

Health Actions for Women: Practical Strategies to Mobilize for Change

Health Actions for Women is an innovative resource for women, girls, and their allies working to educate, advocate and mobilize their communities for women's health and rights.

This 352-page print book and online resource shares proven strategies and activities to help women and men facilitate community discussions and action around difficult topics—like family planning, sexuality, HIV, and gender-based violence—even in challenging settings where education and organizing for women's and girls' health may be difficult or dangerous.

FIELD-TESTING

Health Actions was developed in coordination with community-based organizations and women's health advocates worldwide.

Throughout 2012–13, chapters of the book were sent to 40 community-based partners in 23 countries. Field-testing brought together diverse groups of younger and older women, groups that mixed adolescent girls with young married women, and mixed gender groups. 1,400 people participated in discussions, tried out new activities, and submitted their feedback and insights about the issues most important to their communities!

FEEDBACK

Women Solidarity (WOSI), Liberia

"When the stories [from Ghana and Nepal] were read, participants grew interested and were inspired by the intentions and initiatives of the women in the stories. According to the people, the stories have motivated them to take action in their own community that will change the lives of women and girls."

Change Associates, Bangladesh

"The participants were mostly young women and adolescent girl garment workers living in slums in Dhaka city. They were very much engaged with the training. They became quite emotional as, according to them, nobody had ever shared anything like this with them before and in such an entertaining way. They requested that we should be doing this more often! This was quite an unexpected response, as the training was held on a weekend we thought they might not be too happy about it."



Field-testing the Safe Motherhood chapter in Lebanon



High school students in Malawi field-test the Violence Against Women chapter.



Experienced health workers from the Philippines give critical feedback on the STIs and HIV chapter

MORE INFORMATION

Health Actions for Women was developed by Hesperian Health Guides, a nonprofit organization. For more information, please contact **Sarah Shannon**, Executive Director, at 510.845.1447 or visit www.hesperian.org.

SHARING STRATEGIES AND IDEAS FOR ACTION

In **India**, the Tathapi Trust in Pune shared this experience about using the draft Gender chapter:

"Both men and women enjoyed the activities. They were discussing gender for the first time. At the end of the day all the group members decided that they are going to raise the issue of equal pay for equal work; especially about agricultural labour. At present, Men get Rs. 150 & women get Rs. 70 per day. In fact, women put in more work than men. They decided that they will raise this issue with Tanta-Mukti Committee (a village-level dispute resolution committee) and elected representatives of Gram Panchayat (the local self-governance institution) to discuss this issue at the village meeting."

In **Pakistan**, field testers from the organization Social Transformation and Educational Prosperity brought together men and women to discuss and test activities from several chapters including Gender and Safe Motherhood. They had never before attempted to conduct mixed gender discussions on these topics and found overall the experience to be effective and useful and one that they will try to replicate going forward. For example, in reviewing the Safe Motherhood chapter, the group's discussion of the story about a man from Tanzania who organized emergency transportation for birth emergencies was very engaging for the men. The men who participated in that session have since met again to discuss organizing rapid response to birth emergencies.

In **Guatemala**, the Sexuality and Sexual Health chapter was field tested with a mixed gender group of adolescents by a GOJovenes Associate, who reported that as a result *"the participants learned about their sexuality, how they perceive their sexuality and to recognize that pleasure is part of sexuality and sexual health. The group identified some of the cultural and social barriers that limit women's opportunities to learn about their sexuality. There were a few times during the workshop when some of the participants expressed discomfort and embarrassment, but as the activities and discussion progressed, the participants expressed very positive feelings about what they were learning."*

NOW AVAILABLE

Health Actions for Women was released on February 1st, 2015. This groundbreaking new title integrates the insights and experiences collected from field testing. Help us to distribute this resource widely!

www.hesperian.org
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Playing a board game from the Family Planning chapter in Nicaragua



Partners from the Kibera slum in Nairobi, Kenya, try an activity from the Gender chapter.



Community health workers in Nepal discuss the Women and Violence chapter.