WGH Chapters: Interest Guide

Updated May 2022
Hello and Greetings from WGH,

Thank you for your interest in establishing a Women in Global Health chapter. WGH is an organization built on a global movement with the largest network of women and allies working to challenge power and privilege for gender equity in health. It is a US 501(c)(3) started in 2015 and has grown to include over 50,000 supporters in 90 countries and has 40 official chapters, with a majority in low-and middle-income countries. The global team and its network of chapters drive change by mobilizing a diverse group of emerging women health leaders, by advocating to existing global health leaders to commit to transform their own institutions, and by holding these leaders accountable.

WGH works with global health organizations to encourage stakeholders from UN agencies and other multilateral organizations, governments, civil society, foundations, academia and professional associations, and the private sector to achieve gender equality in global health leadership through their spheres of influence.

This document is intended to give you an overview of the WGH chapter development process: Background, Vision, How to Start a Chapter, Chapter Responsibilities and more. You can learn more about our existing chapters at our website.

If chapter development seems right for you after reviewing this document, please let our Chapter Development Team know – membership@womeningh.org – so we can note your interest and let you know if there are any other interested groups in your country.

Sincerely,

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Interested in Forming a Women in Global Health Chapter? Learn more about us!

Women in Global Health (WGH) is an organization built on a global movement with the largest network of women and allies working to challenge power and privilege for gender equity in health. It is a US 501(c)(3) started in 2015, which has grown to include over 70,000 supporters in 90 countries and has 40 official chapters, with a strong presence in low-and middle-income countries. The global team and its network of chapters drive change by mobilizing a diverse group of emerging women health leaders, by advocating to existing global health leaders to commit to transform their own institutions, and by holding these leaders accountable. Together with the World Health Organization, WGH jointly co-chairs the Gender Equity Hub for the Global Health Workforce Network, working with partners to catalyze gender equity and gender transformative change in the health workforce.

WGH chapters have been established in Australia, Bangladesh, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Côte d’Ivoire, Egypt, Finland, Germany, Guinea, India, Ireland, Kenya, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Portugal, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Togo, Uganda, UK, USA, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. WGH also has the following regional affiliates: Africa Hub, European Chapters Initiative, Francophone West Africa Regional Initiative, and Latin America Hub.

Our Global Movement
WGH was launched as an informal virtual network in 2015. The Co-founders were early career women working in global health, including our Executive Director, Dr. Roopa Dhatt. Within two years, the founders decided to formalize the organization to provide a firm foundation for a fast growing global movement. In particular, we listened to women all over the world who wanted to form nation-level chapters linking global advocacy with national experience and establishing a network to share knowledge to strengthen global health.

In November 2017, WGH registered as a non-profit in the US, however, we are a global network and international organization. It is our goal to support the launch of 50 WGH chapters by 2022, with 70% in low-middle income countries (LMICs) elevating the voices of women and highlighting on a global level the perspectives and experiences of those who are underrepresented, particularly women from low-income countries.
WGH began with three chapters in Europe. WGH Germany was the first national chapter and was launched in January of 2018 in Berlin. The launch, hosted by the Ministry of Health and Development Agency, was attended by over 100 individuals. Organized by a core team of 10, with Patron Professor Ilona Kickbusch and Founder Dr. Sabine Ludwig, the chapter held quarterly meetings, an annual summit, and meet and greets during their first year. In November 2018, WGH Norway was launched and WGH Sweden launched in January 2019.

What have WGH Chapters accomplished?

WGH Chapters around the world have made tremendous progress in achieving gender transformative policies in the health and care sectors. Our chapters launched several unique advocacy and communications campaigns in the past year.

- WGH Australia, WGH South Africa and WGH UK launched in 2021
- WGH Cameroon organized community level COVID-19 public health awareness activities and personal protective equipment drives in March 2020 at the start of the pandemic. During the pandemic, the chapter initiated the COVID-19 Sheroes social media campaign that increased visibility and recognition of women frontline health workers in Cameroon.
WGH India participated in WGH’s COVID 50/50 campaign and rolled out a 14-part virtual dialogue series to amplify the voices and concerns of various cadres of frontline health workers and women on the community level during COVID-19. In focusing on India’s ASHA workers and issues of unpaid and underpaid workers, WGH India not only showcased the commitment and leadership of women community leaders, but also bridged conversations with key policymakers and stakeholders involved in the health care decision-making process.

In 2020, WGH Somalia advocated and campaigned for gender equity and diversity in COVID-19 task forces to the Ministry of Health. They were featured in NPR for their success in convening local civil society organizations to persuade the Somali government to collect sex-disaggregated COVID-19 data at the country level.

WGH Chile also mobilized during the COVID-19 pandemic to collaborate with a group of 150 civil society leaders and work with the President of the Senate to support legislation for health workers to receive a bonus from the government. In 2020, the government committed to establishing the “Special COVID-19 Health Emergency Bonus.”

WGH chapter members have taken up various global leadership roles such as Editorial Board Members of PLOS Global Public Health and serving on the Gavi CSO steering committee.

WGH Nigeria influenced two major health technology organisations to include gender as an essential part of their leadership initiative.

In April 2020, WGH Finland organized a webinar, “COVID-19 DECODED” that explored the gendered impacts of the pandemic that had quickly taken pace globally. The chapter also procured seed funding from the Finnish Cultural Society, and signed a memorandum of understanding with the UN Technology and Innovation Lab (UNTIL) to undertake further activities that support the COVID 50/50 Campaign and further women’s leadership in global health.
WGH Sweden established the Covid 50-50 taskforce and integrated COVID-19 work with the Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights consortium established in October 2020. The chapter also developed a video interviewing nurses and midwives on their experiences of working in a pandemic.

In 2020, WGH Zambia convened a meet and greet which brought together stakeholders from civil society, including women’s organizations, academia, and high-level speakers from the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Gender, among others. This was a significant event for the chapter, as gendered issues during COVID-19 were brought front and center to health decision-makers in the country.

WGH Portugal moderated a panel meeting about Strengthening the EU role on Global health organized by the Portuguese Health Ministry at the Global Health Conference in March 2021.

WGH China launched a paper on the health and wellbeing of women leaders in China in a conference in April 2021.
What are the benefits of a WGH chapter?

Creating a WGH Chapter has many benefits, as you become a member of an established global organization and movement. These benefits include:

- An opportunity, as part of a vibrant global movement, to influence health decision-making at national and global levels,
- A platform to connect with women in global health in your community and identify opportunities to advance women’s leadership and gender equality.
- An opportunity to bring visibility and recognition to women shaping global health programming, policy, and advocacy in your community.
- The support of like-minded women committed to working for positive change in health.
- New connections across issues and organizations working in global health in your community and globally.
- Raising awareness to global health decision-making about the realities for women in global health from your perspective and having dialogues on gender, diversity, intersectionality, and power relations.
- Advancing gender transformative leadership in global health organizations in your community.
- Fostering exchange of knowledge and learning across diverse backgrounds - age, geography, race, discipline and other identities.
- Gaining skills and expertise to practice gender transformative leadership, and apply a power and privilege lens in global health.
- Collaborating with other WGH chapters to building the global WGH movement for collective action to achieve gender equality in global health leadership and therefore, better global health.
WGH Chapter Development Process

**INITIATION**
- Form a core group and define objectives
- Review initiation documents*
- Complete Chapter Interest Survey
- Connect with WGH
- Complete Chapter Application

**FORMALIZATION**
- Sign MOU
- Receive Chapter Development Toolkit
- Receive Chapter Comms Toolkit and branding resources
- Connect with WGH to plan next steps

**STRATEGIC PLANNING**
- Needs Assessment
- Review initiation Stakeholder Mapping
- Complete Chapter Mobilizing resources
- Identifying advisors
- Seeking a host institution

**START UP ACTIVITIES**
- Create a list of Women Leaders in Health in your country
- Paper on the Status of Women in Global Health in your country
- Membership drives and continued member engagement
- Thought leadership events
- Attend WGH monthly town hall meetings and bi-annual retreats
- Launch event

* WGH Chapter Manifesto, Business and Industry Guidelines and the Gender Transformative Leadership Brief
The Process

To establish a WGH chapter, you must first go through the chapter development process, as outlined in the graphic above. WGH does not provide funding for chapter formation, however, we do provide micro-grants for some of our established chapters based on specific advocacy issues and geographical match. Chapters are formed based on geographical communities (based on country and occasional sub-national and sub regional levels). Chapters are not formed based on special interests, areas of specialization, language, cultural, or other identity groups at this time. Below is a checklist that will serve to guide you through our chapter development process.

Checklist

1. Learn more about Women in Global Health
   - Check out our About Us
   - Learn more about Gender Transformative Leadership
   - Read about WGH’s first chapter - WGH Germany

2. Ensure there is no WGH National Chapter in your country
   - If there is an existing chapter, work towards uniting to make one national chapter (Exceptions are made on a case by case basis)

3. Invite at least 4 - 5 Members to Form an Interest Group
   - A sustainable WGH chapter begins with a strong core interest group and a host secretariat. Possible interest group members should share a passion for gender equity and are prominent in the global health landscape. We require an intergenerational, multi-disciplinary interest group.
   - Use our WGH Chapter Starter Kit to sensitize key leaders and get their support
   - Brainstorm with your interest group core objectives and strategic goals, as well as tangible outputs for the next year

4. Review our Business and Industry Guidelines

5. Review the Chapter Manifesto, which should be shared with all potential chapter members before they sign up

Communicate Interest to WGH Chapter Development Team (membership@womeningh.org) with the names, expertise, affiliated institutions, sector representation and contact information of the interest group members to receive preliminary feedback from WGH
- Develop Communication Channels with Interest Group Members
  - Collect email addresses from each interest group member
  - Choose the best form of communication for the interest group’s future meetings and ideas during the preparation for chapter development (WhatsApp, Email, Slack, etc.)

- Schedule 1st Interest Group Meeting after Approval from WGH on the Interest Group Members
  - Topics to Discuss During this 1st Meeting:
    - Understanding the WGH mission and its connection with impacting the local country context of gender equity health
    - Possible ways to engage as a chapter with WGH policy issues and fund sustainable chapter activities
    - Identifying a host institution.

- Complete the [WGH Chapter Interest Survey](#) and [WGH Chapter Application](#)

**After submitting an application, what happens next?**

After you and your interest group submit the chapter application, WGH and the Chapter Development team will review the application and evaluate if your group is ready to sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and formalize your WGH community by entering the incubation phase, giving your chapter 12 - 18 months to become an official chapter. After signing the MOU, your group will have access to additional support, including WGH branding, support from WGH advisors and board members, the international WGH network and other WGH chapters, and other advocacy opportunities. The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) segment in this document describes the phases in chapter development.
Chapter Responsibilities

1. To support and further the global mission of WGH in their country
2. To offer expertise and time to build and strengthen the movement.
3. To support WGH campaigns at the country level.
4. To adhere to WGH regulations, including the Business and Industry Guidelines. WGH chapters must follow WGH guidance on industries no chapter can take money, resources from, or partner with. WGH’s reputation rests on each chapter and what WGH does and vice versa. This applies specifically in relation to WGH’s collaboration with other global actors.
5. Support WGH global in the translation of global materials and publications into their national language as appropriate.
6. Create, support, and engage a national community of women in health, which includes hosting quarterly activities, creating and maintaining a national list of women in health,
7. and one annual in-person event, to which WGH is invited.
8. Collate local interest in WGH into one national chapter. The sub-national structure is to be determined by the chapter, while adhering to WGH values. WGH will interface with only one national chapter, with the exception of disputed territories.
9. Coordinate all fundraising with the WGH Global Secretariat. National fundraising efforts must be shared with the WGH Global Secretariat.
**Chapter Development FAQs**

**Q1: How do I start a chapter?**

The first step is to contact us at membership@womeningh.org. If there are other people in the same country that have expressed interest, WGH will link you up with them so that you can work on the chapter application process together. If not, we encourage you to identify 3 or 4 other individuals so that you can form an interest group then follow the steps as listed in this checklist.

**Q2: Can I get in contact with other already formed chapters so I can learn from them?**

Yes, and we can assist you with that. Our Chapter Development Team can help guide you in contacting WGH chapters to form an amazing chapter for your country! After submitting an application, WGH facilitates informational sessions, monthly town hall meetings and biannual retreats. Existing WGH chapters also provide mentorship to chapters that are starting out and the WGH team can facilitate connecting your chapter to an existing chapter. Lastly, WGH chapters also collaborate at regional levels. Once a chapter has been established and is in incubation, they shall be linked to the closest regional affiliate.

**Q3: Will I receive starting funds from WGH?**

Unfortunately, at this time, WGH does not have any funds to support chapter formation. WGH is however actively pursuing fundraising opportunities to be able to issue microgrants to chapters. Make sure to coordinate all fundraising, including in-kind contributions, with the WGH team.

**Q4: Do I need to report back to WGH?**

Yes. Each chapter will be responsible for submitting a bi-annual report that includes chapter updates, chapter progression, initiatives, and events/activities. We also ask you to update our events calendar monthly and keep us updated for features in our social media platforms quarterly.

**Q5: Can organizations be members of WGH Chapters?**

No. Members in WGH Chapters are individual representatives and are not representing employers or other organization
Q5: What are the different phases in forming a chapter that I need to be aware of?

The different phases are described in the image below. There are several phases in the chapter development process. After signing the MOU, new chapters get into the incubation phases which can last up to 18 months. WGH acknowledges that this is not a linear process for all chapters in their development. Some chapters may achieve progress in other stages earlier on. Some of these processes may be undertaken at the same time as well.

**Stage 1: 1-3 months**
- Signed MOU & access to WGH email address
- Receive chapter development toolkit and chapter communications toolkit
- Complete Needs Assessment Questionnaire
- Complete Stakeholder Mapping
- Expand Governance Structure

**Stage 2: 3-6 months**
- Begin Social Media Outreach from WGH Chapter handle
- Recruit & contextualize Stakeholders
- Analyze Needs Assessment Questionnaire
- Begin research on policy issues & resource mobilization strategies
- Begin identifying host institution

**Stage 3: 6-9 months**
- Continue Social Media Outreach
- Begin initial plans for launch event during stage four
- Continue & redefine research on policy issues & mobilization strategies

**Stage 4: 9-12 months**
- Complete Chapter launch event
- Recruit & educate Chapter members on WGH goals
- Finalize list of women leaders in local country
- Redefine policies & goals
- Begin to Build Membership Database

**Stage 5: >12 months**
- Well-Established Governance Structure with Term Limits for Leadership
- Board of Stakeholders & Advisors Participating in WGH Advocacy Campaigns
- Consistent & Reliable Communication Channels within WGH Chapter
- Sustainable Resource Mobilization Strategies to Receive Independent Funding
- Communication with 100 Members on the WGH Chapter Mailing List through Quarterly Newsletters
- Host at least 4 Formal WGH Chapter Activities Each Year
- Attend the Monthly WGH Chapter Townhall and bi-annual Chapter Retreats
- Members of the WGH WhatsApp Chapter & Extended Community Group
- Develop an Annual Report of Member Engagement, Chapter Activities, and Chapter Impact
Q6: How many members do I need to start a chapter?

We encourage an interest group to have at least 4 to 5 members, however, there is no limit as to how many members a chapter can have. The core principle in creating a chapter relies on connecting with other individuals from a variety of institutions and sectors who are passionate about creating gender transformative leadership in your country. We encourage chapters to have intergenerational representation in membership; senior career women and engaging students and young professionals. Membership should also be open to multidisciplinary health and care workers including, academia, NGOs, health worker organizations (Community Health Workers, Nurses, Pharmacists, Dentists, Midwives, Physicians), youth/students, government and policy makers, researchers and private sector.

Members of chapters can also be from diaspora e.g. a German National living in Switzerland can be part of Both the German and Switzerland Chapter

Q7: Are there any restrictions on fundraising for WGH Chapters?

WGH Chapters cannot solicit funds, resources, or partner with organizations that are in violation of WGH’s Business and Industry guidelines. All fundraising and mobilizing resources via donations, grants, and other revenue streams must be coordinated with WGH.

WGH will not accept support from organizations that:

- manufacture or distribute products widely recognized as harmful to public health, and to people, or against public morals – such as tobacco, arms and munitions;
- abuse human rights and women’s rights;
- abuse animal rights;
- use systematic and sustained forced or compulsory labour or child labour;
- are involved in corrupt or environmentally damaging practices.

In May 2021, WGH signed a memorandum of understanding with the World Health Organization. We adhere to the restricted guidelines to be able to maintain our relationship and create opportunities for our chapters as a result.

Q8: Can WGH Chapters have their national secretariats hosted by other organizations?

Yes, we encourage this, especially to mobilize resources, establish continuity, and create sustainability for your WGH chapter. Host organizations should be included in the MoU process and agree with the values of the WGH global movement.
Further Questions?

Contact us at:

membership@womeningh.org
info@womeningh.org
www.womeningh.org