



**World Organisation
for Animal Health**
Founded as OIE

World Café on Gender

Hosted by the WOAHP Gender Task Force

22 May 2023 / 17h00 – 18h30

Maison de la Chimie, Paris, France

90th WOAHP General Session

Contents

Executive summary.....	3
Purpose and goals	4
Participants	4
WOAH Gender Task Force	4
Methodology	4
Results of conversations	5
Question 1 - What are some of the current challenges facing women in the veterinary domain? Why is achieving gender equality in this domain important?	5
Question 2 - What would a gender-balanced veterinary domain look like?	6
Question 3 - How can we – as WOAH and national Veterinary Services – help create conditions so that women in the animal health sector can achieve their full potential?.....	7
Plenary discussion	8
Next steps	8
Evaluation and participant feedback	10
Annexes	11
Annex 1: General Session Side Event announcement	11
Annex 2: Photos	12

Executive summary

WOAH's first ever World Café on Gender brought together 30 participants, including Delegates, representatives from national governments, NGOs/civil society, and WOAH staff, to discuss the role of gender in the animal health and veterinary domain. Held on the sidelines of the 90th General Session, the purpose of the World Café was to collect ideas, understand advancements in the gender agenda, and raise awareness of inclusion and empowerment in the sector. The event followed a participatory World Café methodology, where participants engaged in three rounds of discussions, sharing insights on challenges faced by women in the veterinary domain, envisioning a gender-balanced veterinary industry, and exploring ways to create conditions for women to achieve their full potential in the sector. Key outcomes included the identification of challenges such as gender disparities in recognition, limited access to leadership roles, and work-life balance issues. The importance of achieving gender equality was highlighted, emphasising equal representation, improved working conditions, and the need to break down stereotypes.

The World Café event was facilitated by WOAH staff, particularly the Gender Task Force, which was established to enhance the Organisation's understanding of gender and develop strategies to address gender-related issues. The discussions generated valuable insights that will inform WOAH's approach to gender. Next steps involve utilising the outputs to shape organisational policies, considering similar events at regional workshops or conferences in different languages, and taking a leadership role in promoting gender balance and equal opportunities in the veterinary domain. WOAH aims to drive meaningful change, support its Members to create inclusive environments, and empower its stakeholders to thrive professionally in the animal health sector.



Purpose and goals

The World Café, a side event organised during the 90th WOAHA General Session, was WOAHA's first major event specifically focused on the role of gender in the animal health/veterinary domain. It served as a first opportunity for WOAHA to engage with its Membership and stakeholders on this topic.

The stated goals of the session were to:

- Collect ideas on expectations for WOAHA concerning gender (links with mandate) and what the Organisation should be doing on this topic
- Understand how other organisations/governments have advanced the gender agenda
- Raise awareness of the importance of inclusion/empowerment of women in the animal health and welfare, veterinary, and food safety sectors

The World Café approach intends to be interactive and collaborative, giving all participants a chance to voice their ideas and opinions.

Participants

Participants of the session included Delegates and representatives of national governments, representatives from NGOs/civil society, and WOAHA staff. Thirty (30) participants joined the workshop, including nine men and 21 women (30% / 70%).

The workshop was organised and facilitated by seven WOAHA staff, most of whom are members of WOAHA's Gender Task Force.

WOAHA Gender Task Force

Following a period of internal discussion to develop an appropriate coordination mechanism and scope of work in 2020-21, in December 2021 WOAHA launched its Gender Task Force (GTF), composed of 24 staff working across departments at WOAHA Headquarters and regional offices, to inform how WOAHA understands gender across its mandate. Terms of Reference (TORs) for the group were validated by the Director General and adopted in December 2021.

Goals of the GTF include:

- Develop better understanding and awareness of how gender affects WOAHA's work (e.g., Data collection, guest speakers, cross-team discussions, sharing results of gender-sensitive work at WOAHA)
- Identify training needs and organise training opportunities to raise WOAHA staff's awareness and engagement on gender issues
- Author a roadmap leading to an institutional Gender Policy to be reflected in the 8th Strategic Plan

Methodology

A World Café is a participatory workshop to facilitate discussion amongst participants and to generate collective ideas for action.

The World Café unfolded in three rounds, with one question posed per round. Tables of 5-6 participants, including one facilitator per table, discussed in small groups. Participants switched

to a new table every round to interact with a maximum number of participants and to cross-pollinate ideas. The table facilitator is responsible for providing a short summary of the discussion from the previous round, and for ensuring that everyone has a chance to contribute to the discussion.

In designing the questions, WOAAH was inspired by an ‘appreciative inquiry’ approach, an organisational approach that aims to build on collaboration and strengths to bring about positive change in a system. WOAAH also took inspiration from a similar World Café undertaken by the International Telecommunications Union in 2012.¹

Dr. Monique Eloit, Director General of WOAAH, joined the session to share remarks on WOAAH’s commitment to introducing a gender lens in its work and to thank participants for their interest and willingness to contribute to this initiative.

Results of conversations

Question 1 - What are some of the current challenges facing women in the veterinary domain? Why is achieving gender equality in this domain important?

Participants identified various challenges faced by women in the veterinary domain. They noted that there are cultural and societal expectations that perpetuate gender disparities. For example, women may encounter limited recognition of their competence/ability in providing care for animals, particularly when working with physically demanding tasks, strong animals, or in remote/difficult-to-reach geographies. Moreover, women often face barriers in accessing leadership positions and decision-making roles within the field. Additionally, challenges such as political manoeuvring favouring men for senior positions, unfavourable work conditions or lack of family-friendly policies, and the expectation to manage homes and work simultaneously can create additional hurdles for women in the veterinary domain. Wage gaps between men and women were discussed, as was the issue of sexual harassment in veterinary schools.

Participants felt that achieving gender equality in the veterinary domain is crucial for several reasons. It promotes equal representation and contributes to a better veterinary workforce. Gender equality ensures that all individuals, regardless of their gender, have equal access to opportunities, jobs, and education within the field. By addressing gender disparities, the working conditions for all professionals can be improved, leading to a more inclusive and supportive environment. Additionally, gender equality helps to break down stereotypes and biases, encouraging anyone to pursue careers and leadership positions in the veterinary domain. This increased gender balance not only brings diverse perspectives and talents to the field but also enables better access to veterinary services for all, as in some cultures or settings women may prefer female veterinarians for certain services. Ultimately, participants felt that achieving gender equality in the veterinary domain would foster fairness, inclusivity, and enhance the overall quality of veterinary care and services provided.

¹ ITU World Café report available for download: <https://www.itu.int/council/C2012/pd/Report-ITU-World-Cafe.docx>

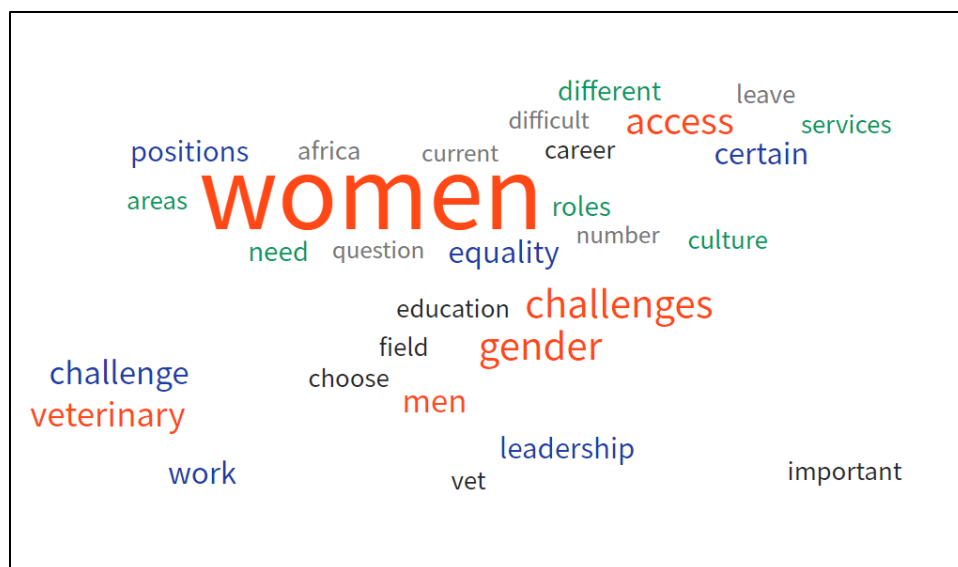


Figure 1: Question 1 cloud of frequently used terms

Question 2 - What would a gender-balanced veterinary domain look like?

Many participants highlighted that a gender-balanced veterinary domain would be characterized by equal representation and opportunities for both men and women at all levels. It would involve a shift in focus from gender to skills, where individuals are recognized and valued based on their abilities rather than their gender. In a gender-balanced veterinary domain, there would be a diverse workforce comprising a balanced number of women and men at all levels and in all regions. Participants mentioned that organisational structures would embrace diversity and foster an inclusive environment where everyone feels empowered and supported, irrespective of their gender.

Many suggested that in a gender-balanced veterinary domain, work-life balance and flexibility would be prioritized, allowing both men and women to have equal time for their families and personal commitments. The domain would accommodate the specific needs of women to ensure that they can thrive professionally without facing unnecessary challenges. Participants highlighted that the challenges faced around gender in the veterinary domain are also challenges faced in society in general. Achieving gender balance would require a change in societal expectations regarding home duties, meaning men and women could balance their work and home responsibilities effectively. Parents would be able to pursue their careers while also fulfilling their family responsibilities.

Ultimately, a gender-balanced veterinary domain would foster an environment where all individuals, regardless of their gender, have equal access to opportunities, resources, and leadership positions. It would promote collaboration, diverse perspectives, and a holistic approach to veterinary services. The domain would celebrate and leverage the skills and contributions of both men and women, leading to a more harmonious, equitable, and successful veterinary industry.

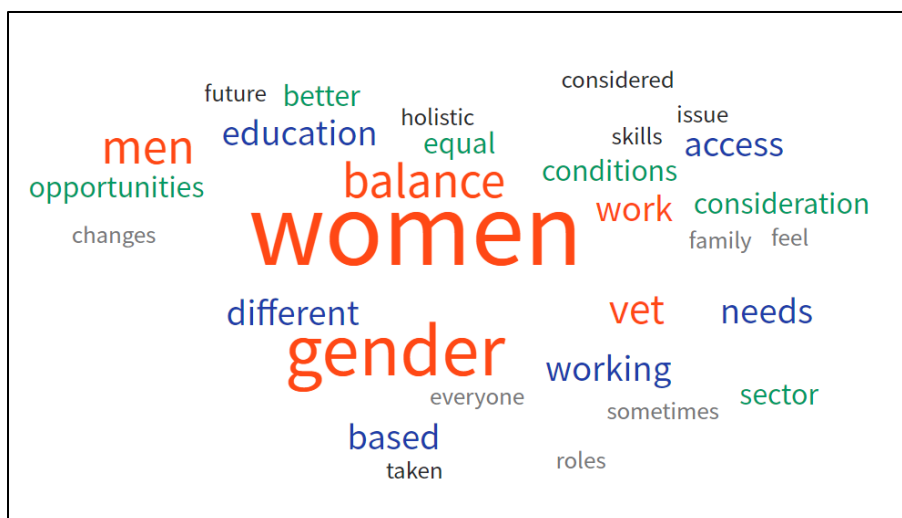


Figure 2: Question 2 cloud of frequently used terms

Question 3 - How can we – as WOA and national Veterinary Services – help create conditions so that women in the animal health sector can achieve their full potential?

Some participants suggested that WOA could play a crucial role in raising awareness and promoting gender balance through targeted programs and initiatives. This could include awareness-raising programs that highlight successful women in leadership positions as role models, as well as storytelling to share success stories and provide technical advice to different regions. WOA could collaborate with other agencies or partners to implement training and education projects to ensure access to quality training for women in the animal health sector. Conducting surveys to gather data on the performance of veterinary services in relation to gender representation could also provide valuable insights for policy-making and decision-making processes.

Participants also felt that National Veterinary Services could take concrete actions to support women in achieving their full potential. Establishing gender policies and improving recruitment procedures with specific measures to address gender balance was identified as a possible solution. Creating favourable working conditions, including provisions for maternity leave and flexible working arrangements, can support career progression and work-life balance. Identifying and addressing the needs and challenges faced by all genders and creating a dynamic framework for their development and advancement can contribute to creating an inclusive and supportive environment. Several participants noted that demographics are changing, particularly in Europe and the Americas: in some countries, there are many more women graduating from veterinary school than men. Thus, the question is not only about reducing barriers for women but making sure that both men and women are supported.

Overall, by working together, WOA and national Veterinary Services can raise awareness, implement supportive policies, provide training opportunities, and create an enabling environment that allows both men and women in the animal health sector to thrive and achieve their full potential.

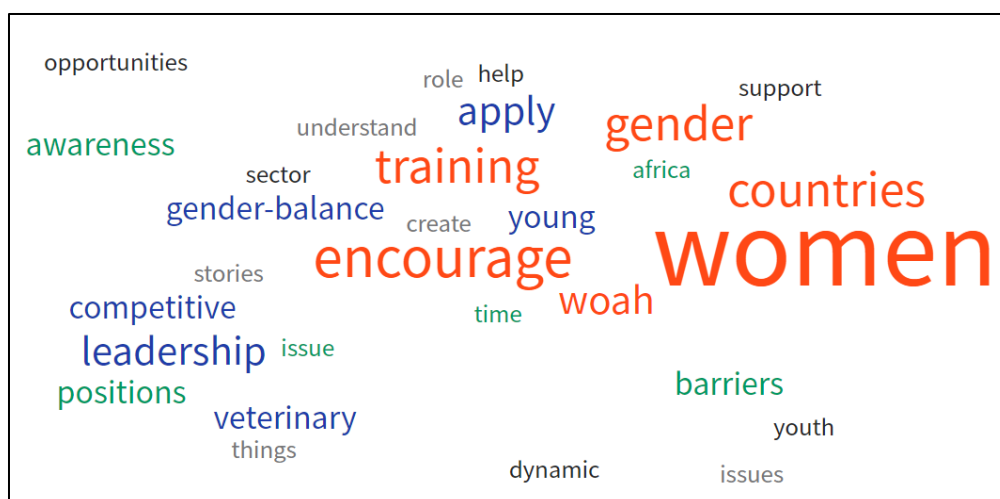


Figure 3: Question 3 cloud of frequently used terms

Plenary discussion

At the end of the workshop, each table was invited to share key takeaways from the discussions, either aloud or via post-it notes. Participants highlighted the importance of:

- identifying and understanding regional- or cultural-specific challenges related to gender
- promoting equitable access to animal health systems through increased representation of women
- developing inclusion frameworks
- investing in awareness-raising initiatives to educate the younger generation
- embracing the role of organisations like WOAHA in advocating for gender equality
- recognising the significance of gender equity and its connection to professional development
- gathering data on gender gaps to inform targeted actions
- integrating gender equality into existing systems
- acknowledging the personal motivations of individuals invested in supporting women's access to opportunities.

Overall, participants emphasized the need for comprehensive efforts at various levels to create conditions that enable women in the animal health sector to achieve their full potential.

Next steps

Outputs from this exercise will be used by the Gender Task Force to inform WOAHA's organisational approach towards gender. WOAHA's mandate is to maintain updated and relevant norms and standards related to animal health and the safe trade of animal products, to protect human populations around the globe. It also supports its Members to improve the quality of Veterinary Services to fulfil their national and global obligations and serves as a global data steward.

When framing its gender approach and strategy, the Gender Task Force recognises that incorporating a gender lens into WOAHA's mandate will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Organisation's work by ensuring that all stakeholders are able to use and benefit from its

activities and interventions. These efforts intersect with the values and objectives of WOA's current 7th Strategic Plan, including the value of diversity, fairness and inclusion, and collaboration with partners (SO 4.4) and efficiency and agility (SO 4.5). Moreover, the topic has been raised by Members and partners as an issue of importance for the global community.

WOAH is in the process of securing human and financial resources to embed additional gender expertise within the Organisation. WOA will explore holding other event(s) at regional workshops, Regional Commissions and/or conferences, including in other languages (i.e., French/Spanish) to engage a wider audience. During the 90th General Session, the Gender Task Force also undertook a series of interviews with leaders in the Veterinary Services. The need to understand different cultural interpretations and expectations related to WOA's work on gender should not be overlooked.

WOAH commissioned several studies on gender (i.e., gender in animal health emergencies; gender in Veterinary Services in Southeast Asia; gender in Veterinary Services in West Africa) in 2022-2023. Insights from these and future studies will complement consultations and stakeholder analyses with Members and further contribute to WOA's gender vision and strategy. Results of these activities will be shared through publications, webinars and conferences.

WOAH intends to play a pivotal role in driving meaningful change, creating a gender-balanced veterinary domain that offers equal opportunities and support for a diverse workforce to thrive in their professional careers.

Evaluation and participant feedback

A brief evaluation survey was shared with participants through a QR code at the event and by email. Thirteen (13) responses were received.

Overall satisfaction

Overall, 92% of respondents (12/13) reported that they were 'extremely satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the event. One participant was somewhat satisfied.

Summary of what participants liked most about the event:

- Meeting other stakeholders from other countries; cultural diversity
- Hearing different views and perspectives on gender
- Motivation expressed by the men in the groups
- Frankness and openness of discussions
- Willingness to transform; participant engagement
- Hearing stories/experiences from women veterinarians
- Data- or information-based interventions
- Moderation of the event

Summary of what participants appreciated least about the event:

- Too noisy
- Not enough time
- A sense of a "gender agenda" amongst some participants

Summary of actions participants expect to take as a result of participating in this event:

- 77%:** Share information with colleagues e.g., talk to colleagues about it, share the report afterwards, etc. (10/13 participants)
- 46%:** Learn more about gender and how it relates to my sector (6/13 participants)
- 38%:** Initiate or propose in-country activities related to gender (5/13 participants)
- 8%:** Don't know (1/13 participants)

Additional comments/suggestions received:

- Include a storytelling satellite event in the next GS to present success stories in all regions.
- Build capacity of current workforce and conduct capacity building for youth.
- The journey is as important as the destination. Create baselines from social study surveys and keep an open mind that every situation in every country is different. From this create a policy, and then goals and objectives in the form of a framework from which WOAHA can enact action. Create a timeline and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) but be patient. There will inevitably be bumps in the road. Keep talking to these communities and offer support whenever it's needed.
- Thank you for organising this side event. It was very interesting and a great learning experience.

Annexes

Annex 1: General Session Side Event announcement

World Café – Gender Task Force

Date: Monday 22 May, 17h – 18h30

Venue: Room: 233

Gender intersects with several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of relevance to WOA and has been an important topic in global policy discussions and within international organizations, governments, the private sector, and civil society/NGOs. Given its importance, in October 2021 WOA launched its Gender Task Force, composed of 25 staff working across departments at Headquarters and Regional/Sub-Regional offices, to inform how WOA understands gender across its mandate, programmes, and policies.

The Task Force is in its early stages of framing the role of gender in WOA's work, and we want to talk with you! **Come join this interactive session to share ideas on how gender intersects with your work and to reflect on how WOA can support Veterinary Services in this domain.**

* Note: this session will only be held in English. *

Annex 2: Photos



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



WOAH Director General Dr. Monique Eloit provided her remarks during the session.



Each discussion round lasted between 15-20 minutes.



Participants were invited to share their ideas and experiences related to gender in the veterinary and animal health domain.



WOAH's Gender Task Force, composed of WOAH staff, facilitated the session.



Outputs from the session will be used to inform WOAH's policy on gender going forward.

Photos courtesy of Gabriel Reyes, WOAH Communication Department.