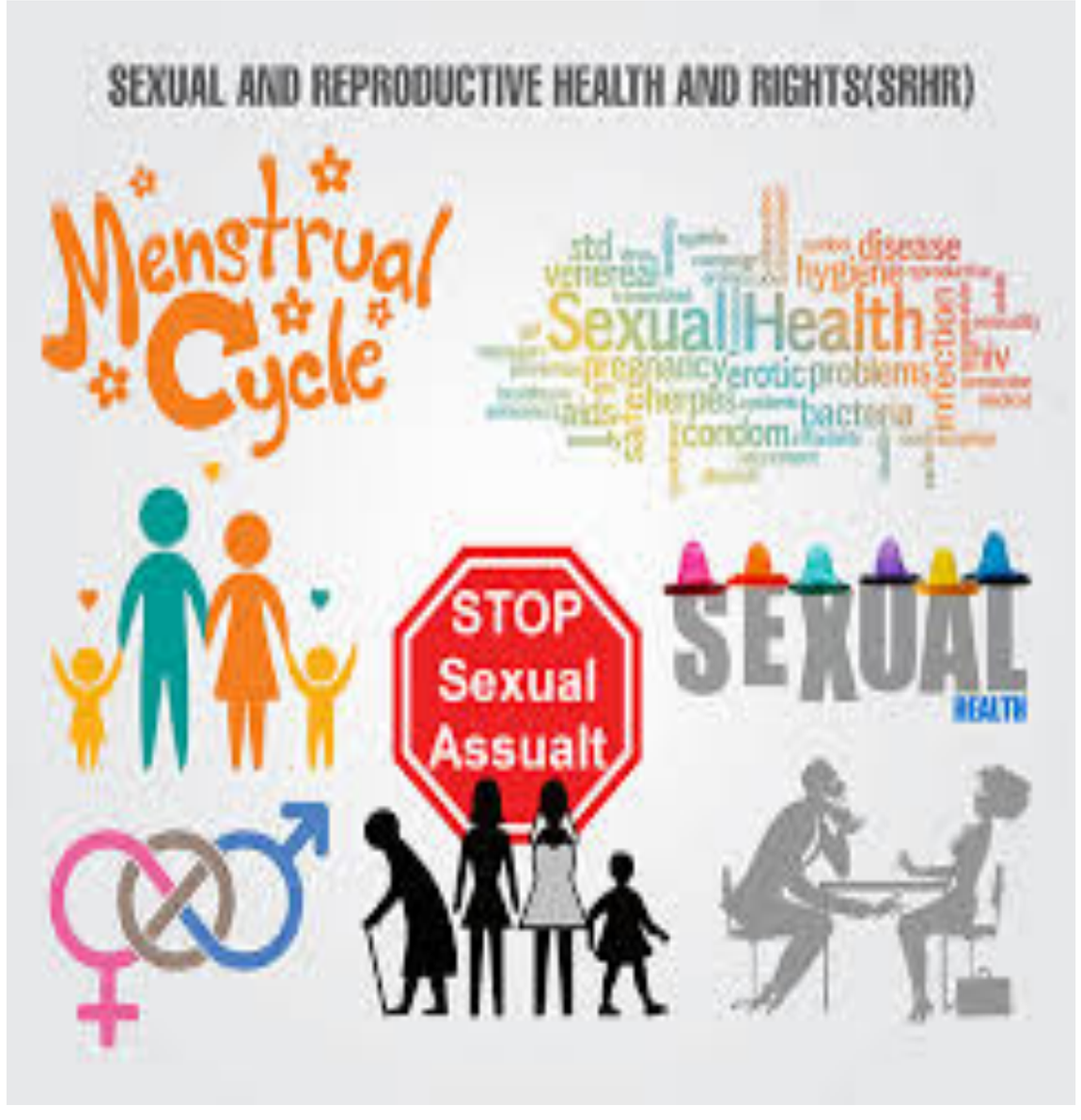
IAMCR 2019 Madrid - *Gender, health communications and online activism in the digital age* – funded by the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF)

Dr. Carolina Matos

Senior lecturer in Media and Sociology

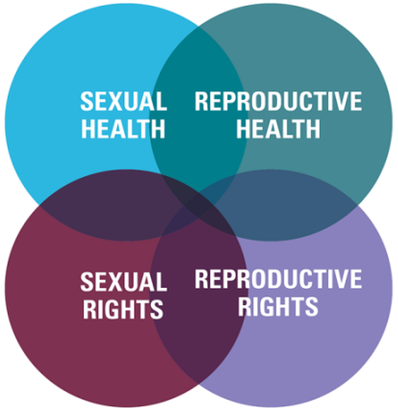
Department of Sociology

E-mail: Carolina.Matos.1@city.ac.uk



GUTTMACHER INSTITUTE

1 Sexual and reproductive health and rights must encompass four distinct and intersecting components



Source: Guttmacher-*Lancet* Commission.

gu.tt/ATimeToLead ©2018

CHANGE
CENTER FOR HEALTH AND GENDER EQUITY

BREAK BARRIERS WITH CHANGE.

CHANGE advances **gender equality** and the **empowerment** of all women and girls by promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights. We do this by elevating women's voices to influence public discourse and policy so women and girls can:

- Live free from illness and preventable disease
- Live free from violence
- Choose if and when to have sexual relations, and with whom
- Decide if, when, and whom to marry
- Plan if, when, and under what circumstances to have children
- Attend school and send their children to school
- Expand their economic opportunities
- Engage in the political process and public service

THERE'S NO STOPPING CHANGE.

ADVOCACY:
CHANGE is committed to being a bold and outspoken advocate for the development and implementation of laws and policies that affect the health and rights of women and girls globally. And, we are dedicated to working with women from across the globe to lift up their voices so they can help shape the policies that impact their lives and communities.

ACCOUNTABILITY:
Research and analysis are powerful tools that allow us to inform and hold the U.S. government accountable for its global commitments and for the impact its policies and funding decisions have on the health and rights of women and girls. CHANGE publishes our analyses to help empower advocates from around the world and inform policy discussions and development.

COMMUNICATIONS:
Strategic communications is the cornerstone of our ability to shape public discourse and influence key audiences including the media, opinion leaders, policy makers, organizations, advocates, and foundations. Communications creates additional spaces for our global partners to share their stories and is critical to advancing the message that sexual and reproductive health and rights are essential to empowering women and girls globally.

PARTNERSHIPS:
At CHANGE we unite in action with others to influence discourse on women's health and rights by bringing together thought leaders, policy makers, organizations, and advocates across sectors to explore emerging issues, identify common ground, and formulate collective strategies. Whether it's through public briefings, roundtables or trainings, we know that the more we work together the more quickly we can break barriers to achieve change for women and girls around the world.

AND CHANGE GETS RESULTS.
Our policy advocacy has led to:

- $500 million in U.S. government funding for HIV prevention among young women and adolescent girls.
- More than 100 Members of Congress calling for U.S. support for abortion access for women and girls raped in conflict.
- The U.S. government officially recognizing sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Women leaders from across Africa crafting an agenda and vision for HIV prevention designed by women for women.

IT'S ALL ABOUT RIGHTS.
WOMEN'S RIGHTS HUMAN RIGHTS REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS SEXUAL RIGHTS

For more information on how to Break Barriers with CHANGE go to
www.genderhealth.org

Gender, communications and development

- Development seen as economic development, the invisibility of women and WID
- GAD and feminist critiques to mainstream development discourse (i.e. Harcourt, 2009; Mohanty, 1991, 2000; Wilkins, 2016)
- Understanding of development and communications as *discourse* (Wilkins, 2016)
- Building bridges between the North and the South around gender equality and SRHR:
- - "*Voices that are pushing for gender equality are coming from the South*" (Erin Williams, Global Fund Women)

NGOs and communications for advocacy and social change

- Growing research into NGOs and journalism, and how social media (and online communications) are changing *the visibility of advocacy* (i.e. McPherson, 2017; Powers, 2017)
- NGOs compete for funds and media publicity
- **Role of NGOs in development**, and the "Northern" versus "Southern" NGOs (
- Alvarez (2009) on the paradox of NGO's (i.e. *NGO-ization*) – "vast constellation of knowledge products generated by NGOs" (i.e. "*the communicative webs*")
- **Power dynamics, limits of use and access to digital technologies -** i.e. online inequalities between organisations, as well as publics and their capacity to access information and communication technologies on SRHR as well as quality health services

Rethinking global health communications: theoretical and empirical challenges

- Health communications and need to address more issues of power inequalities, and gender
- Critical perspectives have questioned the *behaviourist tradition* and the neglect of power (Zoller and Kline, 2008, in Waisbord and Obregon, 2012, 21), asking for more qualitative and in depth methods and studies which can examine how societies understand health, and how inequalities are formed
- **Shortcomings in the field:**
- "most health communications interventions do not target issues of power inequality, gender relations, sexual and reproductive rights…" (Tufte, 2012, 618)
- **Contributions**: Feminist perspectives on health communications, multidisciplinary mixed methods research

Methodology

- 1) Content and discourse analysis of institutional websites and the social media engagement of a total of 53 health and feminist NGOs (non-profit organizations), from US, Europe, India to Brazil;
- 2) In depth interviews with the gender experts and NGO CEOs;
- 3) Application of questionnaire to the communications director of the organizations;
- 4) Use of secondary data (i.e. WHO and UNFPA) on SRHR, following 25th anniversary of the 1994 ICPD conference
- **Research questions:**
- *1) How can online communications be used for advocacy on SRHR?; 2) How are health and feminist NGOs and networks making use of communication tools? and 3) What are the communication strategies used, and what are the challenges that NGOs face in advocating for SRHR?*

Sample list of NGOs health, gender and SRHR

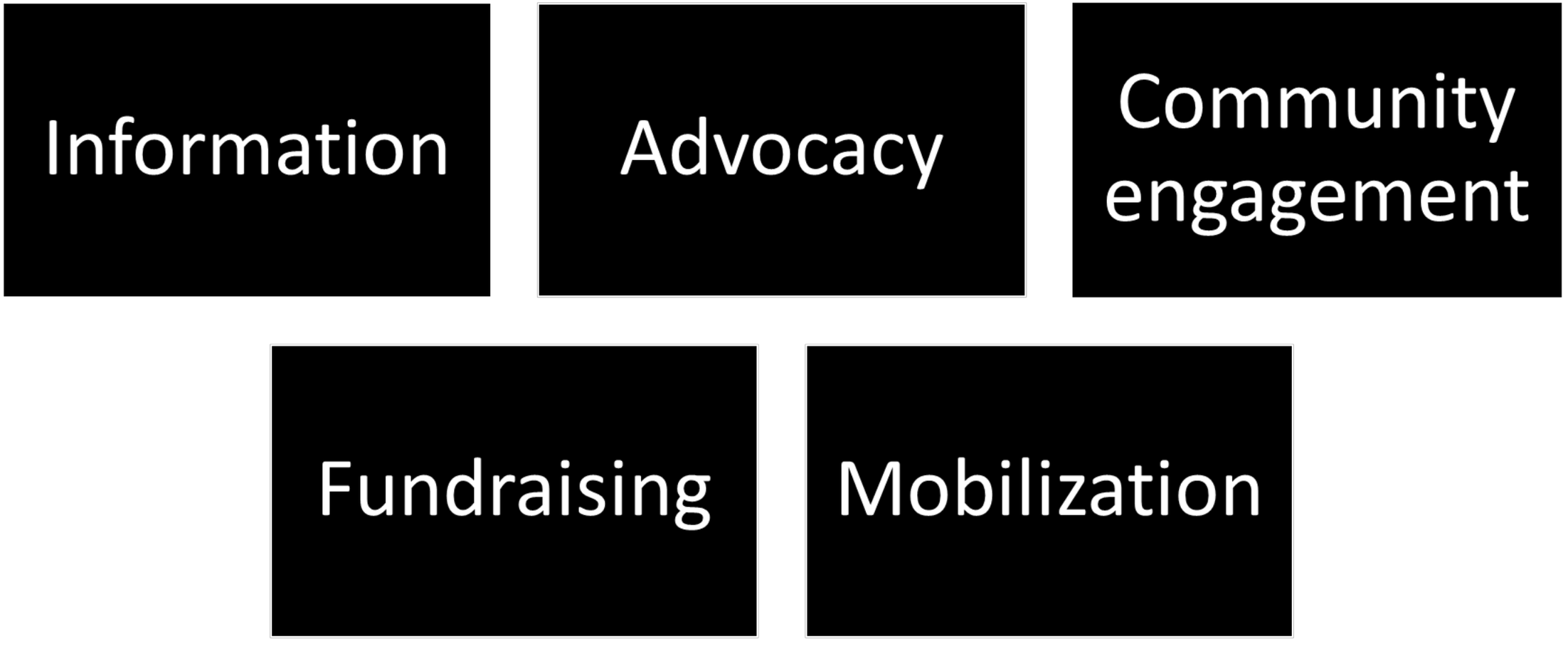
Asap
Swasti
IAW (International Alliance of Women)
You Act
Global Fund for Women
Safe Abortion Women's Rights
Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters
Ibis Reproductive Health
Care International UK
Amnesty International UK
Centre for Health and Gender Equality (Change)
Anis
Sos Corpo
Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights
Rede Feminista de Saúde, Direitos Sexuais e Reprodutivos
Family Planning 2020
Promsex - Centro de Promocion y Defensa de los Derechos Sexuales y reprodutivos
Crea India
Inspire Euro NGOs
Reprolatina
Católicos pelo Direito de Decidir
Ações Afirmativas em Direitos e Saude
CLADEM

Content and discourse analysis

© Can Stock Photo - csp11807487

- **Codebook -** (Data collected – March -June 2019)
- **Content analysis** of the institutional websites, including features, technical characteristics and graphic design;
- Analysis of presence in social media networks, through the examination of the NGOs communicative material on *Facebook* and *Twitter*
- **Discourse analysis** of a selected sample of communicative material from the organizations
- **Total tweets:** 1.505 (Asia, 358, Europe, 265, International, 34, Latin America, 327 and USA, 521)
- **Total Facebook posts**: 741 (Asia, 104, Europe, 161, International, 16, Latin America, 298 and USA,, 162).
- *** Social media engagement period examined**: March 25 – 7 April 2019
- **Partners**: IESP-UERJ RJ (Brasil), Centre for Internet and Society (India)
- **PhD research student assistance**: Aline Carvalho, Alessandra Brigo, Ambika Tandon and Tatiane Leal

Codebook


Information
Advocacy
Community engagement
Fundraising
Mobilization

Codebook

Features	Facebook	Youtube	Twitter	Emails	Instagram	Videos	Podcasts	Blogs	Forums
AADS	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Amnesty	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
Anis	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Asap	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
Care UK	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
Change	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0
CLADEM	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Crea India	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
FP2020	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0
Global	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
IAW	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Ibis	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
SRHM	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
You Act	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0

In depth interviews and communication questionnaires

- **In depth interviews** with CEOs and gender experts, combined with application of small survey questionnaire to communication heads of the organizations
- Sensitive to the diversity of the approaches to the topic in different countries, the gender questionnaire provided scope for the interviewer to apply asset of relevant questions to the local context, as well as taking into consideration the expertise of the interviewees
- Questions permitted flexibility and adaptability, covering a range of topics around advocacy on SRHR.
- **Communications questionnaires –** the questionnaire sheet sought to examine their communications strategies, further asking these organisations to assess their own online and offline communication activities. There were also questions about their website features and forms of communications, probing into their preferences and decisions, in contrast to offline activities
- Opportunities provided for these organisations to examine how communications was used for SRHR, and how messages and content can be improved

Samples of discourse analysis

Safe Abortion
@Safe_Abortion

Seguir

In #Mexico President #Obrador wants a referendum on #abortion, but (women) rights are not the subject of personal opinion! #aborto
Read more: safeabortionwomensright.org/mexico-preside…

Fonte: https://twitter.com/Safe_Abortion/status/111[illegible]311754752

10:00 - 1 de abr de 2019

2 Retweets **5** Curtidas

Promsex
@promsex

Seguir

Desde @promsex en su momento solicitamos al @Minsa_Peru que informe sobre la difusión del protocolo de #abortoterapéutico. En febrero respondieron que "su implementación ha sido lenta debido a múltiples factores". #NiñasNoMadres

Traduzir Tweet

[illegible]:[illegible] - 28 de mar de 2019

Samples of discourse analysis

Family Planning 2020
@FP2020Global

Seguir

Driving health service access equity is a key contributor to #UHC. #CHWs deliver health care in the community, ensuring equitable access to health to those that are out-of-reach of traditional health facilities. #WHWWeek

Traduzir Tweet

14:30 - 7 de abr de 2019

4 Retweets **9** Curtidas

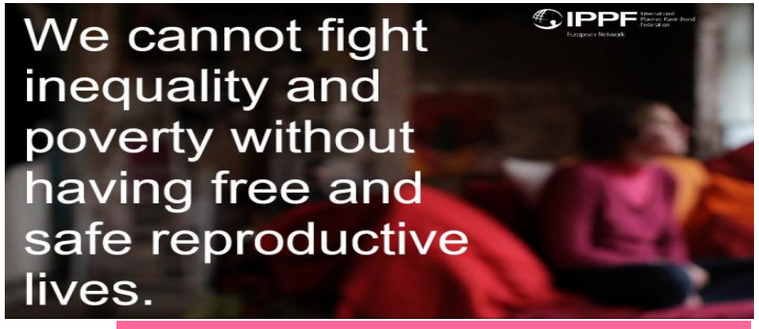
4 9

Anis - Instituto de Bioética
5 de abril ·

"Eu não sei como eu devo fazer, se devo gravar, se devo escrever. O jeito que eu escrevo aqui no Whatsapp é meio linha a linha, eu acho que você vai ter que ter paciência. Eu queria que você contasse a minha história também linha a linha, do jeito que eu estou te escrevendo. Isso foi em 1992, eu não posso gravar para você porque ninguém aqui na minha casa pode ouvir. Eu quero muito participar da campanha, mas a minha condição é essa: eu quero que você conte a minha história I...
Continuar lendo

70 4 comentários 12 compartilhamentos

Curtir Comentar Compartilhar



Quotes from interviews

- *"Yeah, that is definitely a challenge that we are facing and we have talked a lot through our re-brand, to make sexual and reproductive health and rights more accessible to the general public……what I have been trying to do since my time is to try to break down how we communicate with our topics in our way which is plain language.. ……*

…..Just I think you share the same thought that communications plays a vital role in making SRHR a more understandable topic, and creating more awareness around it, and then converting that awareness into activism."

Abigail Fredenburg, communications director of *Centre for Health and Gender Equity* (Change, US)

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS (SRHR)

CHANGE

CENTER FOR HEALTH AND GENDER EQUITY

Celebrating 25 years 1994-2019 25 years

Quotes from interviews

- *"….we need to go back to the understand the meaning of the words. Basically every word has meaning, and we need to go back, in order to understand the language, in order to understand the message that is being used by right groups, and then we need to go back to understand the language and in order to do that, we need do an exercise in de-constructing that message, to understand that message, and then we need to re-construct it in order to construct a message that is understood by the public…. Gender identity does not exist. If we keep repeating it to the public that it exists it is like we are telling them that it exists, it is not correct….Because the word gender itself, it is gender identity or equality, and we can spend an entire day trying to see what this is, what is gender equality, etc. gender is a word that means so much and has been used in so many contexts… In the last two years we have learned this, how we need to send those messages that are being used in order to move back the rights agenda, we need to take those messages, de-construct, repackage it and go back to governments and the champions of rights….. That is very interesting, that is why, you know Brazil, Bolsonaro and the conservative groups were supportive of that campaign, using the words that we have seen used in the US also. The big discussion is about gender, so every political movement in Latin America totally uses the word "gender", "abortion" and "reproductive health and rights". That is in the middle of the political discussion in every single country in the regio*n…"
- Alvaro Serrano, regional communication adviser for Latin America and the Caribbean, of the UNPFA (United Nations Population Fund)
-

ome conclusions and future challenges

* Beyond individual and neoliberal notions of empowement, women within development as active agents of change and not "reproductive bodies" or "victims of oppression"

* Necessity for communications to be embedded in the whole advocacy and policy process

* Need to adopt new communication strategies and commitments to use media communication tools creatively

* Inequalities of communication strategies and practices, and limits of online communications

•"**Development as discourse**" - Better use of *language and discourses* to influence public debate – the need to *de-construct* certain terminologies and rebuild the *conversation* around gender equality (and SRHR)

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City, University of London
Northampton Square
London
EC1V 0HB
United Kingdom

T: +44 (0)20 7040 5060
E: department@city.ac.uk
www.city.ac.uk/department