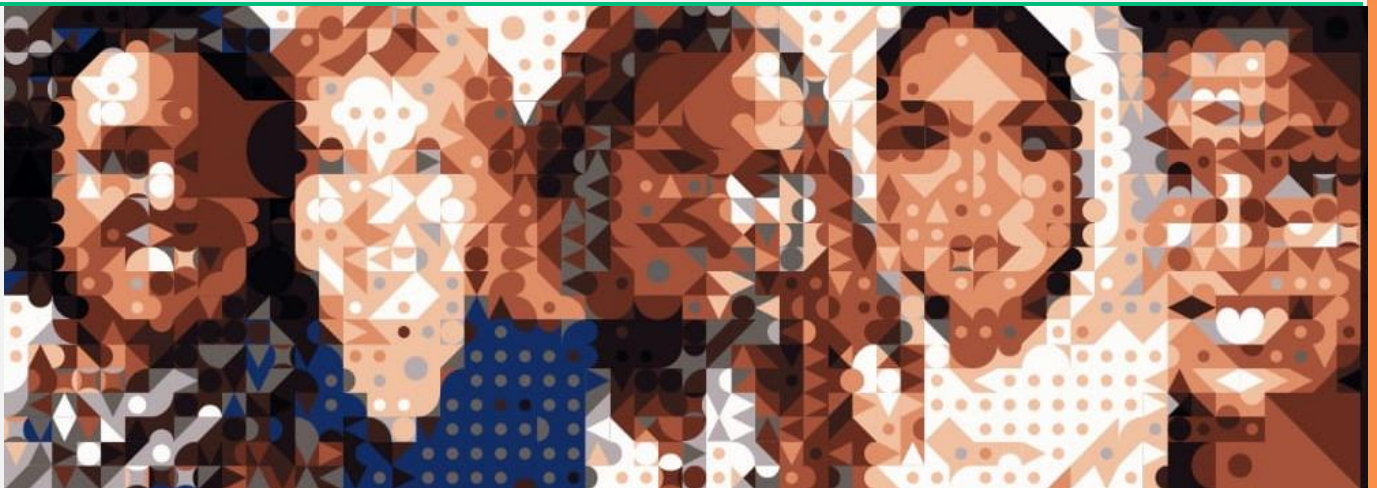
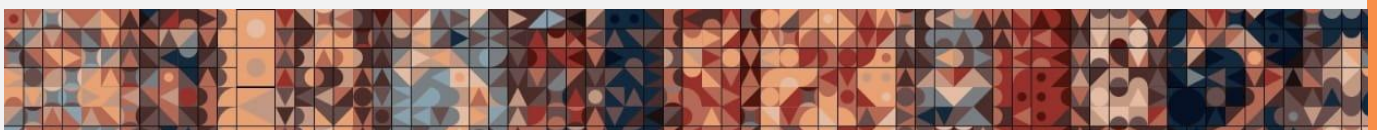


INTERSECTIONALITY- INFORMED FRAMEWORK FOR TACKLING RACISM AND EMBEDDING INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY IN TEACHING & LEARNING

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



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INTERSECTIONALITY-INFORMED FRAMEWORK FOR TACKLING RACISM AND EMBEDDING INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY IN TEACHING & LEARNING

INTRODUCTION

This intersectionality-informed EDI framework lays out a roadmap to embed 'inclusivity' into all aspects of the teaching and learning cycle; from **design and review of curricula/ content**, through to **delivery in classrooms**, **evaluation** the **wider institutional environment** in which learning is embedded. A distinctive element of this framework is its adoption of an intersectionality lens in addressing racism alongside other intersecting forms of discrimination rooted in different aspects of one's social position (especially gender, class, race and ethnicity, sexuality), which operate to exclude or privilege some groups over others and produce unequal outcomes.

Intersectionality refers to the understanding that social inequalities are not experienced as unitary exclusive phenomenon of race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, and other aspects of social position but as interacting and 'reciprocally constructed' phenomenon¹. It rejects the idea that human lives can be reduced to single characteristics and the a priori assumed significance attached to any one characteristic or social category². In higher education, for example, students cannot be defined solely based on their skin colour or nationality. Their experience of discrimination is unique, resulting from the complex interaction of different aspects of their social location (gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality, disability). A transformative approach to education thus demands recognition of the diverse realities and embodied experiences of their socio-political, economic, and cultural lives.

While there's growing salience of the concept and theory of intersectionality, operationalising it to transform equality and diversity policy and practice in organisations (esp. higher education) is not straightforward, and fraught with critical challenges and

difficult conversations. The UK's Equality Act 2010, a first step in recognising the multiple levels at which discrimination and inequalities are experienced, highlighted nine protected characteristics (Box 1).

BOX-1

PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS, UK EQUALITY ACT 2010

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Sex

However, the act promotes an isolated understanding of these characteristics³; failing to appreciate the systemic basis and interacting nature of these discriminations, and how these co-create systems of disadvantage and exclusions that undermine attainment of education and other development goals. **Discrimination is not merely additive, but intersectional or 'mutually reinforcing'**⁴. For example, discrimination faced by a Black female student (or educator) is not merely the sum of gender discrimination (sexism) and racial oppression. Instead, her racialised experience of being a woman is distinct from her White female counterpart and shaped by her age, nationality and migration status, socio-economic status, as is her gendered experience distinct from her Black male counterpart.

¹ Collins PH. Intersectionality's definitional dilemmas. *Annual review of sociology*. 2015 Aug 14; 41:1-20.

² Kapilashrami A, Hankivsky O. Intersectionality and why it matters to global health. *The Lancet*. 2018 Jun 30;391(10140):2589-91.

³ Christoffersen, A. Intersectional approaches to equality and diversity in higher education. Equality Challenge Unit. 2018.

⁴ Crenshaw, K. Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stan. L. Rev.* 1990; 43, 1241.

Adoption of an *intersectional* perspective to inform the University's work on racism, will inform a fuller grasp and appreciation of "context, politics, social divisions and outcomes vis-à-vis inclusive equalities"⁵. The perspective allows us to go beyond the victim-perpetrator dichotomy and labels (e.g. racist-non-racist; sexist; homophobic), which make important conversations on racial equality in workplace and classrooms difficult and increase resistance to change, to bring centre-stage the underlying forces that determine these inequalities. Instead, the framework aims at raising critical consciousness by focusing on *privileges* and *oppressions*, and how these translate to power differences in our interactions. Reflecting and being aware of these differences in a supportive space can be a critical step towards emancipation of self, and others.

Utilising this approach is not only an attempt to unpack and inform our thinking about

equality, but a political commitment to transformational change in education.

WHO'S THE AUDIENCE?

The framework is intended for educators who are engaged in teaching and learning across a wide range of disciplines and subject areas (esp. STEM, Public Health, Social Sciences, Arts & Humanities), although some aspects of the framework will be more relevant for some areas than others. Its use does not demand expertise on equality, race, and diversity issues, nor on gender, disability, sexuality studies. The framework offers probes and guidance for creating a shared reflective space for learners that can facilitate examining and actioning concrete steps to tackle discrimination. To that extent, its adoption requires a commitment to such critical reflection, dialogue, and change.

INTERSECTIONALITY-INFORMED EDUCATION FRAMEWORK: A STEP TOWARDS DECOLONISING ACADEMY

The framework consists of:

- i) Six guiding principles that are drawn from Hankivsky et al's⁶ IBPA framework
- ii) Three core objectives and associated questions that will guide development of inclusive practices at **three levels**:
 - a. **Content** design to ensure the imparted knowledge does not reinforce inequalities and prejudices against people of colour and other minorities and presents diverse perspectives.
 - b. **Classroom** delivery to ensure learning occurs in a reflective and interactive space, enabling respectful and meaningful participation from all.
 - c. **Culture** pertaining to the wider institutional environment and system-wide changes necessary for an equal and fairer society
- iii) Operational framework that embeds the principles and objectives in teaching and learning cycle and environment.

The framework is evolving, and the guiding questions at each level should be viewed as initial attempts to progressively (and incrementally) adopt intersectional ideas in tackling racism, and more broadly advancing the equality, diversity and inclusion work in the University; as small steps in a long journey to transformative learning.

⁵ Clark C, Matthew D, Burns V. Power, privilege, and justice: intersectionality as human rights? *The International Journal of Human Rights*. 2018 Jan 2;22(1):108-26.

⁶ Hankivsky O, Grace D, Hunting G, Giesbrecht M, Fridkin A, Rudrum S, Ferlatte O, Clark N. An

intersectionality-based policy analysis framework: critical reflections on a methodology for advancing equity. *International journal for equity in health*. 2014 Dec 1;13(1):119.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The approach is guided by the following key principles of intersectionality-based analysis.

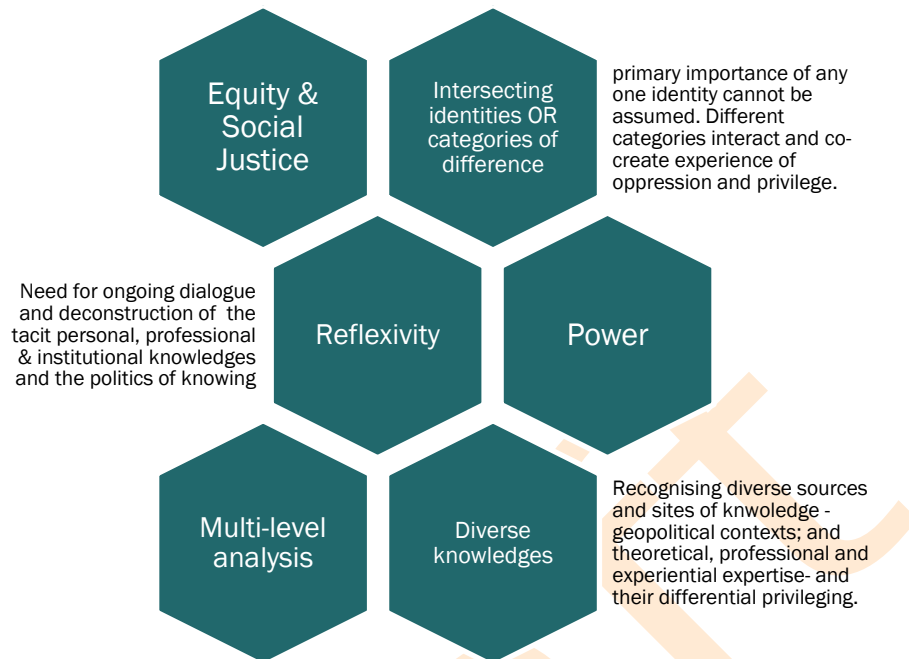
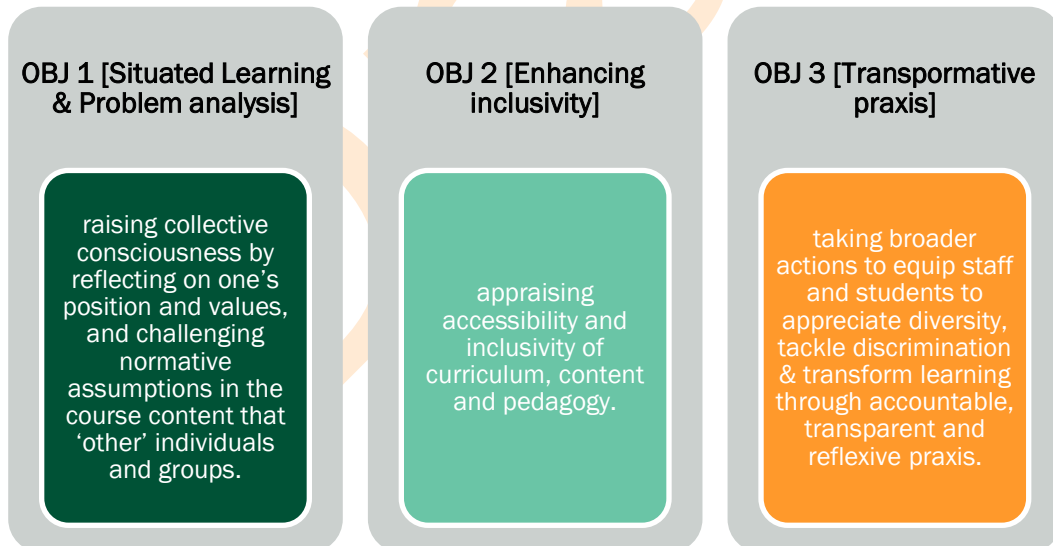


Figure 1: Key principles of Intersectionality-based analysis [Adapted from Hankivsky et al 2014]

KEY OBJECTIVES



CONTENT / CURRICULUM DESIGN

Situated analysis

- What problems/ topics does the course/lecture tackle? How have representations of the 'problem' come about? Who is defining the problem? Whose perspectives are excluded/ prioritised?
- What knowledge, values & experiences does the module design & delivery team bring to the topic? Does these generate a partial understanding of the problem?
- How are diverse populations (identity-based & other disadvantaged groups) differently affected by this problem? Does the course account for these differences?

Enhancing inclusivity

- Does the curricula reflect the needs and realities of its diverse audience? Are perspectives of minorities, diverse geographies (esp. contries and populations that are subjects of study) reflected in the reading list and guest speakers?
- Do learning exercises and assessments cater to different learning styles & educational backgrounds.
- Is curricula informed by student and wider community perspectives? How is representative equity achieved in consultative and co-design forums?

Transformative praxis

- Acknowledge & utilise wider 'expertise' including "embodied expertise" derived from lived experiences of oppressions via co-production with students and other communities (policy, activist, practitioner)
- Challenge racial and gender politics of knowledge production (e.g. racism and sexism in science, colonialialism)
- Develop practical and theoretical skills -transferable to wide-ranging contexts and realities.

CLASSROOM LEARNING

Situated learning

- What is the composition of the class? Is diversity (or its absence) assessed and acknowledged in class?
- What factors constrain participation in class? Do seating arrangement, activity design allow interaction and learning across groups?
- What formal and informal opportunities exist for troubleshooting, grievances, feedback?

Inclusivity

- Is classroom (as physical & social space) and teaching media accessible & inclusive?
- How is participation from under-represented groups encouraged? Do learning platforms account for diversity in class and inequalities in learning environment?
- Are there structured opportunities for cross-socio-cultural & political interaction to help students appreciate the value of diversity

Transformative praxis

- Establish mechanisms for periodic review of practices (language/terminologies used, references), involving students.
- Create space and informal mechanisms to elicit student voice and concerns (esp. minorities); and communicate actions taken (via feedback loops)
- Create opportunities for raising critical conscioussness for e.g. via 'teach out' sessions on inequalities in educational environments & professions (pay-gap, workloads, financial pressures etc.), leadership & role models in their fields.

INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT & CULTURE

Situated analysis

- External environment - what are the current practices of recruiters, partners and regulators in tackling discrimination (e.g. equality & diversity policy, sexual harassment and racism)?
- What external and internal mechanisms exist to monitor progress?
- How is diversity captured within existing metrics (e.g. Athena SWAN, Race Equality Charter)? How are results communicated to students, staff and other interested parties?
- Are there spaces to share experiences of discrimination experienced by students, academic and professional staff?

Enhancing inclusivity

- Are equality & diversity mechanisms led and represented by members of minority groups? How are these supported administratively & financially?
- Are staff offered training and support on (un)conscious bias, EDI?
- Are procedures for assessing performance and promotion transparent?
- Are positive action measures utilised to increase representation of intersectionally marginalised people among educators & professional staff in general, and in senior management? Is there adequate support and recognition of the additional burden of these roles?

Transformative praxis

- Strengthen institutional leadership through representational equity (e.g. race, gender, disability), allocate resources and provide support (including mentoring, shadowing, coaching)
- Enhance accountability & transparency in the University, and among partners and regulators by developing effective and anonymous reporting mechanisms and independent committees for grievance redressal (e.g. sexual harassment, racism)
- Institutionalise independent mechanisms to assess and monitor wider risks (e.g. covid, financial) and their implications for EDI.

PUTTING THE FRAMEWORK TO PRACTICE - A SNAPSHOT VIEW

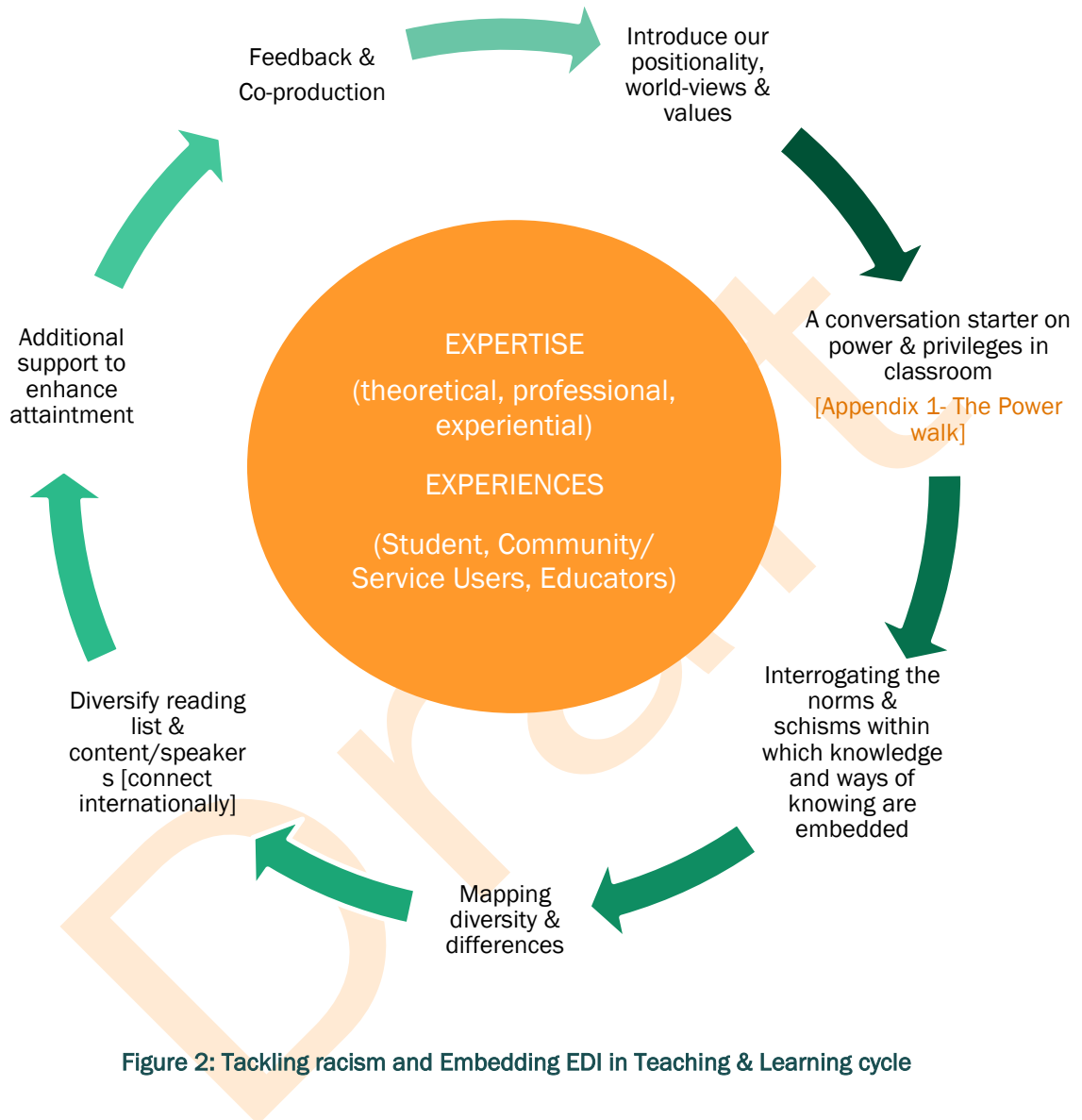


Figure 2: Tackling racism and Embedding EDI in Teaching & Learning cycle

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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Reviewers: Professor Kam Bhui, Dr Ashlee Christoffersen, Dr Winifred Eboh, Professor Olena Hankivsky, Dr Sharifah Sekalala, Dr Alison Swartz, Dr Sridhar Venkatapuram

APPENDIX 1: POWER & PRIVILEGE WALK - A CRITICAL RESOURCE USED IN FEMINIST TRAINING PROGRAMMES⁷

Power is intrinsic to all human interactions and critical in maintaining social, political, and other hierarchies. It is expressed – implicitly and explicitly – through ideas, norms, practices, institutions, capital, and the use of force. Privilege is the access to or enjoyment of rights, entitlements, or advantages simply by virtue of being a member of a majority group. Understanding privilege involves recognition of historical oppression and resulting socio-economic and political inequities and discovering how our interactions with other people may consciously or unconsciously, explicitly, or implicitly further marginalise the oppressed. In this exercise, all participants are asked to start from a common point. Based on the statements below, they will be instructed to step forward or back depending on specific circumstances that correspond to hidden or visible privileges, and disadvantages.

GROUND RULES:

- Tackling racism and enhancing inclusion is a collaborative project.
- Expertise is – experiential, embodied, and derived from training.
- Privilege and oppression are dynamic, may not be mutually exclusive, and are preventable/ amenable to change.

STATEMENTS [NOT AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST. TO BE DEVELOPED AS PER CONTEXT]

1. If your parents have had to work more than one jobs to support your family/ education take one step back.
2. If you have been verbally or physically abused for the colour of your skin, take one step back.
3. If you have had to take loan for your studies, take one step back.
4. If you were encouraged to go to college, take one step forward.
5. If you attended private school for part or whole of your education, take one step forward.
6. If you can show affection to your partner in public without fear of violence, take one step forward.
7. If you can legally marry or cohabit the person you love, take one step forward.
8. If your mistakes have been linked to your race/ ethnicity or gender, take a step back.
9. If you've been shamed or attacked (verbally or physically) for your religious beliefs, take a step back.
10. If you are nervous about going through airport security or immigration, take a step back.

11. If you were ever stopped or questioned by the police because they felt you were suspicious, take one step backward.
12. If you've had adequate access to nutritious food throughout your childhood, take a step forward.
13. If you've had to skip a meal because there was no food in the house or you were unable to buy it, take a step back.
14. If you can comfortably walk back to your home at night from a social event, take a step back.
15. If you're told that you attract unwarranted attention by the way you dress or speak, take a step back.
16. If you're unable to physically access classroom or educational material, take a step back.
17. If you were uncomfortable about a statement or joke related to your race or gender made in your presence but was unable to confront it due to the fear of being alienated, take a step back.
18. If you feel you are unable to speak against a practice/ policy that you feel harms or disadvantages you due to the fear of consequences, take a step back.
19. If English is your first language, take a step forward.
20. If you have had to hide or lie about your sexual preference, take a step back.
21. If you identify with the gender you were born with/ assigned at birth, take a step forward.
22. If both your parents went to college, take a step forward.
23. If you are a citizen of the UK or have multiple citizenships, take a step forward.
24. If you ever felt passed over for a job/career opportunity because of your ethnicity or gender, take one step back.
25. If your body weight/ shape/ height has been the subject of discussion or commented upon, take a step back.

DISCUSSION POINTS:

1. Why did the participants get dispersed even though they had started at the same point?
2. What were the various bases of differences and discrimination in the exercise? How do these differences manifest in different participants?
3. Explain the non-binary and dynamic understanding of vulnerabilities, disadvantages and privileges- i.e. how individuals may be at an advantage on one basis but at a disadvantage on another basis – and how advantages accumulate over life-cycle and along a particular basis – race, caste, class, religion, age, abilities etc.

⁷ Developed from prior experience of gender and sexuality rights trainings and by adapting the following resources: Buzzfeed video resource on privilege walk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hD5f8GuNuGO> & Khanna R. et al. 2020. Gendered Research in Health. A training manual. SAHAJ, WOHRAC, WSRC, University of Baroda.