-19 has brought to the forefront.

3.2.2 Reprogramming of funds to support a COVID-19 response

Soon after the pandemic hit in early 2020, it became clear that it would have a significant impact on SRHR and gender equality. In response, SNI reallocated total of EUR149,500 to finance projects on COVID-19, SRHR and gender equality. As shown in table 10, important research and knowledge translation grants were allocated to multiple countries (including several that are not country hubs) on important topics related to effectively and safely navigating through challenging COVID-19 scenarios.

3.2.3 Scale-up and acceleration of the digital platform

SN responded quickly and effectively to the COVID-19 pandemic and accelerated new ways of working effectively with members through a revamped and strengthened digital platform. A greater focus on digital communications, including social media and data analytics, enabled SN to better understand its members more than ever before and also create new ways of mobilising many more members than in previous years. A good example of how SN effectively managed to continue working as planned, albeit through the digital platform, is the CCC which was hosted by SN Bangladesh.

3.3 Positive and negative unintended effects

3.3.1 COVID-19

While the COVID-19 pandemic had, and continues to have, a significant negative impact globally on SRHR, there have been some positive unintended consequences for SN, most notably the scale-up and acceleration of the digital platform and more efficient ways of working and reaching members cost-efficiently. This enabled SN activities to continue in more novel and new ways, and also enabled SN's membership to grow – arguably more so than working less extensively through the digital platform would

have made possible. COVID-19 also forced SN to reprogramme funds to support a response to the pandemic, but also created expenditure underspends due to travel not being possible.

3.3.2 Greater use of digital can lead to more divides among members

While the expansion of the digital platform and more online ways of working has enabled more members to be reached and more remote activities to take place globally and in the country hubs, especially during COVID-19, it has also inadvertently created a “digital divide” among members, meaning that those who do not have access to technology are more excluded than they might be through more traditional face-to-face interactions.

3.3.2. Country hubs often cannot fill regional needs

SN has expanded the network to new country hubs, but also inadvertently undermined opportunities to think and work regionally at times by being too specifically focused on the country level. This also leaves SNI to carry the weight of engaging with partners and members internationally, regionally and in countries that do not have country hubs. In the past SN Netherlands would play a greater role in regional and international networking, although over the last two years SN Netherlands has decided to deprioritize this role since the SNI Secretariat is now tasked with leading it. However, this lesson learned has been recognised by SN and efforts are underway. SNI has initiated the brainstorming on regional approaches with country hubs. In addition, New country hubs have been encouraged to think more regionally and membership requests from neighbouring countries are forwarded to nearby country hubs.¹⁰

3.4 Innovations

There have been some innovations during the programme phase under review, although these are limited in number and the size and depth of the innovation.

3.4.1 innovative ways of working effectively

Engagements with online survey respondents and key informants interviewed illustrated some innovations in terms of the way in which SN has operated over the last two years. Examples include digital and online working, exploring multiple tools as well as the sharper and accelerated focus on the development of the digital platform. In addition, the digital CCC and SHIRIM are themselves innovative ways of working.

3.4.2 More innovative grants are in place

Compared to previous years, SN’s grants since 2020 have been much more innovative and focussed on a wider range of methods, diverse subjects, shifted from research to more practically-focussed topics such as advocacy and policy change, and now include more participatory grant making, youth-friendly formats such as games and podcasts, as shown in table 10. Enhanced communication, digitalization, participatory grant making and the varied type of grants have led to more engagement to youth which may encourage further innovation. However, SN will need to track and measure any improvements in innovation from such grants and engagements with young people.

¹⁰ It remains unclear, however, how if and how effectively these requests are actioned.

3.5 Networks and partnerships that should be created and leveraged

There are several categories and specific networks and partnerships that SN should create and leverage. Some of these have already been identified by SN during its 2019 proposal to MoFA, and others are newer and which are listed in table 10 based on the feedback from respondents that contributed to this MTR. It is recommended that SN expand upon this list further as part of its new 2023 – 2027 strategic planning process, working closely with the country hubs, who identified several in-country partners during this MTR but which are too many to list in this report. Critically, SN should expedite efforts to create strategic partnerships with high priority organisations in order to increase its visibility, coherence and impact globally, as well as to support funding diversification efforts.

Table 10. Summary of categories of networks and partnerships that SN should leverage

Category	Examples	Why SN needs to leverage partnerships
MoFA		SN should leverage its strong relationship further with MoFA – both in the Netherlands, the country hubs and potentially regionally - in order to position itself for future funding after the current programme phase ends. SN should also extend its relationship with senior MoFA staff, and identify and nurture “internal champions” as a strategic way for MoFA to help position SN for additional funds from other “like-minded” donors who support SRHR
Funders	Sida (HQ and Africa regional office in Zambia) and other Scandinavian donors, Gates Foundation, UNFPA, Hewlett Foundation	SN aims to diversify its funding base and so new funders are critical to enable SN to meet this objective. SN will need to demonstrate its value proposition, impact on how knowledge management contributes to changes in policy and practice. Many donors will also be interested in a regional approach which SN should consider
Other Dutch knowledge platforms	INCLUDE, VIA Water, Food and Business Knowledge Platform, Security and Rule of Law	It is important for SN and the other knowledge platforms to improve their partnerships as greater coordination and collaborations will likely improve how each network operates, and will also support future discussions with MoFA about continued funding and efforts to diversify funding to new donors
International NGOs (INGOs)	IPPF, MSI Reproductive Choices, Plan, Hivos	INGOs typically have a wide funding base with multiple donors, and have leverage that SN could gain from – both to increase its impact, collaborations and to potentially explore joint funding options with new funders
Regional SRHR organisations and networks	Asia Pacific Alliance for SRHR, Women’s Global Network for Reproductive Rights, SRHR Matter and others	As with INGOs. Partnerships with regional SRHR organisations and networks would also enable SN to have a greater focus regionally and in the global South than it currently may be perceived to have
Southern-based NGOs	Amref Health Africa, others as identified by the country hubs	As with INGOs. Partnerships with southern-based NGOs would also enable SN to have a greater focus regionally and in the global South than it currently may be perceived to have

Southern-based universities	Many per country and regionally, as identified by the country hubs	Country hubs and other key stakeholder interviewed to inform this MTR identified the need for SN to collaborate with more universities and academia in the global South. Such partnerships would help to increase the number of strong and valued voices in the countries who often have leverage with policy makers and host governments
Grassroot organisations /civil society organisations (CSOs)	Many per country and regionally, as identified by the country hubs	Grassroots organisations are based in the global South which will enable SN to have a greater regional focus. CSOs are also important in policy advocacy and often require research and high quality knowledge for effective influence
Research and knowledge agencies	Guttmacher, Population Council, World Health Organisation	As with INGOs
SRHR platforms and initiatives	Women Deliver, FP2030	These platforms are critical, driving global initiatives for SRHR. Partnering with them will enable SN to increase its global reach and impact, and provide additional platform to spread its knowledge to a much wider audience of key stakeholders

4. Recommendations.



4.1 Relevance

4.1.1 Increase the focus on the membership to be more diverse and inclusive – and make materials relevant to more members

Internationally and in the country hubs, online survey respondents, workshop participants and the analysis of findings indicate that SN's membership needs to diversify and become more inclusive. The current membership profile is important and should be maintained, although efforts need to be made to ensure that SN's membership is not elitist or exclusive to those that are typically more educated, assumedly more urban and with access and abilities to use technology. Efforts to diversify the membership should include intentional attempts to reach more young people, people with disabilities, poorer groups including the informal sector and rural populations, and LGBTQI. To be more inclusive, content and materials must be developed in local languages and designed in locally acceptable ways. SN communications should also expand to other channels than largely written and digital communications. Several stakeholders including MoFA have highlighted the need for alternative communication channels to be explored in order to reach more special groups. Such methods might include art, films, fairs, competitions and edutainment to reach more young people, or those with lower education levels, or who are illiterate. SN should also diversify its membership beyond more urban, educated researchers to community based and grassroots organisations and networks, many of whom play important roles in advocacy. Finally, SN may consider reviewing how diverse and inclusive its board is, as well as senior position both in the secretariat and country hubs, and acting as needed in case a more diverse and representative configuration is needed. Perhaps worthy of consideration would be an equality, diversity and inclusion audit of leadership positions to see if there is scope to diversify leadership and ensure that key target groups are represented.

4.1.2 Engage more with members, hubs and organisations in the global south

While the digital platform has been effective in expanding the number of members, too great a focus on this has inadvertently created a "digital divide" between those that have access and can use technology, and those that cannot. Further, the digital platform seems limited in how effectively it can bring together meaningful discussions, relationships and partnerships. After almost two and half years of COVID-19 restrictions, members are requesting more face-to-face engagements again, which are recommended as important ways to strengthen the membership and to also focus on some of the other key recommendations listed below, including bringing together knowledge and practice and programming more effectively to demonstrate a greater impact. Such meetings will help to strengthen partnerships, relationships and knowledge use in ways that online and remote meetings often cannot. They will also support a more personalized and participatory approach which some members have indicated is important, especially for those groups that are not well reached through print and online products and services only. Meetings do not necessarily mean large and expensive workshops only. Smaller meetings can be co-funded with local partners. Alternative means of engaging with groups such as young people, people from disabilities and those with lower education levels are also important, such as fairs, festivals and other edutainment channels.

4.1.3 Modify some small improvements to governance - if absolutely necessary

The governance at SNI and the country hubs is fit for purpose and does not need any major reworking or overhauling. There are some considerations on how to potentially improve this, such as

making the board more independent if it is felt to be necessary by wider representation in the board. Some changes will need to be made if a regionalised approach is pursued. Any concerns regarding the potential imbalance of power between the SNI secretariat and the hubs (which this MTR does not find) should be addressed through pragmatic and results-focused improvements, such as leveraging the knowledge and skills of the country hub organisations, instilling a greater sense of knowledge sharing between host organisations and country hubs, and creating skills and abilities and clear mandates on country hubs to diversify and expand their funding in-country. It will be important to keep the conversation going on governance, but this should not be at the distraction of more critical issues such as funding, sustainability, regionalization and tracking how knowledge leads to outcome change.

4.2 Effectiveness

4.2.1 Advance strategic partnerships at all levels, including in country hubs and internationally

Strategic partnerships are important to the next phases of SN's growth and direction. They will support SN's ambitions to diversify its funding, especially through new institutional donors. Strategic partnerships will also increase SN's collaborations and coherence on important SRHR issues, increase global visibility and will support SN to contribute more to positive changes in policy and practice. At the international level, many of the strategic partners identified in SN's proposal from 2019 remain important, but SN should now increase the engagement and formalize these partnerships. Others should be identified as part of the 2023 – 2027 strategic planning process. If SN decides to pursue regionalized approaches, then strategic partners that align with these ambitions should also be mapped and pursued. Feedback from all the country hubs indicate that more strategic partnerships are also needed with multiple agencies who are often unique to the country contexts, including smaller and grassroots organisations. Several country hubs have recommended that new partnerships with academic institutions should also be pursued to help strengthen SN's objectives on the ground.

4.2.2 Develop clearer pathways for enhanced collaboration and sharing of knowledge between hubs

The frequency and ways in which country hubs work together can be strengthened, especially with regards to how knowledge is shared, used and driven forward between the country hubs. In the sense-making workshops participants indicated they would welcome greater opportunity to interact with other country hubs. However, they did not think responsibility for this lay at the country hub level, but at the level of the SNI secretariat. The role of knowledge facilitator between the countries still largely rests with the SNI secretariat, and country hubs focus almost exclusively on their own SRHR knowledge platform and country priorities, rather than looking beyond country borders. CoPs between the country hubs could be explored and clear plans for regular sharing of knowledge between hubs should be developed. Knowledge sharing between countries could be added to the ToC and added to the M&E so it is intentionally tracked each quarter.

4.2.3 Increase the focus on using knowledge to focus on outcomes and positively change practice and policies

It is evident that SN is effective at generating and sharing important SRHR knowledge to members and stakeholders. There is a need to now increase the focus on using this knowledge, the SN platform, members and expertise within the network to improve and change practices and policies. This needs to be done at a higher level than activities or individuals, or small policy changes in organizations. Attributable change to practices and policies needs to occur and be tracked at the national level in which SN and members work, including being able to determine to what extent CoPs are indeed the main intervention that can lead to changes in outcome. Given the limited available evidence on what changes in outcomes have occurred due to SN's interventions, it is not currently possible to determine to how and to what extent CoPs may be a critical initiative that can indeed influence and change policies and practice.

Grants should have a greater focus on supporting implementation and effective changes in policy and practice. SN might consider various ways to increase the focus on such changes, including identifying specific policies and practices in country hubs that require a specific change, including for example drawing up a calendar of which key policies are due for renewal and using research and knowledge to draw up policy advocacy campaigns and messages. SN should also actively network and matchmake different members who could play key roles in identified campaigns, and SN might consider partnering with new strategic organisations who specialize in policy advocacy, but often require high-quality knowledge and research to effect change. The M&E of such interventions will need to be strengthened so that activities targeting policy and practice can be tracked, measured and attributed in the SN M&E plan which guides the platform and is reported against to MoFA. Demonstrating outcome changes in policy and practice will be critical to engaging in new strategic funding opportunities, and will be key to SN developing value propositions for new donors (see recommendations under section 4.5).

4.2.4 Strengthen the digital platform further

While good progress has been made on the digital platform between 2020 and 2021, further improvements can be made. Websites and online materials should aim to be more inclusive and reach more diverse groups of members. The functionality of the websites has been stressed by members as being an issue, and while this is being addressed by SN, it is recommended that the ease of using the websites is examined regularly. While the amount of members now receiving the newsletter has increased, the "open rate" has dropped. Efforts need to be made to increase this so that the impact of greater distribution is realised to a greater extent. The social media posts have increased significantly over the last two years, but SN should also focus on tracking the outcomes from these inputs rather than focussing on the social media interventions and activities only.

4.2.5 Consider piloting a regionalised approach

While country hubs are important, a model that focuses on a country only excludes others from within the region and misses some important opportunities, networks and partnerships that come from working across regions. However, regional approaches also bring potential disadvantages, as summarised in table 11.

Table 11. Advantages and disadvantages of a possible regional pilot

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>1. Expansion: Offers the potential for SN to support a greater number of countries and more members than seven country hubs can do alone</p>	<p>1. Finances required: While the estimated costs of piloting a regional approach are not available, it is assumed that a regional approach would be a relatively costly endeavour. While SN assumedly has the budget to support this, a clear cost-benefit analysis should be conducted to determine what benefits would be gained as a result of a regional approach, against what other benefits could be gains for the same amount of funds</p>
<p>2. Better access to information for members: Some members have indicated that it is challenging to access SN unless you are located with a country hub. Regional approaches could improve this situation</p>	<p>2. Resource intensive: It is likely that piloting a regional approach will be time and potentially labour intensive. While a regional approach would bring some benefits to SN, the main priority needs to be on the future financial sustainability of the platform. A regional approach should not compromise the future sustainability</p>
<p>3. New funding and partner opportunities: MoFA and other donors, as well as networks and platforms work regionally. SN would have the opportunity of partnering with new organisations and potentially tapping into new funding</p>	<p>3. Scaling too quickly for fewer results: There is the potential of SN “spreading itself to thin” through expanding to new countries too quickly and inadvertently reducing down the results that it achieves</p>
<p>4. Joined-up research and practice: Might offer new opportunities for integrated research-to-practice approaches in certain regional administrative bodies, such as the East African Community or the Southern African Development Community</p>	<p>4. Sustainability: It remains unclear how sustainable a regional approach would be. It is not advisable to pilot any regional approach without a clear plan for financial sustainability</p>
<p>5. Operate at scale: Could enable SN to be seen as a larger knowledge platform that operates more at the international level than it is currently</p>	

Bangladesh or Jordan seem to be a plausible starting point for piloting a regional approach, given their size of membership, experience and geographical location. Recent scoping missions to both countries explored the possibility of a regional platform to be based from either country. However, MoFA has recently confirmed to SN that both countries will not be SRHR focus countries for MoFA from 2023 onwards which undermines the feasibility of regional approaches being launched from either Jordan or Bangladesh as additional resources will be required from other donors, which given the short amount of time remaining, may be unlikely. On the other hand, the Sahel and Great Lakes regions remain a

focus for MoFA, which could be worthy of further exploration, with Burkina Faso and Burundi being possible regional hubs.

It is recommended that further exploration of the feasibility and costs and benefits from a possible regional approach be conducted by SN in the second half of 2022. While they could offer some important benefits, this should not be at the expense of increasing the sustainability of SN as the top priority for the 2022 – 2024 programme phase.

4.2.6 Provide further capacity to applicants of grants

In line with the SN grant making manual, it will be important for future rounds of grants to be continuously supported by more extensive capacity building and support on how to apply for grants, including perhaps sessions on how to write funding applications, develop budgets and also explain the terms and conditions of the grants themselves. This will make the granting process smoother and more effective for SN and grant applicants, will enhance member capacities and will result in greater delivery of results for successful applicants.

4.2.7 Consider a sharper focus more on innovations

While there are some examples of how SN has innovated over the last two years, there is arguably the potential to do more, especially with regards to innovations that stimulate and drive change within the SRHR sector. Given its large and growing membership base, SN could actively recruit more innovators such as business partners to join. Key SRHR innovators could also be invited to speak at key SN global events. The activation grants could have a greater focus on innovations too, and the SNI Secretariat and country hubs could also participate in innovative groups to learn more from others. However, it is important to note that while this consideration for SN to potentially be more innovative is being made, it is certainly not a top priority and should not be placed over other priorities such as the diversification of funds and tracking and measuring changes to outcomes.

4.3 Efficiency

4.3.1 Reconsider if the most efficient ways of delivering results are the most effective

SN is an efficient platform that delivers knowledge in a comparably low-cost way. Management costs and the level of effort are low compared to other similar projects. However, it is not evident if the current level of effort among the secretariat team or those in the country hubs is optimal and actually the most efficient way of delivering results, or whether opportunities are being missed as a result. This recommendation is not advocating for significantly more resources to be allocated from core project activities to personnel, but SN should reconsider the level of efforts across core positions against the planned 2022 – 2024 delivery, and consider any areas that need to be strengthened. For example, a greater focus on outcomes and tracking positive changes in policy and practice may need an increased level of effort on staff to support monitoring and evaluation.

4.4 Coherence

4.4.1 Review and modify the ToC to contextualize it more with the next phase of SN delivery

The ToC should be updated and modified to reflect the 2022 – 2024 phase of SN’s delivery, including other recommendations in this report, such as strengthening diversity and inclusion of members, improving knowledge sharing between country hubs, potential regional approaches and increased sustainability. Additional components such as linking knowledge to policy advocacy and changes in practice should be added, thereby ensuring that the ToC is fully aligned with the M&E plan. Additional key activities and products such as SHIRIM and working with the private sector should also be included as they are currently lacking in the ToC. The modification of the ToC should be done together with the country hubs. There is a need for the country contexts to be incorporated into the ToC, which will also create a greater sense of ownership and use of the ToC in the country hubs than there is at present (especially newer hubs).

4.5 Sustainability

4.5.1 Treat the future financial sustainability of SN as the top priority for the 2022 – 2024 programme phase

While the future of MoFA’s commitment to SRHR seems likely, there are competing global health priorities and it remains unclear what proportion of funds will be ringfenced for SRHR. In addition, MoFA has recently indicated that Bangladesh and Jordan will not be SRHR focus countries from 2023 onwards, and no robust plans – or additional funding sources - are in place to ensure the financial sustainability of these two country hubs. This puts SN in a challenging situation, which is exacerbated by the fact that there has been little progress in expanding and/or diversifying funding from other donor in the first phase of the programme. Given this situation, and the long lead times that raising new finances usually takes, it is strongly recommended that the SNI Secretariat and SN country hubs treat the future financial sustainability as the top priority for the 2022 – 2024 period.

4.5.2 Develop a medium-term financial sustainability plan and use it to guide the next three-five years of SN’s growth and development

SN needs to develop a simple, pragmatic but ambitious sustainability plan that will guide how it approaches the next three – five years of growth in an intentionally sustainable manner. The plan should be developed with country hubs and other stakeholders, including MoFA in the Netherlands and the country hubs, as well as other strategic individuals. The plan will need to consider a number of options for increasing and diversifying funding sources. The responsibility of this sustainability plan should not solely rest with KIT – it should clearly lay out the roles and responsibilities of all SN staff and member organisations. This plan may be developed with support from external consultant facilitators.

4.5.3 Diversify and expand funding sources at all levels to increase financial sustainability

The sustainability plan will need to comprehensively cover and assess a full range of options to expand and diversify funding sources at all levels, including internationally through the Secretariat, through the country hubs and even through new, regional approaches. A few key options are summarised in table 12. These options are based on feedback from members and country hubs as well as extensive discussions with MoFA, and internal experiences of the MTR team on developing and supporting more sustainable development approaches. Given the importance of future financial sustainability, and how much time it can take to secure additional funds, it is recommended that SN

start as soon as possible. All four options below should be explored to spread risk and likelihood of success if the required time and resources are available.

Table 12. Possible options to increase and diversify funding opportunities

Option 1: Diversify funding from other “like-minded” donors	
Key features	SN could tap into and secure funding from other donors that are supporters of SRHR, such as the Scandinavians. SN could become an initiative that is funded by multiple donors
Immediacy of this option	Medium to long-term
Potential size of funding	Medium to large
Likelihood of a positive outcome	Potentially medium, although it is expected to require significant efforts and time
What is needed from SN	Significant efforts and time to develop value propositions, establish strategic partnerships with key organisations and to continue to advocate and champion for additional funds to be secured
Risks	Significant time and resources could be spent strategically pursuing this option but which not produce the needed results in the time available (until 2024). The time and resources required may not be readily available as SN staff are already on a very low level of effort
Other key details	Importantly, SN will need the MoFA to champion and advocate with other like-minded donors. Currently, there are not enough senior-level internal champions in the MoFA that could support SN to do this. A separate strategic approach will be needed to increase the internal senior champions at the MoFA before pursuing this option
Option 2: Tap into funding opportunities in the global South, especially country hubs or even regional opportunities	
Key features	Building on the Burundi example, and the goodwill for the longer-established country hubs among MoFA (and potentially other partners), SN country hubs could tap into bilateral funding in-country from MoFA and other donors. Opportunities also exist for regional platforms, such as through Sida’s regional SRHR office in Zambia which has an Africa-wide perspective
Immediacy of this option	Medium to long-term
Potential size of funding	Medium to large
Likelihood of a positive outcome	Medium
What is needed from SN	Significant efforts and time to develop value propositions, establish strategic partnerships with key organisations and to continue to advocate and champion for additional funds to be secured. Capacity building of country hubs to engage and strategically fundraise will also be important
Risks	Quite significant time and resources could be spent strategically pursuing this option. While funding from the global South could be secured, it is unclear to what extent this would cover support staff based in the Netherlands
Other key details	SN will need to build the capacity of country hubs and will also need to spend significant time developing its value proposition and key ideas to sell to other donors and to strategically engage with MoFA in-country. SN will also need to identify

	internal champions at MoFA in-country who can strategically engage with other like-minded donors in the countries and/or regions to explore potential co-financing opportunities
Option 3: Focus intensely on securing additional funds from the MoFA post 2024	
Key features	Focus on securing a follow-on award from MoFA, which continues on from the current grant which ends in 2024
Immediacy of this option	Medium term
Potential size of funding	Medium to large
Likelihood of a positive outcome	Medium
What is needed from SN	SN needs to scale up its strategic engagements with MoFA, including senior staff. Currently SN is not known comprehensively enough by key decision makers in the MoFA. SN should use its senior board members to advance strategic engagements with senior MoFA leaders
Risks	There is a significant risk that by only focusing on this option alone, SN may not be able to secure the size of resources that are required to financially sustain (and expand) the network. It is recommended that SN pursue this option alongside others
Other key details	
Option 4: Test, pilot and introduce new ways of generating income and revenue from products and services	
Key features	SN could tap into additional revenue sources from its services and products, including membership fees, paying to attend workshops and conferences, fees for networking and job opportunities
Immediacy of this option	Immediate
Potential size of funding	Small although it would help to reduce down the overall dependency on one donor and is a step in the right direction to increase revenue from other sources
Likelihood of a positive outcome	Likely
What is needed from SN	Cost-benefit analysis of the advantages and disadvantages is recommended
Risks	There are potential risks that adding in payments for products and services would exclude more members and further limit diversity and inclusion of more marginalised groups
Other key details	

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