

# Framework for Action

## Achieving Gender Equity in the Community Health Workforce

There is robust and compelling evidence that community health workers play an essential role in delivering life-saving healthcare globally. However women, who make up 70% of this workforce, face significant gender-based challenges including safety concerns, inadequate pay, and limited career advancement.

Integrate Health and Last Mile Health, with nearly 40 years of combined experience in Africa, have partnered to create a framework for action to address the unique challenges women community health workers face throughout their career. We leveraged global guidelines, research, and input from expert implementers to offer innovative and actionable recommendations.

### The Framework for Action

Our framework for action outlines a comprehensive strategy to address the challenges women community health workers face at every stage of their career.

### Recommendations at a glance

#### 1 | Recruiting women

Local community leaders and members, including male partners, must actively participate in efforts to change perceptions about community health workers and recruitment practices so women have equal opportunity for selection. At the national level, policies must proactively recruit women as community health workers and governments must commit to the preferential hiring of women until gender parity is achieved in the national workforce.



#### 2 | Enabling women

Women community health workers need tailored and appropriate training, equipment, coaching, transport, and digital tools to succeed in their roles, addressing any barriers that may hinder their performance or safety. In addition, supervisors must be selected through a process that increases opportunities for women to be appointed to these roles.

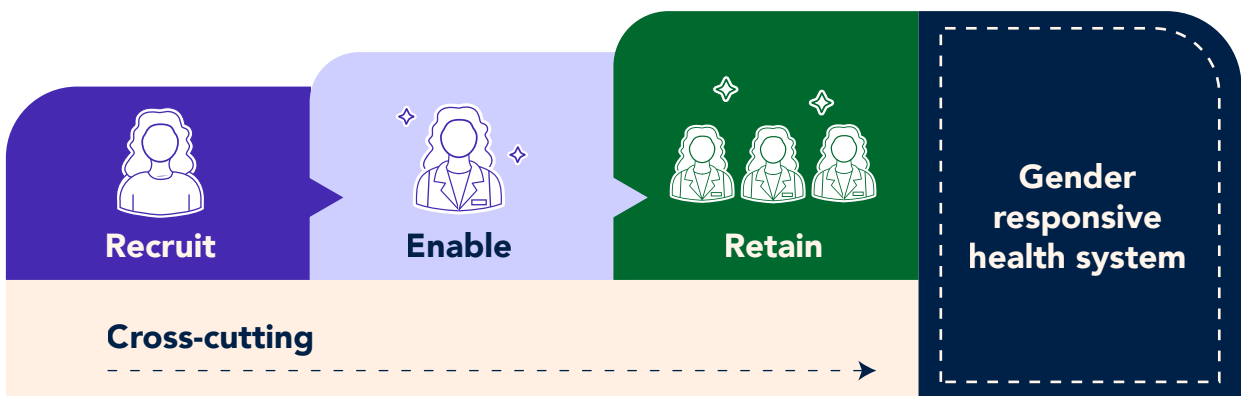
#### 3 | Retaining and advancing women

Women community health workers require a supportive work environment that maintains a fair workload, is safe, and provides clear career pathways and professional development opportunities to enable their growth and development.



### Cross-cutting across the lifecycle

Across all three stages, women's voices must be systematically included in the decisions that impact them. In addition, community health workers require formal roles with reliable financial packages and multi-pronged incentives, as well as inclusion in national digital systems.



## Call to Action

While our framework is aimed at community health program implementers, meaningful progress requires coordinated effort from an ecosystem of stakeholders: governments, funders, advocacy coalitions, researchers, and health workers themselves.

Investing in women community health workers is not only about gender equity and economic empowerment. Women community health workers play a crucial role in improving access to essential health services, reducing maternal and child mortality, and driving progress toward sustainable development goals, including universal health coverage and gender equality. By dismantling barriers that limit women’s potential, implementers, policymakers, governments, and funders can drive lasting social and economic benefits for communities and build resilient health systems.