

Gender



WOAH Gender
Resources

Gender inclusion projects & programmes

Interviews with Delegates on gender and leadership

Gender-disaggregated data available at WOA

Transregional kiosk

Contact: gendertaskforce@woah.org



26-30 MAY 2024
PARIS



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- To ensure that **women and men benefit equitably from WOAH's work** on standards, data integration, animal health tools and services, and capacity building of Veterinary Services
- To ensure that **women and men can equitably access knowledge, information, and tools** to respond to health threats
- To **improve the effectiveness and efficiency of WOAH's mandate** by ensuring that interventions are inclusive and responsive to the needs of diverse stakeholders, thereby ensuring that all are able to use and benefit from its work
- To optimise **quality and representation in decision-making**
- To **advance human rights and comply with local laws and policies**
- To contribute to achieving **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** in line with **WOAH's 7th Strategic Plan**.



India. Global Gathering of Women Pastoralists, November 2010. ©IFAD/M.Benanav



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2023-2024

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In Africa, **Strong stereotypes** from both women and men about women include: **lack of physical strength, fear of animals**. There are also very real risks of **gender-based violence**.

Yet there are **differences in perception from one generation to the next**, and the current trend among young people is a lessening of such stereotypes.

Studies from **Senegal** and **Togo** demonstrate how a wide range of people and institutions can improve conditions for women's participation in the sector, resulting in improved animal health overall.

Study highlights include:



1. **Limited information** is available about gender and Veterinary Services in Africa.
2. Senegal and Togo have made good **progress in strengthening regulatory and policy frameworks** to promote gender equality, bringing credibility and political legitimacy to discussions on the issue.
3. However, **women are under-represented in the animal health landscape**: partly due to specific constraints that reduce **women's access to veterinary education** and barriers that impede their career pathways.
4. **Range of specific barriers to education make enrolment and completion of studies difficult** for some young women, including, perceptions and self-confidence to enroll and succeed, lack of financial support, unsuitable accommodation, lack of opportunities to gain practical experience (sometimes due to preferences for men), lack of role models in the sector.

Key recommendations

1. Improvement in **policy and practices** for veterinary paraprofessional training institutions to create conditions that promote women's equality;
2. **Increased visibility** of women in national Veterinary Services;
3. **Application of gender guidelines** in the livestock sector, in line with national policy frameworks, such as, by:
 - a. Raising awareness and training staff in gender mainstreaming,
 - b. Supporting establishments and statutory organisations in setting up gender policies,
 - c. Preventing and combating gender-based violence,
 - d. Taking better account of the specific characteristics of female livestock farmers in access to healthcare.



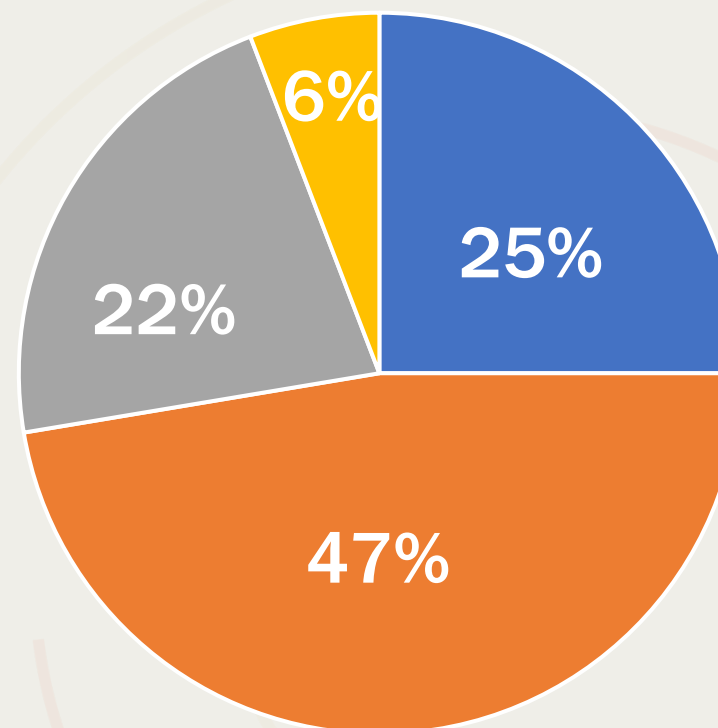
- WOAH commissioned a Gender Assessment of Veterinary Services in South-East Asia in 2023 (Australia support)

[Full Study available online](#)

- New study “Gender, Disability and Social inclusion in the Veterinary Services of South-East Asia and the Pacific” is soon to be released.



Does your organisation/institution have a gender policy?



■ Yes ■ No ■ I am not sure ■ I prefer not to answer



What about your organisation?

Conclusion / Main trends



- **Continued feminisation** of the VS in South-East Asia (up to 70% in some countries)
- Examples of women in high-level positions; but “**glass ceiling**” still exist
- 25% of women report being **treated differently** because of their gender
- **Young women professionals** are most vulnerable in terms of **discrimination**
- Women are **systemically discouraged** from working on farms and large animals

Recommendations:

- Integrate **gender consideration** in the national workforce assessment and planning
- Develop **family-oriented policies** and facilities
- Implement **mentorship** programs for women – early-career professionals
- **Address gender stereotyping**, particularly, within veterinary education and provide more hands-on experience for women to work on the farms

Our sector may be losing a significant number of capable professionals (women) due to institutional barriers!

- **Gender Task Force** was formed in December 2021
- **World café** was organised as side event during the 90th GS 2023
 - Round table discussions including Delegates, representatives from national governments, NGO/civil society and WOAHA staff on the role of gender in the animal health and veterinary domain
- **Key outcomes:**
 - Identification of challenges (gender disparities in recognition, limited access to leadership roles...)
 - Awareness raising on the importance of inclusion and empowerment of women in the animal health and welfare, veterinary and food safety sectors.



Participants included Delegates, representatives of national governments, NGOs, and WOAHA staff.

Gender equality helps break down stereotypes and biases, encouraging anyone, irrespective of their gender, to pursue careers and leadership positions in the veterinary domain.

WOAH commissioned a **study on the role of gender in Animal Health Emergencies** conducted by the London School of Economics (LSE) and Georgetown University. Their findings were presented at **WOAH's Global Conference on Emergency Management** in April 2023



Key findings

- Lack of understanding of gender in animal health emergencies
- Lack of representation of women in senior positions
- Gendered **exposure risk of infection with zoonoses is high for women** working in backyard farms and in food production/preparation
- Animal health emergencies can have **significant impact on women's economic security**
- Women suffer from unpaid burden of caring for backyard as well as management of household.



Recommendations for international organisations, governments and other stakeholders to better incorporate gender perspectives into animal health emergency management.

[Full Study Published and available online](#)



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“The door of possibilities is infinite”: reflections from a Chief Veterinary Officer in the Asia Pacific

- Make a **comfortable working environment**:
are you yourself comfortable in that environment?
- Use **systems thinking** & **behavioural change** to work with diverse groups facing different challenges
- Engage stakeholders to **promote gender equality**
- WOAHP support is valuable through **leadership training**

“You must lead yourself first before leading others, something called Leadership of the Self.”

Conversation with Dr Ximena Melón

WOAH Delegate of Argentina

- Have an **official state policy on gender**, as it is a complex subject
- Give **room and opportunities for Veterinary Service staff** to form support teams: give people space to work internally
- Having **experience lends confidence** in an environment where sometimes female staff qualifications are questioned



“...include everyone. ... To have a deep impact you have to involve everyone to be change makers.”

Interview with Dr Eva Luz Martínez Bermúdez

WOAH Delegate of Peru

- Become aware of the different **fields of action of our profession**, not only in animal health but also public health
- Provide women and men in Veterinary Services **equal opportunities** to foster confidence and commitment
- The challenge for women in Veterinary Services is to **develop professionally without neglecting our role** in the family. Equal participation among genders is key.



“Society must continue to evolve and accept the participation of women, promoting equal opportunities...”

Interview with Dr Maryam Muhammad

Director & CEO- National Veterinary Research Institute –Nigeria

- The **PVS Pathway** provides an opportunity for national governments to support Veterinary Services with the bigger picture
- **Gender differences are changing.** So don't limit us because we are women – let us choose what we want to do. It should be our choice.
 - When I started, I was the only female veterinarian. I noticed my colleagues would always want to give me what they thought was the easier job.

“When I interviewed for my current role, there were only men on the panel. One of them said to me, more or less, ‘how dare you.’ He said, ‘do you really think you can perform in this role as a woman? I said yes..”



Interview with Dr Albertina Shilongo

Chief Veterinary Officer and WOAHA Delegate of Namibia

- Providing **Quality Veterinary Services**: Our profession has contributed to the livelihoods of people, and farmers can generate income from exporting to other markets across the world.
- Need for **Training and Advocating** for gender balance in the veterinary professions, including training for women in the Veterinary Services on management and leadership.
- Gender equality needs to be emphasised. The Director General of WOAHA being a woman is very inspiring for many Member countries.



“We need to educate children when they are young, to instill in them the conviction that they are equal.”

Gender-disaggregated data available at WOAAH

Learning from the gaps and shaping future policies



WOAH Gender
Resources

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World Organisation for Animal Health

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1. WOAAH Capacity-Building Department (CBD)
2. WOAAH Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific (RR AP)
3. WOAAH Data Integration Department (DID)
4. WOAAH Engagement and Investment Department (EID)
5. WOAAH Sub-Regional Representation for Eastern Africa (SRR EA)



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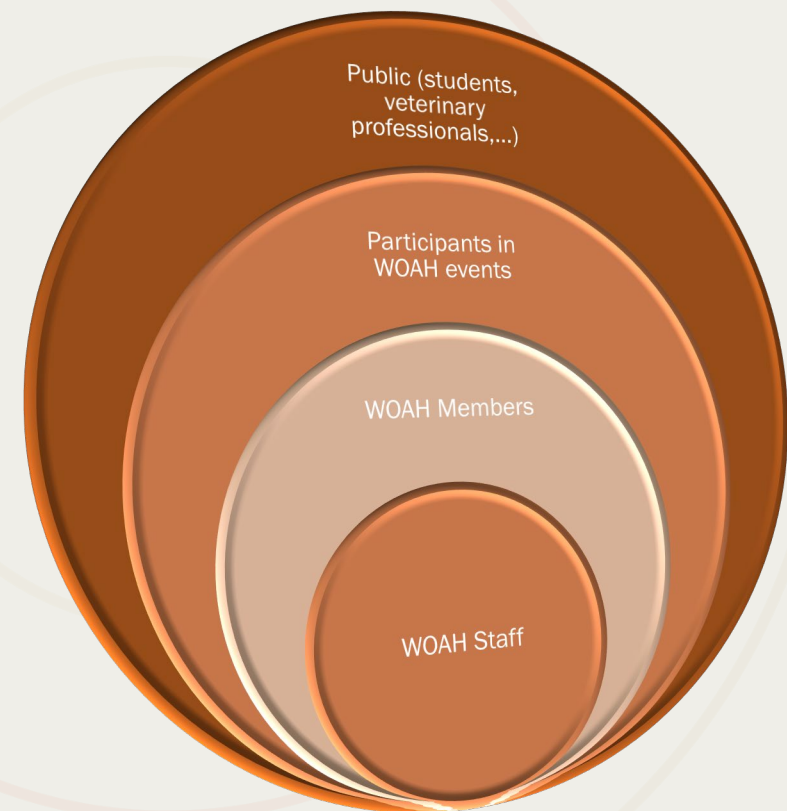
WOAH Gender Task Force (GTF) formed in 2021:
voluntary network of staff to build knowledge and skills related to gender, raise awareness and engage Members.

Data & gender workstream examined three groups:

- **WOAH Staff (and PVS Experts)**
- **WOAH Delegates and other nominated representatives**
- **Participants in regional and international WOAHH events**

Datasets compared over ten years (2013 – 2023) to identify trends.

Datasets have *not* historically been disaggregated by gender, so several methods used to identify gender.



WOAH Staff

Of 249 staff in 2023, overall 53% were women

38% managerial positions filled by women

This increased from 19% in 2013, doubling the representation of women in higher management in a decade.

Year	Overall	Managerial positions	Scientific and technical staff	Support staff
2013	55%	19%	53%	79%
2023	53%	38%	58%	49%

PVS Experts

Of 28 training events for PVS Experts, 18% of participants were women. From 2013 to 2023, participation of women PVS Experts moderately increased from 31% to 43%.



Delegates

- In 2013, of 173 Members, 12% of Delegates were women
- In 2023, of 182 Members, 21% of Delegates were women (N=38).

Council Members are elected amongst Delegates to provide leadership between General Sessions.

- In 2013, only one out of 9 Council Members was a woman, but held the Presidency (Germany).
- In 2023, again only one woman was in the Council (out of 7 Members).

Focal points are appointed by the Delegate, in up to eight subject matter categories.

In 2023, there were 1,350 focal points, of whom 43% are women.

Africa N = 118	Americas N = 112	Asia N = 91	Europe N = 183	Middle East N = 32
35%	51%	43%	52%	26%

% and number of women Focal points in 2023

Representation of women in WOAAH Regional events

Gender representation of participants for WOAAH events between 2018 and 2023*

Women's representation at regional events is higher than international events: average of 53% for regional compared to 40 % for international.

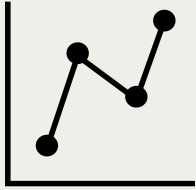
Africa N = 86	Americas N = 107	Asia Pacific N = 516	Europe N = 95	Middle East N = 66	[N = number of women at regional events]
26%	48%	73%	39%	32%	

Representation of women at the 2023 General Session, **an international event**, was 36% (for 822 participants)

Two other international : aquatic animal health (2019) and emergency management (2023) had 41% women (for 232 participants) and 43% women (for 356 participants) respectively

*5 events per region, face-to-face or virtual, more than 50 participants

Trends



Some improvement in gender balance between 2013 and 2023, but not balanced yet - women's representation as follows:

- Reference Centres : from 27% to 40%
- Specialist Commission membership : from 21% to 25%
- Council membership : from 11% to 14%
- Delegates : from 12% to 21%
- Bureaux of the Regional Commissions : from 5% to 28%
- General Session : from 21% to 36%
- Staff (in leadership positions) : from 19% to 38% worldwide, but with sharp contrasts between some offices (48 – 50%) and others (0%) in 2023.
- PVS Experts : from 31% to 43%

Only 21% of Delegates are women

But, there **are** women in the pipeline who have high level of expertise

43% of WOAHA Focal points are women

There appears to be a **leadership gap** for women to achieve **highest level representation** i.e. **Delegates**

Current lack of data on gender e.g. event participants

WOAHA should collect sex/gender disaggregated data to track and respond to gender imbalances

WOAHA intends to develop a Gender mainstreaming strategy in 2024-25

Awareness-raising

Advocacy for gender balanced leadership

Optimise animal health outcomes through gender-inclusive Veterinary Services

UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5.5)
Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life