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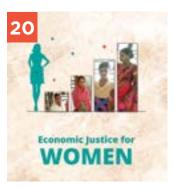
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# Message from the Executive **Director**

# **Ravi Verma** Executive Director, ICRW Asia



This transition is reshaping how we work and where power and decision-making lie, moving from a traditional North-to-South model to one led by local expertise, grounded in the lived realities of communities across our region. As you explore this report, I invite you to look beyond projects and data to see the stories of real people and communities driving change and imagining a more equal world.

At ICRW Asia, we have consciously aligned our organizational culture and governance with the feminist values we champion. This means fostering diversity, inclusion, and collective decision-making across all levels, from our leadership teams to program design and implementation. Our senior management team and staff reflect the diversity of gender identities and communities we serve, and everyone actively contributes to budgeting and strategic priorities through participatory processes.

What truly sets us apart is our respectful, contextdriven partnerships with grassroots leaders. We reject one-size-fits-all solutions. Instead, we listen deeply and empower local voices, especially young people and women, to lead.

You can see this in Jharkhand, where our GEMS and MANthan projects have helped adolescents challenge traditional gender stereotypes and envision new possibilities for themselves. Or in Gujarat, where women salt farmers, in partnership with SEWA, are demonstrating that gender equality and climate action are mutually reinforcing.

We've also taken on some of the most challenging issues, such as intersectional violence, not just through research, but through collaboration, bringing



together survivors, activists, and policymakers to build systems that truly protect women and girls. In Bihar, our work expanding contraceptive choices is shaped by what people in the community actually need and want, not just what outsiders think is best.

Another significant focus this year has been thought leadership, ensuring that good ideas spread and that we continue to learn, adapt, and share what works. ICRW, in partnership with Women in Global Health India (WGHI), launched 'Chingaari', a Gender Transformative Leadership program for early- and mid-career healthcare professionals from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities in India. This cohort of 50 women, including nurses, doctors, community organizers, and health journalists, have engaged in meaningful conversations around gender, power, patriarchy, and rights-based healthcare. Moving forward, they will further explore ways to apply these ideas in their daily work, also involving their colleagues in focused sessions. Chingaari reflects our commitment to learning platforms and region-wide conversations about gender and equity. None of this would be possible without an incredible circle of partners, from grassroots groups and government departments to our dedicated donors and supporters. You make it possible for us to take risks, keep learning, and push for real change.

Looking ahead, we know there's still a lot to do. But we're moving forward with optimism, carrying the lessons of this year with us, and staying true to our feminist roots.

Transition is rarely tidy, but it is powerful. By standing with us now, you are not only sustaining programs, you are re-engineering the very architecture of development so that feminist research flourishes where it's needed most.

Thank you for believing in this vision, for holding us accountable, and for journeying with ICRW Asia as we become a world-class Gender Center of Excellence.

> With gratitude Ravi Verma



# GENDER and A EDUCATION

# **GEMS in Jharkhand: Transforming Schools, Transforming Futures**

ICRW's Gender Equity Movement in Schools (GEMS) initiative serves as a model for how schools can act as powerful platforms for fostering gender responsiveness and transformation. By engaging students during their formative years, GEMS aims to nurture gender equity and reduce violence, thereby embedding these values at the heart of school culture, pedagogy, and policy. In 2024-25, the program's transformative journey continued in Jharkhand, reaching deeper into communities and expanding its impact.

This year, a significant focus was placed on building the capacity of educators. With technical support from ICRW, 574 teachers and 244 headmasters across 270 government schools in Jamtara and Godda were trained to implement the GEMS curriculum. The momentum extended to three additional districts of Sahebganj, Deoghar, and Pakur, and reached 786 educators in 393 schools.

At the institutional level, ICRW played a pivotal role in drafting Jharkhand's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Gender Responsive and Inclusive Schools (GRIS) and co-developing the State Gender Cell under JCERT.

Progress is visible both in the frameworks that shape schools and in the personal journeys of students and educators. Insights from 2,800 adolescents reveal that GEMS has sparked significant positive shifts in educational aspirations, self-confidence, and gender-equitable attitudes. Yet, their voices also bring attention to a sobering reality – many students still question the practical value of education in their specific socio-economic context. These findings highlight an important need to strengthen gender equity efforts like GEMS by also focusing on skill-building and career preparation, ensuring that young people are not only able to dream of a brighter future but are also equipped with the tools to realize it.

Encouragingly, change is visible among educators, too. Male teachers are now questioning traditional gender roles, sharing domestic responsibilities, and addressing gender-based violence with greater awareness.

Looking ahead, GEMS will work closely with government partners to embed gender equity even deeper within Jharkhand's education system by



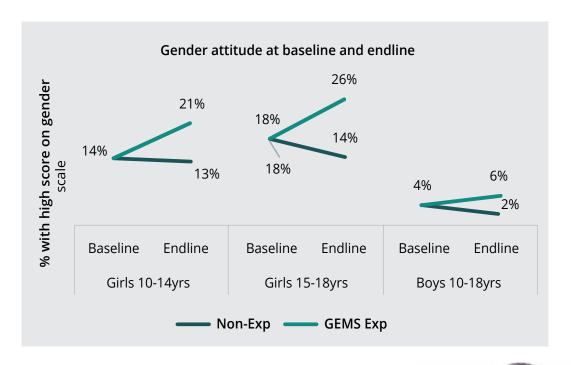
finalizing and rolling out the SOP on GRIS. A new gender curriculum for preadolescents will address early biases, while ongoing teacher training and creative classroom tools will make it easier to build more open and inclusive spaces for learning.

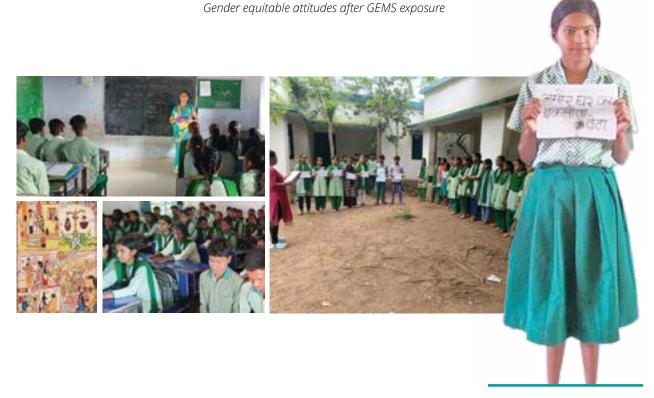
Through sustained effort, GEMS continues to demonstrate that schools are not merely places of learning but also powerful platforms for challenging harmful gender norms and empowering young people to build more equitable future.

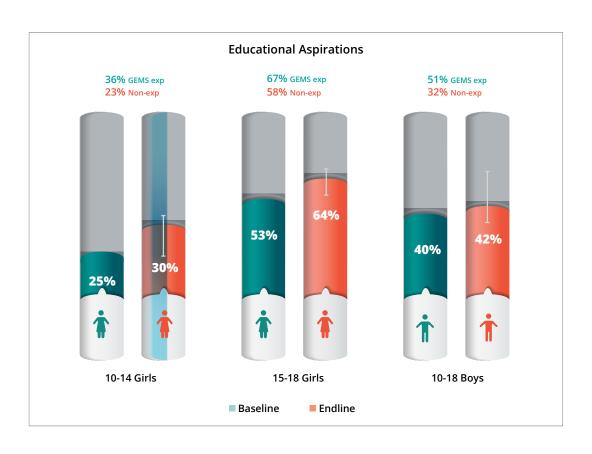
After GEMS training, now I too help a little bit...I help to cook, wash dishes, sweep the floor, and do other things.

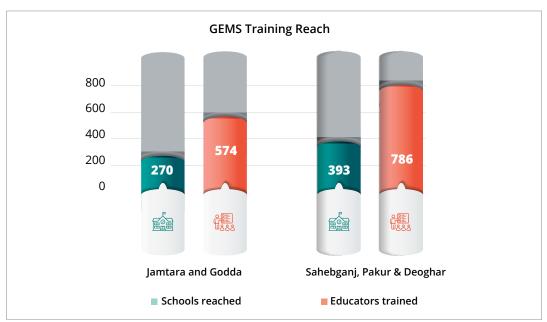
- Headmaster (GEMS program school)

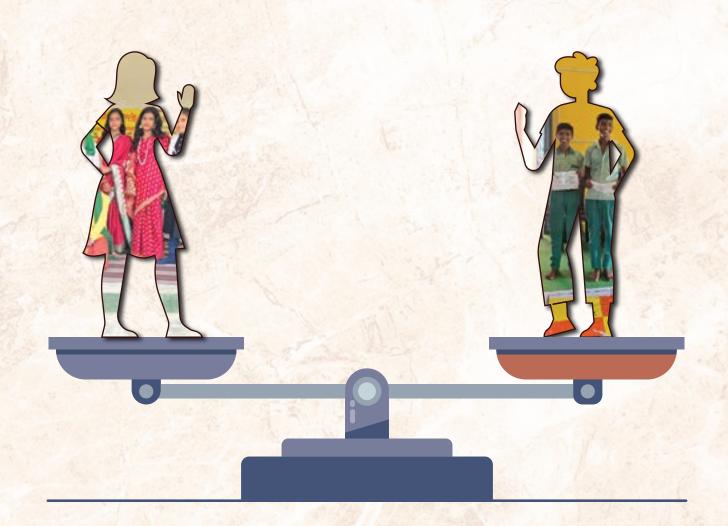












# GENDER EQUALITY

# **MANthan: Men for Gender Equality**

This year, MANthan witnessed powerful progress. Young men across rural Jamtara district of Jharkhand, once quiet observers, are now emerging as active participants and co-creators in building more gender-equal communities. What began as a transactional engagement has evolved into genuine ownership. Through structured residential workshops held at the Gandhi Ashram in Jamtara, young men have found spaces to reflect and grow. These immersive sessions have sparked a wave of self-driven leadership.

These men, who once joined as participants, now spearhead several communications and development initiatives in their own communities as our Village Champions, taking on the roles of facilitators and mentors. This cascading model has proven to be transformative, extending into the communities of village champions, who are informally influencing their peers, and formally stepping into roles that advocate for gender inclusive development. Our initial cohort of 34 active Village Champions has grown to about 76, with over 158 youth involved across more than 30 villages. MANthan's reach is growing, fuelled not by incentives, but by shared values.







Village Champions

**Total Youth Engaged** 

Villages Reached



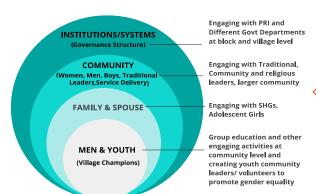
MANthan's pivotal work extends beyond the youth. With our intergenerational dialogue initiative, we have been offering spaces where elders and young men come together and help clarify perceptions about power, patriarchy, and one another. Going forward, by continually investing in these spaces, we hope to develop structured tools and guidelines on conducting intergenerational dialogue among men.

This year, we also noticed a promising involvement of community influencers. Leaders like the Maulvi, Pandit, and Majhi Haram, as well as the Mukhiyas, have begun engaging in our work with young men and boys. The growing engagement of these institutions suggests that new, more inclusive perspectives are beginning to take shape at the community level.

With more women taking active roles in Panchayat governance, we expect to witness greater gender equality in community leadership, along with stronger support from young men and boys. To further strengthen these developments, we have sought a two-year extension from RNPF to continue our work within the community.

The momentum of change continues to grow. With every new champion and ally, we move closer to a future where equality is not just an aspiration, but a lived reality for all. We look ahead with optimism, knowing that every new voice and partnership brings us closer to lasting gender equality in Jamtara and beyond.

# MANthan, A Comprehensive Intervention to **Promote Gender Equality through MEN and BOYS**







**AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS** 

# **Preventing Intersectional Violence Against Women and Girls**

In partnership with the Jharkhand Women's Development Society, Government of Jharkhand, ICRW has embarked on a multi-phase research initiative to strengthen state systems for preventing and responding to violence against women and girls (VAWG). This project aims to gather actionable data and develop sustainable, evidence-based policies and solutions to enhance the effectiveness of existing programs to help respond to and prevent violence against women and girls.

Collaboration has been central to this effort. So far, we have engaged with key state departments, including Department of Women and Child Development, National Health Mission, Jharkhand Education Project Council (JEPC), and the Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society (JSLPS). JSLPS's Gender Resource Centres (GRCs) have emerged as a key entry point for engagement because of their deep reach and interdepartmental linkages. In addition to working with key government departments, we have also facilitated dialogues with civil society organisations working on gender in the state of Jharkhand to explore opportunities for further collaboration between state and non-state actors for violence redressal.

As a part of this project, we conducted a review of existing datasets on violence against women and girls in India and Jharkhand which helped us map patterns and prevalence of GBV. The results have revealed deeply concerning trends.

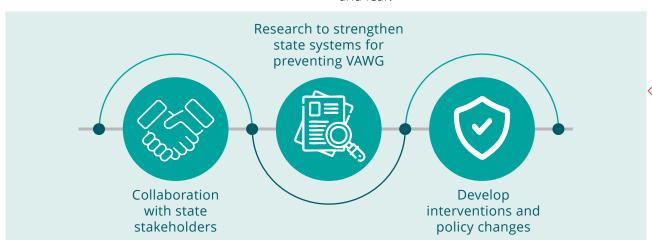
Reported rape cases have risen by 60%, and domestic violence by 253% between 2005 and 2013.

- Witch-hunting is a critical issue, with an average of 35 murders and over 4,500 harassment cases between 2015 and 2020.
- Incidents of kidnapping and abduction have increased by 17.1% during a similar period.
- Tribal and rural women continue to face the highest risks, especially from trafficking.
- There are high rates of underreporting that persist, due to stigma, fear, and limited access to justice.

We are reviewing both national and Jharkhand state-level laws and policies to understand how gender norms and VAWG are addressed, and to assess how effectively these systems are functioning in practice. Our work is grounded in the belief that evidence-based research must inform policies that improve lives and uphold dignity.

Finalizing partnerships with key state departments in addition to facilitating key platforms for collaboration with state and non state actors, conducting in-depth community consultations, and establishing a project steering committee and advisory group. We are also developing ethical protocols and research tools to guide the upcoming primary research phase.

We remain committed to fostering an ecosystem where survivors receive coordinated, comprehensive support and where communities are empowered to challenge harmful norms and break cycles of violence. Through persistent collaboration and a focus on actionable evidence, we continue to envision a nation where every woman and girl can live free from violence and fear.





# ITERATIVE LEARN NG GRANT

# **Iterative Learning Grant**

ICRW, in collaboration with Purple Audacity and PSI India, is supporting the Government of Bihar in introducing two new contraceptive methods, DMPA-SC and hormonal implants (HI), across public health facilities. The learning initiative aims to gather evidence on what is working well in the roll-out of these new methods and suggest recommendations for future scale-up across the state and country.

Guided by the core principle of equitable access, this initiative is rooted in deep engagement with government partners, civil society actors, and communities to generate timely and actionable insights. During the first year, the team co-developed a robust learning agenda through consultations with stakeholders, including the State Health Society, Bihar (SHSB), McCann, UNFPA, and FOGSI.

The project utilises an innovative and systematic learning approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data and insights. Given a dynamic and complex implementation environment,

#### **Complexity Aware Monitoring (CAM)**

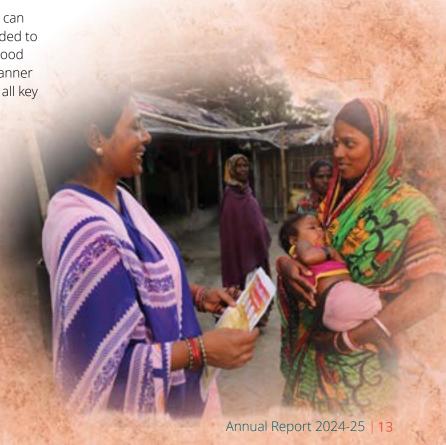
approaches have been utilised that has provided near real-time information about 'what is working', 'how', 'what is challenging' and 'why' so that program stakeholders and decision makers can rapidly act to make adjustments where needed to improve programming. Documentation of good practices and challenges in a concurrent manner has also proven useful for dissemination to all key stakeholders to inform program scale-up.

Multiple program documentation efforts were carried out, including visits to health facilities in four implementation districts, documenting training and refresher orientations of service providers, and observing data quality by reviewing facility records. Interviews were conducted with healthcare providers, facility staff, users of the new methods, and frontline workers to learn what was going well and where improvements were needed.

Regular sharing of insights with stakeholders has been a key approach. Reflective workshops were conducted with implementing partners to understand evolving status of the roll-out and key highlights and challenges. The multi-stakeholder consultation, such as the "Lessons Learnt Meeting" in August 2024, with program partners, funders, bilateral organizations, and communications and advocacy partners, provided a valuable opportunity to pause, reflect, and collaboratively identify actionable recommendations for program strengthening.

In the coming year, ICRW plans to deepen its work in Bihar across expanded districts, supporting partners in monitoring data collection and analysis, and initiating primary research once government approvals are secured.

This learning journey speaks of our ongoing commitment to evidence-based programming ensuring that the voices of women, couples, and communities shape how services are delivered and improved, promoting equitable and informed access to the expanded basket of choice.



# **Partnerships**

#### **Grant Foundation**

Gates Foundation

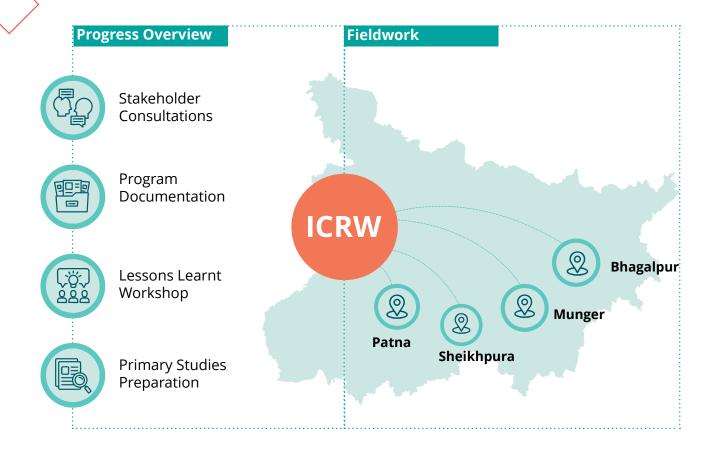
#### **Core Partners**

- State Health Society, Bihar
- PSI India (Technical Support)
- McCann (Communications)

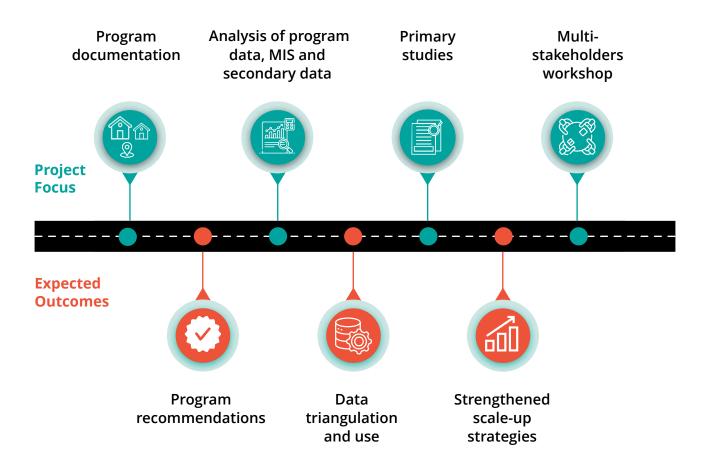
#### Other Stakeholders

- Family Planning Association of India
- United Nations Population Fund
- FOGSI

# **Year 1 Highlights**



# **Year 2 Roadmap**







# Framework for Women-Led CLIMATE ACTION

# **What Works: Women and Climate Building** an Evidence Base and Framework for **Women-Led Climate Action**

In Gujarat's Little Rann of Kutch, women are emerging as key actors in shaping climate resilience. The collaborative ICRW-SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association) study, supported by The Rockefeller Foundation, aims to build a robust evidence base for women-led climate action that advances ecological impact alongside livelihood empowerment. For ICRW-Asia, this collaboration marks a significant expansion of its

efforts to generate evidence on women-led climate action, especially within the Global South context.

The project focuses on women salt workers who are shifting from diesel to solar pumps for groundwater extraction, a transition that promises to cut greenhouse gas emissions while lowering input costs. Beyond the technological aspect, the research explores how collective organization,

# **Year 1 Highlights**

#### Impact.



Reduced diesel dependency



**20** kilotons of CO<sub>2</sub> prevented in one salt season



Reduced fuel expenses for salt production



Strengthened collectivisation at community level



Increase in women's bargaining power



Grassroots research capacity built



local knowledge, and community-based leadership can influence climate outcomes when women are positioned as decision-makers.

In the first year, we focused on establishing a strong foundation by developing study design, creating research tools, training local women as field researchers, and launching data collection through repeat energy consumption surveys and in-depth interviews. The study, spanning Halvad, Patdi, and Dharangadhra blocks in Gujarat's Surendranagar and Morbi districts centers on the Cleaner Sky campaign by SEWA, which is supporting over 30,000 women salt pan farmers in transitioning from diesel to solar energy for salt farming.

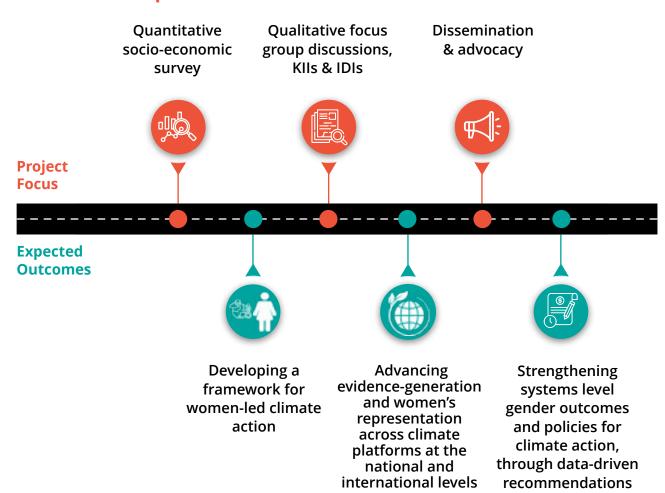
Despite challenges such as institutional transitions, harsh weather, and limited field access, the team made critical progress. Notably, over 7,000 women have already adopted solar technology, preventing an estimated 20 kilotons of carbon emissions in one salt season.

Preliminary findings indicate early signs of success, including reduced energy costs, increased climate awareness, and greater involvement of women in local trade decisions. Women report improved access to financial services and a stronger role in community leadership. However, their lived experiences also highlight the intensifying burden of climate stressors, such as extreme heat, cyclones, and unpredictable weather, which impact their work and health.

In the upcoming year, we will focus on completing a large-scale quantitative socio-economic survey, continuing qualitative data collection, and deepening analysis. These insights will inform our advocacy efforts with government stakeholders and global platforms, with the aim of shaping policies that recognize and invest in women-led climate action. This will be followed by wider outreach and engagement activities to share the findings. Grounded in partnership and a clear purpose, the ICRW-SEWA study seeks to demonstrate how climate action can be sustained by strengthening gender equity and fostering durable transformation.



## **Year 2 Roadmap**







# Economic Justice for WONEN

# **Economic Justice for Women Informal Workers**

The Indian economy is predominantly informal, with over 90% of the workforce engaged in the informal sector. This informality is particularly pronounced among women, with around 92% engaged in the informal sector. This is driven by limited access to education, skill-building opportunities, and start-up capital, especially among women. Further, patriarchal gender norms continue to constrain women's participation in the workforce, often rendering them invisible as economic agents. To address these barriers, various CSOs working with informal women workers (IWWs) have developed innovative solutions to enhance their economic participation.

In partnership with the Ford Foundation, this year ICRW launched a research and learning project that aims to generate evidence and insights from five different CSO-led intervention models. These models are designed to effectively and systematically enhance IWWs access to safe, dignified and remunerative work. Over the next three years, this initiative will consolidate key learnings to inform large-scale investments aimed at advancing women's employment. These partner CSOs are based in Delhi NCR, Gujarat, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

We will adopt a participatory and inclusive approach to capture learnings from program participants, implementers, and other key stakeholders. The research will document and analyze the strategies implemented by different partners to address the challenges faced by IWWs, the influence of these models on women's lives and livelihoods and the role played by different stakeholders in the process. The research will also situate and unpack the role these models play in the larger sectoral ecosystem.

In the first year of the project, the proposed learning agenda was refined based on an allpartner inception workshop and individual virtual meetings and field visits to partner sites. To deepen our understanding of the ecosystem within which the IWWs navigate their work, we have also initiated literature review. In the coming year, we aim to create collaborative spaces for peer learning and reflection, initiate primary research after IRB approvals, and continue to contribute to partners' efforts by bringing insights from our learnings through primary and secondary research. Through this project, we aim to center the voices of women and other stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding of their sector of work, the role played by the intervention models in that ecosystem, and the areas where additional efforts are needed to strengthen economic participation and advancement opportunities for IWWs.

# **Project Timeline**

### Year 1



Held all-partner inception workshop



Conducted virtual meetings and field visits



Refined learning agenda collaboratively



Initiated literature review to map IWWs ecosystem

#### Year 2



Create collaborative peer learning spaces



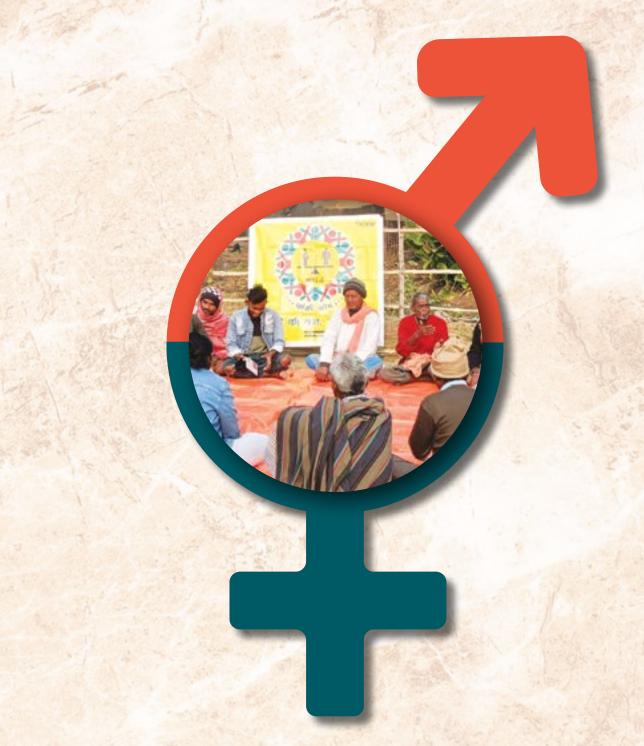
Conduct primary research



Share insights to support partner interventions



Develop strategic learning framework



# ENGAGING MEN AND BOYS FOR GENDER EQUALITY

# **Testing the Toolkit for Engaging Men** and Boys for Gender Equality

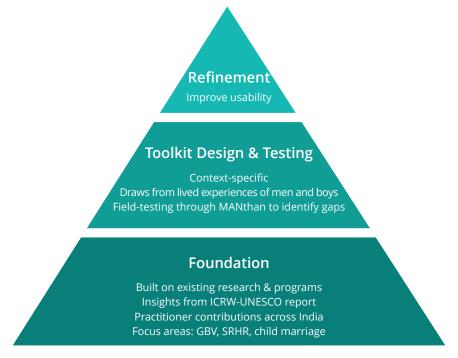
ICRW, in collaboration with the American Jewish World Service (AJWS), has developed a toolkit aimed at promoting gender equality by engaging men and boys. The toolkit builds on several years of research, programming, and advocacy efforts carried out in diverse contexts across India. It also incorporates learnings from ICRW's recent report with UNESCO Engaging Men and Boys: A Report on Pathways to Gender Equality in India.

Designed to be practical and context-specific, the toolkit considers India's varied cultural, social, and economic settings. It draws on past interventions and the lived experiences of men, boys, and their communities, and offers structured strategies to support gender-equitable norms and practices. The content includes contributions from practitioners across India, with a focus on issues such as gender-based violence prevention, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and early, child, and forced marriage.

The toolkit is currently being tested through ICRW's MANthan initiative in Jharkhand, which works with men and boys to examine and shift norms of masculinity that contribute to gender inequality. As part of this initiative, Village Champions (VCs) work with local actors on challenging prevailing gender norms and initiating social change. The testing process involves expanding the MANthan initiative to additional villages to assess how the toolkit can be used to initiate and implement gender equality interventions with men and boys at the community level. The testing will focus on:

- Clarity and feasibility of toolkit steps
- Assumptions that may require review
- Practical considerations for implementation
- Content areas that may need to be added or

The testing phase is a critical step in making the toolkit more grounded and responsive to onthe-ground realities. It allows the team to better understand how practitioners interact with the content—what works in real-world settings, what requires adaptation, and what support they might need. These insights will not only strengthen the relevance and usability of the toolkit but also ensure that it reflects the everyday experiences, challenges, and practicalities of those implementing it in the field.





# Chingaari: Building Feminist Leadership in Health

Early this year, ICRW in partnership with Women in Global Health India (WGHI) launched a Gender Transformative Leadership (GTL) capacity building program 'Chingaari' for 50 early- and mid-career healthcare professionals working with community-based organizations (CBOs) in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.

From nurses to community organizers, doctors, and clinic support staff, the 'Chingaari Fellows' represent the diverse backbone of India's health ecosystem.

The capacity-building program aims to build perspectives on gender, power, patriarchy, feminist leadership, and a rights-based approach to healthcare. Through a reflective and participatory pedagogy, we seek to learn and unlearn together ways of navigating inequities in

our lives, workspaces, and the communities we work in.

We are also engaging with the Chingaari fellows' organizational representatives to enable some shifts in the ecosystems they come from.

Throughout the journey, we have been using research to understand what works and what doesn't in a feminist leadership capacity-building program.

What makes Chingaari special is its focus on creating a space that's as real as it is radical, one that celebrates honesty, vulnerability, and fierce and difficult conversations about gender, power, patriarchy, feminism, social change, and leading from the margins.



# **Program Overview**



### **Partners**

ICRW+Women in Global Health India (WGHI)



## **Cohort**

50 women



## **Cohort Profile**

Early to mid career professionals from tier 2 & 3 cities

# **Program Objectives**



Build feminist leadership in health

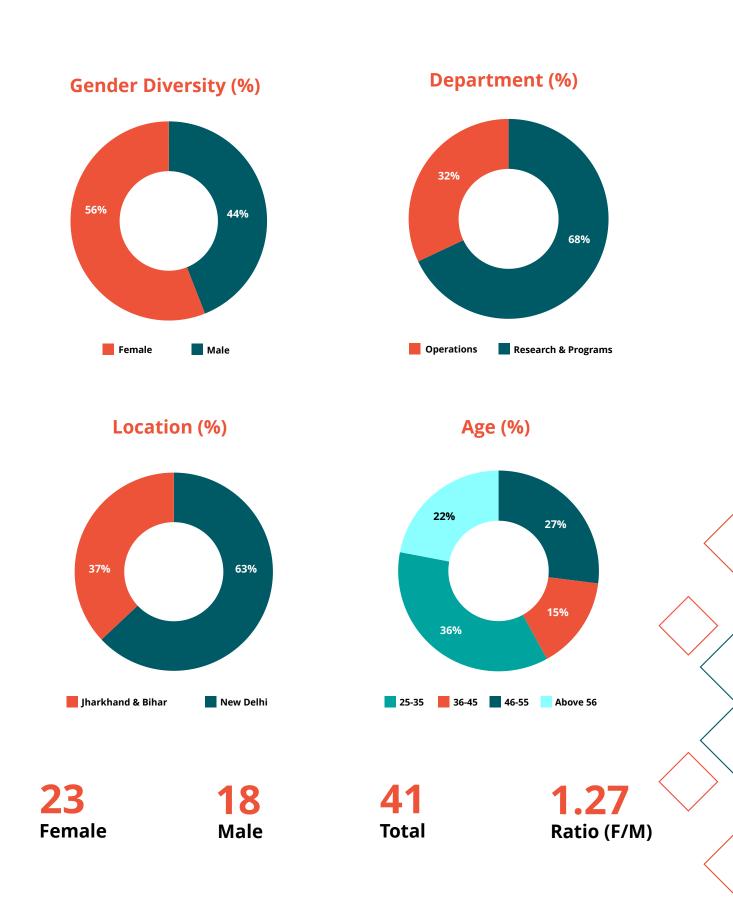


Improve women's ability to navigate inequities



Support capacity building on workplace equity

# **STAFF DIVERSITY**



# **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

FIROZA MEHROTRA (BOARD CHAIR)

**SHALINI SINHA** 

**RAVI K. VERMA** 

RAJNI SEKHRI SIBAL

# STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT TEAM

**RAVI K. VERMA** 

**PRANITA ACHYUT** 

PADMA BHATE-DEOSTHALI

PRASENJIT BANERJEE

**RITU KATHURIA** 

**NASREEN JAMAL** 

**SAPNA KEDIA** 

**MONICA BHALLA** 

**ROSHNI RAI** 

# **FINANCIALS**

### INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN Balance Sheet as at 31st March, 2025

Particulars	Note No	As at 31st March,2025	As at 31st March,2024
I. EQUITY AND LIABILITIES			
Shareholder's Funds			
Reserves and Surplus	1	75,936	55,408
Current Liabilities			
Other Current Liabilities	2 3	15,425	13,577
Short Term provisions	3	-	11 12
	Total	91,361	68,985
II.Assets			
Non-current assets		The second second	
Property, Plant and Equipment	4	2,979	3,716
Long Term Loans and Advances	5	17,760	15,556
Current assets			
Income Receivables	6		732
Cash and Cash Equivalents	7	48,785	30,624
Short Term Loans and Advances	8	282	339
Other Current Assets	9	21,555	18,019
	Total	91,361	68,985

AS PER OUR REPORT OF EVEN DATE ATTACHED

For MAHESH KUMAR & COMPANY CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

Firm Reg Noc 09668N

CAMAHESH KUMAR

M.NO 088236 PLACE: NEW DELHI

DATED: 04 09 2025

UDIN: 25088136 BMOOLF 6964

INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR

RESEARCH ON WOMEN

RAVI KUMAR VERMA

Director

DIN-01828416

For Ros

New Delhi

FIROZA MEHROTRA

Director

DIN-06763478

# **PARTNERS**









BILL& MELINDA GATES foundation

































# **PARTNERS**



























# **About ICRW**

The International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) decentralized global network comprises three autonomous regional entities—ICRW Africa, ICRW Americas, and ICRW Asia. For nearly 50 years, ICRW has set the global agenda for gender equity, inclusion, and shared prosperity with action-oriented research and solutions. Our global experts generate groundbreaking insights and develop gender transformative strategies on topics like economic opportunity and security, health and reproductive rights, gender norms, and climate action. Our vision is to create an equitable, sustainable, and prosperous world where women, girls, and structurally excluded populations lead and thrive.

Photo Credit: ICRW Asia Photo Bank and Getty Images/Images of Empowerment.







### **ICRW** Asia

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**LinkedIn:** https://www.linkedin.com/company/international-center-for-research-onwomen-icrwasia/

### **ICRW Jamtara Project Office**

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