LETTER FROM THE CHANCELLOR

It is an honor to present our second report on the Center on Gender Equity and Health (GEH) at the University of California San Diego. Since its creation in 2013, the Center has served as a shining example of the impact that can be generated through rigorous evidence-based research and collaboration with local and global partners around the world. Our faculty, students, and partners are making a tangible impact—in the classroom, in the research community, and in the field—on the health and safety of women and girls every day. And change is happening now.

We know that in cultures where women and girls have fewer opportunities and limited states, the health and development of the country suffers. Gender-specific policies that place a high value on women, their education, and their financial empowerment experience better health outcomes and economic stability. Our visionary GEH faculty researchers and activists are committed to empowering women and girls to achieve their full potential.

They are working to understand the causes of gender inequities to conduct research that not only identifies the problems but also provides solutions, and to use this research to enact change at the local, national, and international levels. I am proud to join them in this journey to create a world in which gender inequities and gender-based violence no longer pose a threat to the health and full social and economic progress of women and girls.

With recent investments from our philanthropic partners including the Tata Trusts, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Center continues to advance its work and expand its reach. I am optimistic and excited to be part of the next phase of this vital work, and I am proud that UC San Diego was selected as a catalyst for improving outcomes for women and girls globally.

Sincerely,

Pradeep K. Khosla
Chancellor, UC San Diego

WHAT WE DO

To achieve our mission and create sustainable and large-scale change, the Center seeks and maintains partnerships with governments and non-governmental organizations around the globe. We utilize a social justice framework across these efforts, and innovative technologies are employed to enhance the scale and scope of change at individual, community and societal levels. GEH was developed with the intention of increasing the focus of research, training and evidence-based program and policy, related to the impact of gender inequities on population health concerns across low resource settings around the world.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Center on Gender Equity and Health (GEH) is to improve population health and development by improving the status, opportunities and safety of women and girls globally. GEH envisions a world in which gender inequities and gender-based violence are eliminated, no longer posing a major threat to the health and full social and economic development of women and girls.

The Center focuses on conducting innovative global public health research, medical and academic training, and development and evaluation of evidence-based policies and practices related to gender inequity in child marriage, sexual violence, gender-based violence against women, sexual and reproductive health, violence against women, sexual assault, and trafficking. The overarching goal of the Center is to reduce gender inequities and gender-based violence, as much reduction as key to improving women’s reproductive, as well as maternal and child health.

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Since our inaugural report in 2014, the Center on Gender Equity and Health (GEH), along with our collaborators and generous funders, has strived to be at the forefront of gender equity research. The scope and expertise of GEH has grown to include innovative research and communication methods, new partnerships with private and family foundations, recruitment of remarkable faculty, junior faculty and next-generation scholars, and has benefited from continued support and investment on the part of the University of California, San Diego.

GEH research and expertise continues to develop, expanding into new regions, partnerships, and novel opportunities to leverage our efforts to contribute to programmatic and policy development. We have discovered that there is growing interest and investment from donors, governments, practitioners and researchers to understand gender equality and empowerment (GEH) and how it works as a key driver of women’s and girls’ health and development globally. We are expanding our partnerships to include academic institutions in developing countries, to encourage collaboration and leverage expertise, while offering a unique cross training environment. GEH is also embedding itself in the UC system, striving to incorporate and support campus collaborations. We continue to commit expertise to demonstrate research efforts dedicated to sexual violence prevention and sexual health, and the promotion of contraceptive access and choice, internationally.

We are proud that our researchers have actively published in reputable peer reviewed journals, including the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) and The Lancet among others. We are also proud that GEH is prioritizing not only advancing the science of the field but also actively seeking to be “at the table”, contributing to numerous and diverse ways at partner and community meetings, in conferences, and in the media, allowing our research to be shared beyond the traditional methods.

I look forward to our next phase of advancement, as we strive to improve population health and development by improving the status, opportunities and safety of women and girls, globally.

Sincerely,

Antila Raja, PhD, MS
Dean and Chair, Department of Medicine
Vice Chancellor and Dean, School of Medicine
University of California San Diego

Improving population health and development by IMPROVING THE STATUS, OPPORTUNITIES AND SAFETY OF WOMEN AND GIRLS GLOBALLY
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND CONCOMITANT RISK FOR HIV / STI INFECTION

GEH research in this field includes both epidemiologic research as well as evaluation trials of behavioral interventions that consider the gender-based violence (GBV) spectrum and its impact on HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Our work considers how to effectively engage health systems to address partner violence and HIV/STI risk, and its intersection with problematic substance use and mental health trauma. This research also seeks to understand stress responses to GBV on immune function, in addition to considering collective action efforts and social/cultural interventions to affect violence against women.

LOCATIONS: Mexico, Uganda, India, Niger, Tanzania, Kenya, Haiti, Russia, United States

REDUCING GENDER-BASED BARRIERS TO REPRODUCTIVE, MATERNAL, AND CHILD HEALTH

Our researchers are actively working with clinics, health systems, and ministries of health to better understand how these systems perpetuate gender inequities, how these types of implicit bias compromise health (e.g. provider abuse of women in child birth and coercive family planning counseling), as well as how systems can improve responses to gender biases that affect patients and their families (e.g. son preference for curative care, male engagement in family planning). GEH researchers also examine how social inequities (e.g. wealth, rural residency) exacerbate observed gender inequities and the existing public health system responses.

LOCATIONS: India, Niger, Uganda, Bangladesh, Kenya, Honduras

EARLY MARRIAGE AND ADOLESCENT FERTILITY

Working in partnership with policy and advocacy experts, GEH conducts research to interpret risk factor pathways for adolescent marriage and parenthood and the subsequent health and social consequences along the developmental trajectory. Resilience and empowerment focused youth development efforts are also examined for both male and female adolescents in low-resource high-violence settings.

LOCATIONS: Niger, Honduras, Mexico, Cameroon

SOCIAL NORMS AND NETWORKS

GEH research expertise also encompasses social norms theory and measurement, via gender norms and equity lens, with consideration for child and early marriage, son preference, acceptability of violence against women, and reproductive autonomy. Our empirical work in this area not only examines the public health impact of these standards, but also norms transmission through social networks, using mathematical modeling.

LOCATIONS: India, Niger, Honduras, Cameroon, United States

MEASURING AND EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT

GEH is actively working to improve the science of measurement, in terms of gender equality and empowerment indicators, which includes a focus on psychometric properties of these measures and their use for both monitoring and evaluation purposes. Rigorous evaluation trials (e.g. randomized control trials), are also conducted to determine the social and health impact of gender empowerment interventions, particularly those focused on girls’ education, women’s economic empowerment, and gender equity-focused counseling for men and boys.

LOCATIONS: India, Niger, Kenya, United States
SVRI AND WORLD BANK GROUP INNOVATION IN PREVENTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE GRANT AWARD

GEH Professors Jennifer Wagman and Jamil Stockman (pictured right with the 17th President of the World Bank, Jim Yong Kim) are jointly honored with awards by the World Bank Group and the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI), recognizing their innovative and impactful research on engaging men and reducing the health burden of gender-based violence.

WHITE HOUSE CHAMPION OF CHANGE AWARD

Meaghan Yap, GEH undergraduate student intern and mentor, is honored with the White House Champion of Change award for her work with GEH faculty analyzing the sexual assault policies within the University of California system and developing recommendations to improve these policies. This work was conducted as part of a larger GEH focus on both campus and community-based sexual assault prevention in coordination with state health departments, the CDC, U.S. national sport organizations, the University of California system, as well as universities across the globe.

TRIBUTE TO WOMEN IN INDUSTRY (TWIN) HUMANITARIAN AWARD

Dr. Elizabeth Reed (above, center) is presented with the Tribute to Women in Industry (TWIN) Award as a TWIN Humanitarian, who “prospers action and is devoted to engaging women to transform the community.” Dr. Reed’s research focuses on the intersection of gender inequality, poverty, and health, which in turn informs the development of policy and strategies supportive of gender equity and health.

UNITED NATIONS

World Health Organization

THE WORLD BANK

TATA CHANCELLOR’S ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIP APPOINTMENT

In 2017, Dr. Anita Raj was awarded the founding Tata Chancellor’s Endowed Professorship in Medicine based on her record of leadership and groundbreaking research. Bestowed by the Tata Trusts, Dr. Raj’s professorship focuses on society and health, with an emphasis on addressing gender inequities and health in India.
TRAINING AND MENTORSHIP

GLOBAL TRAINING AND PARTNERSHIPS

GHG maintains partnerships and expert advisory roles with multi-national, multi-sectoral organizations such as the World Health Organization, the World Bank, and UN agencies such as UNICEF. The Center leads colloquia and capacity-building workshops, in conjunction with our partners and other stakeholders across the regions and countries in which we work. These events focus on our areas of content expertise (e.g., partner violence, reproductive coercion, sexual assault, early and child marriage), in addition to research methods (e.g., identification and development of reliable and valid measures of gender equity-related constructs for monitoring and evaluation, randomized controlled trial development, and implementation for behavioral interventions, and measurement and analyses related to social norms and social networks). GHG also establishes scientific and educational exchanges with academic institutions within the low and middle income nations with whom we work. Multiple partnerships have been initiated with major academic institutions in South Asia, Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa to engage in bidirectional exchange and training of doctoral and postdoctoral scholars so as to expand and deepen the capacity of these future leaders. This activity is central to GHG’s leadership in both innovative global public health research, and providing academic and research training to support the next generation scholars across the globe.

TRAINING OF NEXT GENERATION SCHOLARS

GHG recruits and trains the brightest young minds to build their research capacities in gender equity and health at UCSD. Our students and mentors in public health, medicine, and social sciences are offered exposure to research occurring in over a dozen countries across South Asia, West and sub-Saharan Africa, Central and South America, and the Caribbean as well as in Mexico and the United States. Our doctoral students work closely with professors not only to develop rigorous research skills, but to utilize strategies and partnerships to ensure that their research has impact. These scholars learn to engage with multi-disciplinary teams to learn to develop and execute both stakeholder-engaged research and strategies to disseminate research findings to multiple audiences in multiple forms so as to move knowledge, practice and policy forward. Our trainees and fellows have a strong and consistent record of procuring independent research funding, developing key publications in the high impact scientific journals, and receiving appointments to faculty positions at major academic institutions and to positions of leadership in multi-sectoral non-governmental institutions. Based on our position in one of the most competitive medical schools in the U.S., GHG also strives to support medical students, residents, and fellows who wish to train and engage in scholarship on gender equality and global health via internship opportunities or enrollment in independent study opportunities with the Center.
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not only does GEH work to develop a campus-wide network of gender equity-focused faculty and scholars, we also strive to empower and inform the populations with whom we work, and to support capacity-building among those communities and with our in-country partners. GEH works to share our research across a broad array of audiences: from the communities and populations where we are conducting research, to our funders and partners, to the UC campus community, and to the broader public. Our Center aims to share our research and disseminate study findings via not only rigorous, peer-reviewed publications, generation of white papers and research briefs, but also through GEH-hosted social media accounts, as well as engagement across UC campuses, and with domestic and international media outlets.

Our comprehensive endeavors to create a multidisciplinary network across the campus and with the local community via GEH-hosted meetings and events. Annually, GEH leadership organizes a public event in honor of UNICEF’s designated International Day of the Girl Child (IDGC), which has included partnerships with San Diego community organizations, as well as attendance by San Diego elected officials and campus leadership. To mark International Women’s Day, GEH instead hosts a book talk for the purposes of presenting on and engaging participants in conversation related to violence against women, global reproductive justice, refugee women’s health, and transgender rights, with an in-depth look at how individuals can participate in creating social change.

GOING FORWARD

At GEH, we envision a world in which gender inequities are no longer a threat to the health and future success of young girls, and the health and future success of young boys. As such, GEH is dedicated to empowering girls and women and girls’ and communities to be enabled and empowered to reach their full potential and contribute to the development of healthy, safe, economically secure, and equitable societies.

For us, this is not a short term quixotic abstraction or far-off dream. This is our mission and immediate aspiration, and one that GEH faculty and staff work towards every day in measurable and tangible ways. The previous pages detail the work accomplished by GEH to combat gender-based violence and inequities around the globe throughout the last three years. While we are extremely proud of the quality and impact of this work, in order to move forward toward our vision, we are expanding the scope of this work in exciting and significant ways as part of the next phase in GEH’s development.

People, we will build upon our previous work and innovative direction and make engagement in family planning, implementing effective family planning interventions, an essential to Idaho’s health and wellbeing. Just as our efforts to reduce the health and wellbeing threats faced by millions of women and girls are important, the health and wellbeing threats faced by millions of men and boys are equally important.

GEH researchers will continue to expand our strong local and state-level partnerships, such as with the California Department of Public Health, and the Office of the President of the University of California to develop, implement, and evaluate innovative and sustainable campus and community-based programs to reduce existing and prevent new instances of gender-based violence against girls and women across the globe, in order to make a difference in the lives of affected women and families.

We will also continue to cultivate our doctoral and postdoctoral training programs at GEH to foster the development of the next generation of leaders committed to improving gender equality and ensuring the health of women and girls worldwide. Critical to this mission is our ongoing expansion of the GEH PhD Program, which offers the advantages of academic institutions within the field of medicine and health sciences in combination with the unique interdisciplinary research and training opportunities offered by GEH.

We hope to continue to expand our existing collaborative partnerships with major foundations (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, David and Lucile Packard Foundation) to provide expert technical advice to guide their rapidly growing investments in addressing gender equity and gender-related issues. As a result, GEH is dedicated to the future success of young girls, and the health and future success of young boys. As such, GEH is dedicated to empowering girls and women, and girls’ and communities, to be enabled and empowered to reach their full potential and contribute to the development of healthy, safe, economically secure, and equitable societies.

GOING FORWARD