Right, Evidence, Action – Amplifying Youth Voices

Midterm Review

RNW Media, 30-11-18

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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the REA programme

Rights, evidence, action – amplifying youth voices (REA) is a three-year programme (2016-2019) supported by an AmplifyChange strategic grant. The REA programme works at the intersection of digital media, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and advocacy to influence attitudes, social norms and policies in favour of the SRHR of young people, including Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) youth, in Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda and India.

The REA programme is a collaboration between Love Matters (RNW Media) and CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality. Love Matters' digital media approach complements CHOICE's youth-led advocacy activities. Love Matters brings its digital expertise and platforms in India, Kenya and Nigeria to provide young people with pleasure-positive and evidence- and rights-based information and address stigma. Our interventions also help create safe online and offline spaces for young people to discuss love, sex and everything in between. Together, we work with four youth-led partner organisations, Equality Triangle Initiative (ETI), Reach a Hand Uganda (RAHU), the Network for Adolescent and Youth for Africa (NAYA) and The YP Foundation, to advocate for all young people's SRHR within national, regional and international forums, like the United Nations.

REA supports young people's participation and amplifies their voices in political and digital media spaces. We listen to young people through their clicks, likes, posts, conversations and survey responses—using natural language processing and analytics. With the data we collect, we can develop insights on young people's views and key interests. We then turn and use those insights to support evidence-based advocacy.

The REA Mid-Term Review is the middle point reflection on the response of young people to the campaigns, story-telling, messaging and discussions on the Love Matters India and Kenya platforms, and provides an opportunity to collect further data as well as reflect on overall progress in the REA program.

1.2 Introduction to the midterm review

The baseline survey, conducted in 2017, served as a benchmark for Love Matters programme activities in Kenya and India, and measured changes and outcomes over the course of the programme. The mid-term review built on the baseline by collecting complementary qualitative data to provide a more in-depth understanding of the topics covered in the baseline. Focus Groups Discussions (FGDs) were carried out between April and August 2018 and consisted of a selection of young people between the ages of 18 to 30 years old who were invited through Love Matters networks in country. These FGDs were based on the RNW Focus Group Discussion Toolkit structure developed by Elianne Anemaat (RNW PMEL) and conducted by the Love Matters India and Kenya teams. Discussion Guides were produced together with the Love Matters teams during the FGD training in March and formed the basis of the topics covered during the FGDs.

It is important to note that the baseline survey and mid-term review were specific to Kenya and India, while Uganda and Nigeria remained outside the scope of study. Within the REA programme,

Love Matters has a presence in Kenya and India, and a newly established platform in Nigeria since June 2018. In Uganda, the REA programme partner RAHU has an online platform called SautiPlus.

RNW Media provides technical capacity-building support for SautiPlus, however the platform, which consists of a website and social media pages, remains outside the scope of Love Matters and is funded under a different programme within RAHU. The REA programme partner in Nigeria is newly registered, and has not had the opportunity to establish an online presence as of 2018. As a result, the measurement for online programme implementation remains in India and Kenya following the Love Matters website and social media pages.

EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Capacity building for PMEL for the Love Matters India and Kenya country teams.

Objective 2: Qualitative data collection:

- Validation and/or adaptation of the Baseline Survey findings.
- A deeper dive into the topics covered by Love Matters and collecting new data.

Objective 3: Progress tracking for the REA program

TARGET GROUPS

- Young people 18 – 30 years in India and Kenya.
- The existing Love Matters online community, including people who have been reached by Love Matters offline activities in Kenya and India.
- Within the online Love Matters community, those who identify and those who do not identify as part of the LGBT community.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

The FGDs were carried out in country by the local Love Matters teams in India (Delhi and Lucknow) and Kenya (Nairobi).

2. Methodology and limitations

2.1 Methodology

OBJECTIVE 1 (CAPACITY BUILDING)

The basis for the capacity-building track of the midterm review was the three-day FGD training held on March 27-29, 2018 in Nairobi, Kenya. Three members from the Kenya team, two members from the India team and one member from REA-partner RAHU (Uganda) were trained in the use of focus groups to collect qualitative data. During this training, the teams simultaneously practiced research skills and prepared for the planned midterm FGDs by developing their respective research objectives, target groups, discussion guides, and planning (based on the RNW FGD Toolkit).

In the following months, the teams organised and conducted the FGDs independently with support from RNW Hilversum. The coding of the transcripts and the subsequent analysis, which was considered the most arduous part of the process, has been a joint effort between the Kenya and India teams, and RNW Hilversum.

OBJECTIVE 2 (QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION)

Both country teams planned and conducted four focus group discussions. To ensure that the findings of the FGDs would be relevant to the teams and would feed directly into the programme in the most optimal way, each team was free to identify their preferred research topics based on their analysis of the most relevant findings from the baseline survey, and additional topics worth exploring for strategy adjustment.

For Kenya, the selected topics were: 1) understanding sexual orientation and behaviour; 2) awareness of legislation affecting LGBT; 3) perceptions of LGBT identity; 4) understanding transgenderism; 5) LGBT information platforms.

For India, the selected topics were: 1) LGBT awareness; 2) coming out; 3) supporting LGBT people; 4) section 377; 5) Love Matters platform.

Both teams applied mainly snowball sampling, using their own networks and those of their partners to recruit participants. The India team recruited a total of 29 participants, men and women mixed, and all in the age category of 18-24 with the exception of two participants in the 25-30 category. The four groups were divided in two heterosexual groups (8 participants) and two LGBT groups (21 participants) in the Delhi and Lucknow area. The decision to separate LGBT from heterosexual participants was made to ensure a safe environment to speak out.

The Kenya team recruited a total of 34 participants, men and women mixed, and divided in two groups of 18-24 year olds (12 participants) and two groups of 25-30 year olds (22 participants) from the Nairobi area. Three out of four groups contained a mix of heterosexual (9 participants) and LGBT participants (13 participants), and one group only heterosexual participants (12 participants). This decision was made to open up a dialogue between LGBT and heterosexual participants.

OBJECTIVE 3 (PROGRESS TRACKING)

The FGDs have been primarily used for capacity building and qualitative data collection. For progress tracking, we employed two methodologies. A desk review was conducted to determine and briefly describe key progress marker as laid out in the REA reports, particularly the 18-month progress report. Furthermore, a short questionnaire was disseminated to the REA team at RNW Hilversum, the India team and the Kenya team, asking each team to provide self-reported insights into most significant progress and challenge within the REA program. All three teams have complied and submitted responses, which were utilised for analysis of developments everyone agrees on, to compare to the desk review data, and to compare between teams and countries. See the annex for the questionnaire.

2.2 Limitations

LIMITATIONS OBJECTIVE 1 (CAPACITY BUILDING)

- Training only one or two members of a country team means that the rest of the team is dependent on these team members to apply this methodology. In the case of future staff turnover, there is a risk that the knowledge and skills gained in this process are lost.
- Applying FGDs as a methodology to collect and analyse qualitative data is a significant time investment. Team members trained to use FGDs often bear other ongoing responsibilities that limit their time to prepare, conduct and analyse FGDs.

LIMITATIONS OBJECTIVE 2 (QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION)

- This is a qualitative and not a quantitative evaluation. Partners and participants will self-assess the successes and challenges. In that sense, there will be no statistically viable data, but this is also not the aim.
- The FGDs were conducted in English, which not all participants may speak fluently. As a result, we may miss some nuance. The efficiency of using English and English being widely spoken in India and Kenya does counter this limitation, at least to a certain extent.
- Due to the deliberate decision to create local ownership over (part of the) topic selection for the midterm evaluation (see methodological section), the midterm did not cover all the topics of the baseline survey.

LIMITATIONS OBJECTIVE 3 (PROGRESS TRACKING)

- There is a chance that the actions and interventions that have been implemented as a result of the Baseline Survey, have not been online long enough to be properly assessed or have not reached sufficient beneficiaries when the Mid-Term Review took place.

3. Findings

3.1 Introduction

As the objectives of the mid-term review process were threefold, we are describing the findings as they relate to these three separate goals.

3.2 Capacity building for PMEL

The FGD process has been a steep learning curve for the teams in India and Kenya. They had not done FGDs before and have benefited greatly from the experience, and indicate that they have built up capacity for the future.

RNW Media organised an FGD training that took place in Nairobi, Kenya, which was the first of its kind for Love Matters. This was also the first time for the Love Matters teams to visit each other in country, whereas previous visits had mainly been focused in Hilversum. Having the teams meet within one of the programme countries provided an opportunity for deeper collaboration and experience sharing with local partners who were included in the training such as the Network for Adolescent Youth of Africa (NAYA) and Reach a Hand Uganda (RAHU). This FGD training was also the first programmatic training for the Love Matters teams and therefore became a capacity-building exercise where the Love Matters India and Kenya teams could learn from organisations that work in the SRHR field, and also actively create and own the tools the teams used during the FGDs.

Due to the need to become more sustainable in a competitive global environment, especially with the recent marked drop in SRHR funding as a result of the Global Gag Rule, the capacity of the Love Matters teams to self-analyse their work and engage with target audiences offline is increasingly important. Implementing the focus group discussions also brought the teams in touch with their users, and provided a base for the beginning of a conversation that will continue into the future of Love Matters as a valuable tool to dig deeper into issues than is possible through an online survey.

The country teams in India and Kenya have formulated lessons learned about conducting FGDs, which are summarised below.

MANAGING FGDS

1. At least three people are needed to manage the FGD -- if one is facilitating the FGD and another is taking notes, in between if new participants join or something else happens the note taker has to manage and that affects the note-taking process.
2. Managing more than 10 participants is challenging as not everyone gets enough time to discuss their points, an ideal group has 8-10 people.
3. Having more than one team member working on the FGDs is crucial to success. It helps with oversight and with sharing of tasks, which help with a faster turnaround time.
4. Transcription should be done by a team member who was present at the FGDs. This is particularly helpful when assigning names and other characteristics to speakers, helping to improve accuracy in transcription, and improving speed of delivery.
5. Testing audio equipment ahead of FGDs is necessary. This helps make the team familiar with equipment, troubleshoot any issues, and to learn the limitations of the equipment being used.

VENUE

1. The venue plays a crucial role while conducting FGD, especially with the LGBT community as they feel more comfortable if they know the venue or partner organisation.
2. It is equally important to find a venue that is suitable for people not identifying as LGBT, as they feel reserved to participate in FGD related to LGBT issues as they think it will be a test of their knowledge – they might feel judged.
3. When scouting for locations, look for one with little to no background noise. This includes construction, major roads, schools, and event venues. Noise at the venue itself, such as air conditioning, is important to consider. The location should be easily accessible by public means if transport is not being provided.

OTHER ISSUES

1. It is important to integrate the process of taking back the findings from the FGDs to the FGD participants to ensure there is transparency, accountability and ethics in the research protocols followed.
2. When selecting dates for the FGDs, weather is a factor to be considered, and any political or social activities that would interfere with movement or safety of the team or respondents. Examples of these include protests or religious activities.

3.3 Qualitative data collection

The FGDs were primarily used for qualitative data collection, with a focus on:

- Validation and/or adaptation of the baseline survey findings, and
- A deeper dive into the topics covered by Love Matters and collecting new data.

VALIDATION/ADAPTATION OF THE BASELINE FINDINGS

A key objective for conducting the FGDs was to validate and/or adapt the findings of the baseline line study through qualitative data collection. The baseline study, conducted in 2017, served the following purposes:

1. Established a starting point: a benchmark for future activities, and reference for making project management decisions.
2. Established priority areas and supports planning: which aspects of the REA programme potentially need more focus. These aspects can differ substantively, e.g. more knowledge than awareness needed, or geographically, e.g. other focus needed in Kenya than in India.
3. The baseline study served the purpose of a starting point of informing decision-makers about what impact the project has had on the target groups. Along with other strategies, it will also help in attributing change in the target population as a result of the programme.

In the baseline research, we established the starting situation for the following indicator: # and % of young people who have been reached by RNW online activities who have increased awareness and knowledge of SRHR and LGBT rights as human rights.

The main research questions the baseline tried to answer were:

1. What is young people's level of knowledge about LGBT people and their issues, in India and Kenya?
2. What are young people's attitudes towards LGBT people and their issues, in India and Kenya?
3. Are there differences between self-identified young males and females in India and Kenya with regards to their knowledge and attitude towards LGBT people and their issues?

The areas of enquiry were:

- Demographic questions
- Terminology
- Awareness of LGBT people and issues
- Knowledge about LGBT issues
- Attitude towards LGBT individuals
- Awareness of and attitude towards LGBT rights as basic human rights

Target population for the baseline research was (and still is for the midterm and the REA programme as a whole):

- Young people 18 – 30 years, in 2 age brackets: 18-24 and 25-30, with an emphasis on the group 18-24 as this is the main target group for Love Matters;
- The existing Love Matters (LM) online community, including people who have been reached by Love Matters online activities in India and Kenya;
- Within the online LM community, those who identify and those who do not identify as part of the LGBT community.

In the following section, we compare areas of enquiry from the baseline study to the FGD findings. We distinguish between India and Kenya findings where applicable.

DEMOGRAPHICS

In the baseline, we had 3291 respondents, of which 66% was in the lower age bracket and about 62% identified as female, and the rest as male. Around 60% of the baseline sample identified as heterosexual, around 13% as LGBT, and about 27% preferred not to say.

Four FGDs were conducted in each of the two countries with a total of 63 participants.

	Total nr	18-24 yrs	25-30 yrs	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) status
India	29	27	2	Straight identifying: 8 LGBT identifying: 21
Kenya	34	12	22	Straight identifying: 21 LGBT identifying: 13

The midterm sample has more male identifying participants than female identifying participants as opposed to the baseline research, where there were (many) more female identifying respondents. This is mostly because the India team conducted one LGBT specific FGD with almost only (gay) male participants.

The percentage LGBT identifying respondents is much higher for the FGDs, as both teams aimed to include a large percentage of LGBT identifying respondents in the FGD process, in order to get detailed input how young LGBT people could and should be better served by Love Matters.

TERMINOLOGY

This topic featured in the FGDs in both countries, both when speaking to LGBT identifying and straight identifying respondents, and particularly in India. In the baseline, a high percentage (74%) of respondents had some knowledge about the terminology LGBT, but this understanding was not very nuanced, and often did not go beyond understanding it as a sexual interest only. Concerning transgender knowledge, the numbers were lower. This is substantiated by the FGDs, in both countries; giving the correct words for the abbreviation went OK in the FGDs, especially and not surprisingly for LGBT community members, but particularly straight respondents struggled with explaining the meaning of LGBT accurately, and in some cases referred to 'deviance' and 'not normal'. This was more elaborated on in the FGDs in India, where respondents also noted (like in the baseline survey) that there are many different words for LGBT in Hindi, which, according to the respondents, may hamper acceptance and cause confusion because many words are derogatory or stigmatising by nature, and do not convey the meaning of LGBT accurately.

James: "I have a question. If it's natural that means that thing is in you, yes? What are the chances of passing it to my children? If it's inside me it means it's genetic, meaning my boys also be…"

William: "What about when you are influenced by things you watch or what your friends… you can have gay friends so out of hanging out with them, they start influencing you to love other boys. There is also the natural one and I don't think it can be passed on to your children, that because you were gay they'll also be gay because of your genetics."

Alice: "I don't think lesbianism is under influence. These are not drugs. Let me use a personal example: I like watching reality TV so much like RHOA [Real Housewives of Atlanta] and Kardashians, but I haven't acquired that habit like the fighting, the shouting. I don't sing (…). You can't say that lesbianism just because you watch or you're with people who are like that you will just acquire it. I think it's something that is just there with you. I don't think this is something you acquire from an environment."

- James, William & Alice (18-24, heterosexual), Nairobi

The understanding of transgender is in both countries considerably less nuanced, and there is more confusion among straight identifying respondents, although in India most respondents do understand that gender and sexual orientation are different. In Kenya, FGD respondents express more confusion about the difference between sexual orientation and gender identity, particularly about the difference between gay, transsexual and transgender. Several respondents associate sexual orientation with a certain upbringing or societal influences. In the baseline study we saw the same declining understanding about transgender, so this finding validates the baseline results and provides an opportunity for the programme to focus further in order to increase understanding and nuance (see also chapter conclusions and recommendations). Another similarity is that bisexuality as an identity is misunderstood and often perceived as a phase (between homosexuality and heterosexuality).

AWARENESS OF LGBT PEOPLE AND THE ISSUES THEY FACE

This topic was covered in the FGDs in India by looking at how people first learned about LGBT and whether they knew any LGBT people personally. Most respondents in India were first made aware of

the existence of LGBT people through television shows, Bollywood movies and social media. The popular talk show Satyamev Jayate was mentioned several times, which openly and positively discussed LGBT in 2014. LGBT respondents indicate that the impact of first hearing about LGBT in this way can be really profound and in some cases initiated the first step of self-acceptance. Straight-identifying FGD respondents in India indicated that that they are (much) more familiar with LGBT people on TV or in the movies than in real life, which validates the result of the baseline to a certain extent.

"I heard it when I was 15 years old on the TV show Satyamev Jayate, and then I got to know about LGBTQ and I started searching on the internet to find out the exact meaning. And then I realised I belong to this community and I am a gay. That is how I got to know about the term. (...) The show was trying to educate the people that the LGBTQ people are normal and what they face is natural and that people should understand this and accept it as well. And that we are also normal just like straight people."

- Avneesh (18-24, gay), Delhi

Although the Kenya FGDs did not explicitly cover this topic, respondents occasionally referred to LGBT celebrities (both local and international), but did not mention any close friends or family who are LGBT. The baseline showed a similar result, with only a minority of the respondents indicating that they have close friends or family members who are LGBT (as far as they know), and a larger group know LGBT people beyond their closer circles. The section under 'Love Matters and other information platforms' covers more specific information about how FGD respondents seek for LGBT and sexuality-related information.

COMING OUT

We highlight coming out as a separate topic, because it featured prominently in the India FGDs, while a limited number of questions was included in the baseline survey. The baseline results show that a little over 40% of respondents in both countries indicate that they feel that LGBT people are obliged to tell others. About 50% of the survey respondents think that coming out is something you do only once, while 50% say it is a lifelong process.

In the India FGDs, three topics were discussed related to coming out: the process of coming out, personal acceptance, and family acceptance. Coming out was discussed as a long process of coming out to different people. Often female friends and family members were more accepting, and they can act as a catalyst for male friends and family. This is consistent with findings in the baseline survey, in which a gender-based comparison showed that female heterosexual respondents were

"In my life my family is most important to me and I do not want acceptance of every single person, if my family is okay with the person I have decided to bed. I will be really struggling in my life if I want acceptance of everyone. I also have other important things to do in my life. I do not care what people think about me and if they make fun of me after knowing my story. But, if telling the story of my life can help someone I will do it, and I have done it. Coming out does not mean that you want acceptance from every individual in the world."

- Neeraj (18-24, gay), Delhi

(much) more accepting of and allies to LGBT people than male heterosexual respondents, both in India and Kenya. Many LGBT identifying respondents in the India FGDs described a long process of self-acceptance before coming out to the outside world, often including 'straight acting' phases, either self-imposed or by family and friends. Some experiences of LGBT participants with their family were positive, some negative, and the process of coming out to family and friends often took up to multiple years. Although some family members accept it, respondents indicate that others never have, or prefer to keep it a secret outside a small circle.

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT LGBT ISSUES

In the baseline study, we measured knowledge about LGBT issues with 10 true-or-false statements, which provided the opportunity to analyse these data using statistics. On average, respondents answered 6 out of 10 knowledge questions correctly, and we saw significant differences between the countries and between the two binary genders male and female; respondents from India and female respondents (across countries) have more knowledge about LGBT issues. In the FGDs, the India and Kenya teams payed specific attention to LGBT knowledge and misconceptions. In both India and Kenya, straight identifying respondents may know the terminology, but still have many questions about how gay or lesbian relationships practically work. This finding is deepening and focusing the knowledge base acquired in the baseline survey and provides entry points for content development.

In Kenya, discussion took place about the question whether being LGBT is genetic or 'learned', which also came up in the India FGDs. For comparison: about 45% of all respondents in the baseline study believed that 'homosexuality is a choice'.

In India, LGBT identifying participants discussed with each other whether they have a responsibility to educate and debunk myths and stereotypes, even though the stigma attached to being LGBT also prevents them from doing this comfortably. LGBT participants also express that the burden of educating others should not always fall on LGBT people. This may provide a good hook to focus on the crucial role that 'straight allies' can play.

James: "I have a question. If it's natural that means that thing is in you, yes? What are the chances of passing it to my children? If it's inside me it means it's genetic, meaning my boys also be…"

William: "What about when you are influenced by things you watch or what your friends… you can have gay friends so out of hanging out with them, they start influencing you to love other boys. There is also the natural one and I don't think it can be passed on to your children, that because you were gay they'll also be gay because of your genetics."

Alice: "I don't think lesbianism is under influence. These are not drugs. Let me use a personal example: I like watching reality TV so much like RHOA [Real Housewives of Atlanta] and Kardashians, but I haven't acquired that habit like the fighting, the shouting. I don't sing (…). You can't say that lesbianism just because you watch or you're with people who are like that you will just acquire it. I think it's something that is just there with you. I don't think this is something you acquire from an environment."

- James, William & Alice (18-24, heterosexual), Nairobi

ATTITUDE TOWARDS LGBT INDIVIDUALS

In the baseline study, attitudes towards LGBT people were measured with 5 items on a 5-point scale. The overall mean of the attitude towards LGBT people could be interpreted as neutral to slightly positive, with participants in India holding slightly more positive attitudes and women holding more positive attitudes than men. Attitude was captured in the FGDs through general attitude and discussing scenarios in which friends or family come out. The attitudes towards LGBT people among the straight identifying respondents in both countries is quite positive, which may (partially) be a result of the recruitment process for the FGDs (i.e. straight allies would agree to be part of an FGD). In addition, the influence of socially desirable answers should not be underestimated; there can be a difference between attitude in theory and attitude in practice. However, the generally positive attitude of respondents validates the baseline results and is a promising finding. Heterosexual respondents tend to acknowledge the harsh circumstances in which many LGBT people, particularly transgender people, find themselves.

In India, an additional noteworthy finding is that although heterosexual FGD respondents say that they would support a friend or family member with their coming out, when probed, they remain

unclear in how they would provide support. The topic of support as not only 'talking the talk' but also 'walking the walk' is interesting for further explore and work with moving forward.

AWARENESS OF AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS LGBT RIGHTS

About 80% of the baseline respondents indicated that LGBT people should have the same rights as heterosexual people. In India, 10% felt that homosexuality should be punishable by law, while in Kenya this was much higher, at 34%. A little over 40% in both countries were aware of the legal situation at the time in their country. About 60% of the total sample felt that LGBT people should be protected by law. In the India FGDs, the legal situation was not discussed extensively, and the fact that section 377 was abolished during the FGD process has not been featured specifically. In the Kenya FGDs, the legal situation was discussed in more detail. Most participants were actually unaware of specific laws prohibiting or supporting LGBT people in Kenya. Respondents who are aware of the penal code have a strong sentiment that these laws were imposed on Kenya through missionaries and colonialism, forcing certain religious values into legislation. The FGDs in Kenya concur with the baseline outcome that there seems to be a positive base for legal change among the Love Matters constituency.

NEW DATA

The second objective for qualitative data collection was to take a deeper dive into specific Love Matters related topics and collect new data as the country teams saw fit. New data could also be outside the scope of the baseline areas of enquiry. Four topics were covered, of which three were discussed in both countries, and one was covered only in India. Below we describe the findings in the four new areas of enquiry.

LOVE MATTERS AND OTHER INFORMATION PLATFORMS

The majority FGD respondents were not familiar with Love Matters (LM). In Kenya, heterosexual respondents who knew LM were generally positive about the platform, while LGBT respondents were critical of LM being too heteronormative, and indicated that much improvement could be made concerning good information about LGBT topics. In Kenya, searching information about sexuality in general was also discussed. Many indicate that they Google specific terms and search with purpose, rather than browsing randomly.

GENDER NORMS

Although not selected as a particular area of enquiry, gender norms were prominently discussed in both FGD processes. Respondents in both Kenya and India discussed how gender norms and roles for men and women negatively affect the freedom to express one's own (sexual) identity. In the Kenya FGDs, there were heated debates about men who behave 'girly', where female participants strongly objected to this terminology, describing those type of negative images as 'toxic' for both men and women. The fact that particularly men are expected to behave in a certain way, results in a major negative bias towards male LGBT people as compared to female LGBT people, both in social and in legal terms. Affectionate behaviour between women is much more accepted than between men and not necessarily associated with homosexuality. In general, it is agreed that more (negative)

"Society has predefined gender-specific characteristics. A boy is ridiculed if he purchases any item which is girlish say pink in colour. My teacher did not approve of the way I walked and often lectured me for hours describing the posture necessary to look masculine. To improve my walk, I was forced to balance books on my head and keep my chest puffed. My father reprimanded me for my non-violent behaviour, when I was beaten by my classmates. Violent and fierce nature is both expected and appreciated in men."

- Arjun (18-24, gay), Lucknow

attention goes to gay men than to lesbian women. A few potential reasons for the unbalanced focus derive from the Kenya FGDs; sex between women is a subject of male sexual fantasy, and gender norms are harsher for men because women already come from a position of oppression. In addition, the health and HIV perspective has put a stronger spotlight on gay man and MTF transgender people as opposed to lesbian women or FTM transgender people.

SOCIAL BARRIERS

Throughout the discussions, a number of social barriers in the way of LGBT understanding and acceptance were discussed. In India, the fact that LGBT is an 'imported' term and lacks appropriate and local translation has been identified as a major problem in creating more awareness around LGBT, as well as the *hijra* stereotype applied to people in the LGBT spectrum. Media capitalising on this by portraying LGBT in an inaccurate, sensationalist or comedic way, reinforces this stigmatisation.

In Kenya, the influence of religion and the church and the condemnation of same-sex relationships was perceived by respondents as a major hurdle in the way to LGBT acceptance. For both countries, the binary gender norms was identified as one of the biggest influences on stigmatisation of LGBT people, as well as the lack of comprehensive sexuality education in schools.

SUPPORTING LGBT (INDIA ONLY)

Among the India FGDs, a major theme was "how to be an ally to LGBT". Heterosexual participants related to this on a personal level, stating that they would support their family or friends if they were to come out to them, but not saying much more on the subject. Among LGBT participants, several examples of (potential) support mechanisms were discussed: education to increase awareness about LGBT from an early age; media taking up a more balanced representation of the LGBT spectrum, with the government playing an active role as well; platforms for LGBT and non-LGBT people to meet each other; awareness raising information made available in different languages and in rural areas.

3.4 Progress regarding the REA programme

The Focus Group Discussions have been primarily utilised to achieve objective 1 (capacity building) and objective 2 (qualitative data collection). The sources for the findings under this third objective of the mid-term evaluation are twofold: a desk review and qualitative data collection through a short questionnaire that was filed out by the teams in Hilversum, India, and Kenya.

GENERAL PROGRESS IN THE REA PROGRAMME

A considerable number of reports and overviews have been produced, which, for the most part, have already been shared with the donor. To avoid duplication, we are providing a brief meta-analysis of the progress in the REA program, looking at data up until the 18-month progress report, as the 24-month progress was not yet available at the time of writing this mid-term evaluation report. A significant number of achievements are also being reported and explained in the 18-month report.

The REA programme has 32 milestones to track and report on progress. Milestones are adapted per country. There is a separation between global milestones, focusing on advocacy, and per country milestones. At the time of writing this report, the reports mention that of the 32 milestones, 14 milestones have been achieved, 14 milestones are in progress and on track, two milestones are in progress and off track, and 2 milestone are not relevant for the reporting period. The REA

programme has a total running time (after an extension was granted) of 36 months, so 18 months is the halfway mark. With 28 milestones (88%) of the milestones achieved or on track, the project is in good shape, and, at 18 months, ahead regarding the outcomes. The two milestones that are off track concern a) establishing more inclusive networks with non-traditional SRHR allies and b) increased media coverage of SRHR demonstrating accurate and holistic understanding of SRHR topics from a human rights perspective. Two of 32 milestones off track halfway through the programme is not concerning.

The second data collection tool to measure progress was an internal questionnaire, designed and administered by an external consultant early November 2018, and filled out by the teams in The Netherlands, India and Kenya. It produced the following input concerning (self-reported) progress in the REA program.

KEY SUCCESSES OF THE REA PROGRAMME

- The India team identifies as a key success that a quantitative and qualitative evidence-informed understanding of how young people perceive and think about various LGBT issues is now in place.
- This evidence-informed understanding has been incorporated well into the content strategy for the REA programme as well (both online and offline), which has also helped to bridge the knowledge gap on several LGBT issues.
- Having a strategy in place to connect and collaborate with media and journalism schools is also an important aspect; the India team wants bring about a change in how mainstream media reports on SRHR/LGBT stories, and thereby reaching out to journalism students as well as doing advocacy with senior journalists/editors is imperative to influence and encourage rights-based reporting on these issues.
- Training of media practitioners in Kenya in compelling storytelling of LGBT rights is formulated as another key success. There has been a great uptake and interest in LGBT rights stories by the journalists in question, according to the Kenya team. Other organizations in the SOGIE and LGBT space have also expressed interest in taking part in a similar training in future.
- Kenya reports thay here has been successful networking making Love Matters better known to actors and organizations in the SOGIE and LGBT rights space.

The team in Hilversum is particularly pleased with a series of interventions and products that have been developed in this program, among which:

- The #LforLove campaign in India.
- The launch of Love Matters Africa in April 2018.
- The launch of Love Matters Naija (Nigeria) in June 2018.
- The Love ABC campaign for Love Matters India and Kenya.
- The launch of the first virtual reality film in India on SRHR issues.
- The development of the *Data Matatu*.

When asked what went better than expected the India team responds that the content produced as part of the REA programme thus far has gone down quite well with the target audience. They know that young people, especially young women, are reading the content, but some of the comments also indicate that the audience appreciate Love Matters India as a credible resource to learn more about LGBT issues and have validated the need for such content online to increase their awareness and knowledge.

The Kenya team mentions that the use of the FGD results to create content has gone better than expected and has resulted in personas that will be used to create content around the FGD results.

The *Data Matatu* was well received. There is now a dedicated team of experts working to bring the *Data Matatu* to life, and this has potential to be useful for other advocacy organisations in the future, even after the REA programme ends.

When asked about unforeseen or surprising outcomes the India team signals that it has been encouraging for them to see how the audience connects with personal testimonials/experiences shared by LGBT people on the website. The team reads this as indicative of the fact that stories resonate with the audience more than facts and can be an important medium to draw attention and create empathy among an audience for whom LGBT issues are not familiar and/or taboo. The FGD process has also provided important insights into strengthening the content strategy further and engaging with the audience using formats and tools that most appeal and resonate with them.

The Kenya team was surprised by the outcome of the FGD process that some participants see the Love Matters content as too heteronormative and they will address this moving forward.

KEY CHALLENGES

- The India team signals that consistent engagement on SRHR/LGBT issues online is a challenge; this is often due to algorithm constraints on social media platforms, but also a result of a need to be continuously learning and adapting from what is working in online spaces in terms of content. Successfully integrating content on SRHR/LGBT issues into appealing and popular content formats online is a continuous learning process.
- Mobilizing and advocating with media is another key challenge mentioned by the India team; although they have a strategy in place, ensuring that they can affect that real change in the media landscape is a long-term and challenging process that requires time and resources. In addition, ensuring that this change can be sustainable and result in positive impact on consumers of the media with regard to SRHR/LGBT issues is also something that is difficult to measure and ascertain.
- Getting the established media to be open to publishing LGBT rights related content by trained writers has also been challenging.
- Successfully turning offline REA-related activities into online interventions has been challenging for the Africa team.
- Publishing LGBT-specific content, created a slight drop in followers as some audiences unfollowed Love Matters in India and Kenya as they felt strongly against LGBT content.

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED BASED ON BASELINE FINDINGS

- The REA content strategy was guided by the findings of the baseline survey; topics/issues were identified that could be used to build new content on or add to the existing content. The Love Matters teams have continued to produce pleasure-positive, LGBT-friendly digital content on their respective platforms, and in the case of Love Matters Kenya, the platform has grown to include Nigeria under Love Matters Africa.
- RNW has expanded upon the Data for Advocacy section of REA, which is joint indicator 8, and cuts across both Love Matters Kenya and India, as well as CHOICE partners. The *Data Matatu* is a tool with which to transform the digital lessons learned from the Baseline as well as online country data (sentiment analysis) into something that grassroots REA (CHOICE) partner organisations can use to improve their SRHR and LGBT-related content and advocacy work.
- The *Data Matatu* design is a user-centred methodology that articulates each organisation's persona (identity as an advocacy organisation), marks the points of departure (where they start their journey and what they need from RNW), and where they want to go to with

digital data for advocacy (destination which can be an advocacy event like the United Nations UPR process, or the CEDAW process, or a research publication).

- Each organisation is represented by a self-chosen/described persona with a clearly articulated user journey. The persona is for the organisation to use to see themselves and their pathway to an advocacy event or goal. This is their self-assessment point where they define who they are, and who they want to be in the relation to the advocacy goal, all within a clearly articulated timeline. Each client or organisation within the *Matatu* will has a unique journey. The *Data Matatu* is currently under construction by the Digital team in The Netherlands.
- Media training.

PROGRESS USING THE FGD RESULTS

Guided by the FGD results, the development of specific interventions has already started, and in both India and Kenya, the teams have further specific ideas for implementation.

The India team has used the FGD transcript to create a persona in their content workshop and the FGD really helped to write different challenges and fear that our persona can have and how we should approach and engage with them in both online and offline spaces. The FGD findings have also shaped the content and the form of more personal testimonials, which take the reader on someone's personal journey, making it more relatable and it has an emotional hook to engage with the user.

The India team plans to use the FGD findings for:

- Content creation similar to how they used the baseline survey to publish new articles to create awareness about LGBT issues – new themes, or revisit themes already covered but with more nuance or aspects not previously considered.
- Further supporting how content is shared, which can make it more appealing to various audiences.
- Explore new partnerships with other SRHR organizations, academics, media, etc. by providing credible evidence to design new projects and campaigns, as well as specific population groups to engage with on LGBT issues in particular.
- Further explore the new areas of enquiry that have been revealed through the FGD process – e.g. what supporting LGBT people means and how different forms of support could encourage learning about how non-LGBT people can become better allies to the LGBT movement in India.

In Kenya, the FGD finding that FGD participants showed quite some heteronormative behaviour, made the team decide to reach out to LGBT organisations to review the online content and make recommendations how to improve. In addition, the Kenya team is incorporating LGBT items in the online Q&A and column sections. New partnerships with LGBT organisations have also been established to increase the LGBT user base. Kenyan online personas were developed, based on the FGD transcripts, which will be used to guide UX and content development.

4.   Conclusions

4.1 Conclusions about capacity building for PMEL

The choice to utilise the FGD process for capacity building for PMEL has played out well. The teams have learned a lot and benefited greatly from the experience. The fact that the team could take ownership over the FGD process and topic selection has assisted this process. This approach will greatly increase the chances that the acquired capacity will be sustained over time, and really adds to the PMEL skill set of the country teams.

FGDs have been effectively introduced as a qualitative research method, and the capacity of the teams has increased, also in terms of validating FGDs as a credible research tool and an effective way to be in touch with an audience and learn about them. This method has proven to be a valuable method to collect qualitative data, feeding into content strategy – a new skill that merges offline methods with online interventions.

4.2 Conclusions about the (new) qualitative data

Many baseline findings have been validated and deepened by the FGD process, particularly around a limited understanding of terminology, a confused understanding of the meaning of sexual orientation, gender and gender identity, attitudes towards LGBT people being quite positive, and a minority knowing LGBT people in real life, and a much larger group knowing LGBT people only in a much wider circle. However, the FGDs have also provided us with new data and details, providing an opportunity to further build on and improve the interventions online.

The most relevant findings have been outlined in the sections below. Please note that, in addition to summarising the findings, we have also added a layer of discussion and interpretation regarding the implications of the findings, in order to translate the findings into actionable recommendations.

UNDERSTANDING LGBT

Although most participants in both countries were familiar with the LGBT terminology and are able to explain what the separate letters stand for, the ensuing discussions show that a deeper understanding of LGBT identities is still lacking, primarily among heterosexual participants.

In Kenya, this is illustrated in discussions about the difference between gay and transgender identities. The argument that in every gay relationship there is always a 'woman' and a 'man' (or top and bottom) is translated to the misconception that a feminine gay man must therefore be transgender, while the masculine gay man is just gay. This rationale could indicate that people try to understand the unfamiliar concept of LGBT relationships by relating it to their own perspective of what relationships should look like - without necessarily being homophobic or anti-LGBT. This is very relevant finding because it means that when addressing LGBT awareness and rights, rather than approaching it as a new or separate phenomenon, the message might be more effective if we frame it within familiar concepts of love, sex and relationships.

The concept of trying to place LGBT within an internalized (cultural) perception is also visible in India, where *hijras* play a dominant role in the discussion around LGBT. Even though the historical presence of *hijras* in Indian culture and their formal acknowledgment as the "third gender" provides a cultural 'hook' for discussions on transgender identities, in practice it means that LGBT people are perceived as, or associated with *hijras* and have to face the stigma attached to *hijras*. Particularly gay

men suffer under this stereotype. During the FGDs, multiple reasons were given for the *hijra* stereotype in relation to LGBT – most notably:

1. The language barrier: LGBT is an English term and has been introduced as such in India. Although English has been formalized as an official language, at least 10 other languages dominate the different regions of India, with Hindi being the most used. This means that LGBT is a foreign term and is often translated to similar-but-different terms like *hijra*, or derogatory terms like *chhakka*, thereby reinforcing the stigma.
2. With LGBT representation being scarce in Indian cinema, *hijras* are more frequently portrayed, but mostly in inaccurate ways and as comic relief, thereby reinforcing the one-dimensional stereotype.

In the context of India, this calls for a more localised and language-sensitive approach to explaining LGBT identities and the issues they face.

MALE-FOCUSED BIAS

Both countries experience a male-focused bias when it comes to perceptions around LGBT. Discussions on LGBT tend to focus on male gays and MTF-transgender people, which means that lesbian women, FTM-transgender people and bisexual people are often overlooked, under-represented and misunderstood. This was also clearly visible in the FGDs.

In Kenya, the male bias was a particular point of attention in the discussions. Not only the debate around LGBT focus on men, but also the stigma is much harsher for men than women (men showing affection versus women showing affection, effeminate traits in men). In addition, Kenyan legislation around same-sex relationships also explicitly refers to men.

In India, the FGDs showed that the focus on (already stigmatized) *hijras* has blurred perception of the differences between transgender and gay men, and any perceived effeminate behaviour in men is stigmatized and discouraged.

POSITIVE ATTITUDE VERSUS ACTIVE SUPPORT

Most participants in both countries showed a generally positive and open attitude towards LGBT people and the issues they face (which was not entirely surprising considering the recruitment bias). Despite the various stereotypes, misconceptions and knowledge gaps that were visible among the heterosexual participants, all participants acknowledged the basic understanding that LGBT people exist around them and have to face social, emotional and legal challenges.

There is a step between having an open attitude towards the existence of LGBT people, and actively supporting them – both within and outside their direct environment. When asked about how they would support family or friends coming out to them, most heterosexual participants responded in a positive way but not with much detail about what they would actually do. This could mean that either 1) most people are sensitive to the stigma-by-association effect of supporting LGBT, and would not provide active support; or 2) people want to be supportive, but simply do not know how to provide good support because of their lack of familiarity with LGBT people. A similar conclusion was drawn in the baseline research report; that there is a gap between expressing support and acting accordingly.

INCLUDING THE LGBT VOICE

Whereas the baseline survey had a relatively low response rate among LGBT participants, which meant that that group was not extensively analysed, the focus group discussions offered the opportunity to include LGBT voices in a more distinct way. This has led to valuable input from LGBT respondents about their experiences with coming out, support mechanisms, and their view on the

public debate around LGBT. Their own analysis of the major social barriers preventing full acceptance of LGBT in society is very useful in combination with the information collected from heterosexual participants.

4.3 Conclusions about progress in the REA programme

The overall REA programme is on track; with only two milestones lagging behind at the halfway mark, there is no indication for concern. The slower milestones are related to ongoing work in Nigeria with the newly registered partner Equality Triangle Initiative (ETI), whose inception phase took longer than expected due to a need for an established bank account. The other slow milestone being the speed with which journalists begin to implement their media trainings in writing within REA programme countries. Although multiple media trainings have occurred in Kenya for example, it is difficult to measure impact during a period where there have not been enough pertinent SRHR stories being covered within the journalists' specific geographic locale.

5. Recommendations

Below we provide recommendations for further implementation of the REA programme, based on the qualitative data collected in the midterm review.

A RELIABLE AND 'REAL' RESOURCE

- Continue to grow the online platforms into a reliable and fact-based information resource on gender, sexuality and LGBT.
- Engage in more storytelling related to personal experiences: to spread awareness and understanding of LGBT people, LGBT experiences should not be presented or framed as a separate phenomenon, or something "different" from what heterosexual people experience. Instead, use familiar concepts of love, sex and relationships and relate LGBT experiences to this. It is essential, therefore, to LGBT voices and experiences is important to avoid heteronormative framing of LGBT issues.

COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION

- CSE is lacking in both countries. Education at schools is limited to the bare minimum of biological facts – several respondents from India recount how their questions about gender and sexuality were avoided and censored by their teachers – which means that young people are dependent on external sources to gain more knowledge about these topics. In Kenya, the influence of the church plays a major role in enforcing the idea that love and sex can only exist between a man and woman (in marriage). For many LGBT people in India, the lack of CSE has resulted in a difficult coming out process, in which self-acceptance took time before coming out to others. In both countries, the responses from particularly heterosexual participants showed that there are still major knowledge gaps and questions around gender, sexuality and LGBT.
- This means that providing basic CSE remains essential – young people use the internet to answer their queries about gender and sexuality, and reliable information is not always easy to find.

TERMINOLOGY

- In India, it would be beneficial to thoroughly consider how to translate LGBT terminology into Hindi and other predominant languages, how to explain the differences between gay, transgender and *hijra* in a language that (young) people understand, and how to address the misconceptions that still prevail.
- In both countries, but particularly in Kenya, work on addressing the misconceptions between sexual orientation and gender identity, particularly with regards to the difference between gay men and transgender people.

REPRESENTATION (IN THE MEDIA)

- There is a need for more inclusive and accurate representation of the LGBT spectrum, with particular attention to lesbian women, bisexual people, FTM transgender people, and clear differentiation between gay and transgender men.
- In addition, Particularly in India, as the FGDs show that almost everyone learns about LGBT through media sources.
- Representation matters! Both countries show that representation is key to either eradicating or reinforcing stigma and stereotypes. In India, Bollywood and other media play a hugely influential role in determining gender roles and stereotypes. Although there are

plenty of negative representations, this can also be used in a positive way, by capitalizing on (popular) media to bring about a more balanced and inclusive view of LGBT people.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

- There is a great opportunity to work on content that supports heterosexual people to act upon an awareness of and willingness to support LGBT people, e.g. by providing an online practical support guide for parents, friends, neighbours, etc. Provide clear examples of how to support LGBT people in different ways.

ANNEX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE REA (MID-TERM)

The questions below are intended to collect qualitative input about progress in the REA program 'in your own words'. We have the information from the reports, so it is more your (and your team's) view on where progress has been made, what challenges have been, and what you are planning moving forward. There are 10 questions + an open space for additional feedback.

The input will be used in the mid-term report, which will also contain substantive information about the outcomes of the FGD's, adding qualitative data to the quantitative data in the baseline study.

Please fill out one questionnaire per team?

Thank you!

QUESTIONS

1 Which activities have you implemented based on and following the baseline study?

Response:

2 What went better than expected, and why?

Response:

3 What did not go according to plan, and why?

Response:

4 What do you consider the key successes in the REA program so far?

Response:

5 What do you consider the key challenges in the REA program so far?

Response:

6 Are there any unforeseen results or surprising outcomes?

Response:

7 Have you seen changes in your constituencies as a result of the activities in the REA program?

If so, what has changed?

If not, why not?

8 Have you already implemented activities based on and following the FGD's?

If yes, what are they and what was the result?

If not, what are you planning to do with the outcomes of the FGD's?

9 What are your plans with regards to the implementation of the REA program in the next 6 months?

Response:

10 Anything else you'd like to say with regards to the REA program?
Response:

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!