KALEIDOS RESEARCH

EVALUATION OF SHARE-NET INTERNATIONAL, THE KNOWLEDGE PLATFORM ON SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS (SRHR)

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ASK	Access, Services and Knowledge (programme Youth Empowerment Alliance)
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDI	In-Depth Interview
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NWO-WOTRO	Science for Global Development programmes (Netherlands organization for scientific research)
PIPA	Participatory Impact Pathway Analysis
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UFBR	Unite For Body Rights (programme SRHR alliance)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction to Share-Net International

The Knowledge Platform on SRHR including HIV and AIDS, hereafter called Share-Net International was established in September 2013. Following a tendering process by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Royal Tropical Institute was awarded the contract to host its secretariat. The objective of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) was to strengthen knowledge management and support evidence-based policy and interventions by the establishment of knowledge platforms in areas of Dutch priority themes for international development cooperation[1].

Building on the existing Share-Net Netherlands network, Share-Net International now comprises Share-Net Netherlands and three other country nodes, in Bangladesh, Burundi and Jordan. Led by a Steering Committee and supported by the Share-Net secretariat, Share-Net International combines the expertise and strengths of Dutch organisations, Southern partners and key international actors working in the area of SRHR, including HIV and AIDS.

The main goal of Share-Net International is to strengthen linkages between research, policy and practice in the field of SRHR, including HIV and AIDS, through sharing, generating, translating and promoting the use of knowledge. Particular reference is made to: 1) Better information and greater freedom of choice for young people about their sexuality, 2) Improved access to reproductive health commodities, 3) Better sexual and reproductive health care, 4) Greater respect for the sexual and reproductive rights of groups who are currently denied these rights. Share-Net international aims to achieve the following six goals:

1. To identify relevant knowledge for achieving improved SRHR;
2. To stimulate sharing of existing relevant knowledge among platform participants;
3. To generate new knowledge to address prioritised research gaps;
4. To translate knowledge into formats appropriate for intended audiences (application of knowledge);
5. To understand and facilitate the complex processes by which evidence informs policy, both in the Netherlands and in partner countries;
6. To facilitate learning and collaborative exchange among those participating.

Share-Net International encompasses national knowledge networks in four countries: Bangladesh, Burundi, Jordan and the Netherlands, referred to as 'country nodes' (see Box 1). These networks serve as conduits for situation assessments, defining research priorities, facilitating research participation by country institutions and hosting the local knowledge platform. They also stimulate the participation of key international partners and regional and national actors in SRHR based in their countries. Share-Net International operates through working partnerships, work plans with organisations in the selected countries and strategic partnerships with other relevant regional and international organisations.

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[1] The five knowledge platforms are related to the main themes of Dutch development cooperation policy: security and the rule of law, inclusive economic development, food security, water, and sexual and reproductive health and rights. http://www.knowledgeplatforms.nl/

Share-Net Netherlands is the Dutch network on SRHR including HIV and AIDS and has been in operation since 2001. Share-Net Netherlands functions as a Dutch network of which its members are (mostly) involved in international SRHR activities. Share-Net Netherlands has a long history and has proven to fulfil a specific need for knowledge sharing. The network was set up in 2001 based on an urge felt by organisations working on SRHR to share knowledge on SRHR and to be informed on what others were doing. Members contribute financially to the network in order to maintain it. After becoming a knowledge platform as part of five knowledge platforms initiated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2013, an additional objective of generating new knowledge was added, leading to research activities being included. Since then, universities and knowledge institute became stronger partners in the network.

The selection of Bangladesh and Burundi as the first two focus countries for Share-Net International was guided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the summer of 2013 after consultation with some of the Share-Net members in the Netherlands . In June 2014, Jordan was selected as the third focus country. As is the case with Share-Net Netherlands' members, the members of the focus countries automatically become members of Share-Net

International. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Royal Netherlands Embassies in the focus countries also actively participate in Share-Net by sitting in the international and national Steering Committees.

Following a recruitment process the following organisations were selected to host the knowledge nodes.
- Bangladesh: RedOrange Media and Communications, and the Center for Gender, Sexual and Reproductive Health & Rights at James P Grant School of Public Health, of BRAC University
- Burundi: Population Media Centre
- Jordan: Higher Population Council

In all three countries stakeholder meetings were held to discuss agenda setting and to develop the research agenda. Although the general objectives of the country nodes are in line with Share-Net International, for each country different priority topics (see below) and research questions were identified. (Annual Report 2014; Annual report 2015).

Each country node has its own national Steering Committee. Share-Net Netherlands is directed by the Dutch Core Group.

In 2015, eight priority SRHR themes were chosen by Share-Net International, after consultation with the members. These themes form the core of the knowledge agenda for the platform and are as follows: (1) Child marriage and Teenage Pregnancy, (2) Youth Friendly Health Services, (3) Comprehensive Sexuality Education, (4) Gender-Based Violence, (5) Contraception & Abortion, (6) SRHR and HIV integration, (7) Engagement with the Private Sector and (8) Sexual Diversity. In the Netherlands, working groups have been formed around each theme to develop a detailed knowledge agenda and strategy for their respective themes. These inform the content and development of knowledge management activities such as thematic meetings and pieces of research. In Bangladesh and Burundi different themes are addressed. This is related to the preferences of member organisations and to the local context. In Jordan activities have just started (ToR of this evaluation; Van der Kwaak & van 't Hooft 2016; annual report 2014; annual report 2015).

1.2. This evaluation

The overall objective of the evaluation is to assess the progress of Share-Net International in relation to its mandate and objectives and to formulate recommendations to strengthen the platform, ensure its continuation and improve its ability to realise its objectives. Specific objectives of the evaluation are:

1. To assess the progress of Share-Net International in relation to its mandates and objectives, taking into account the perspectives of its members;
2. To identify how and to what extent Share-Net International is responding to the needs of its members in each country and to assess satisfaction (including value for time investment) among members with Share-Net's activities and agenda setting;

3. To review the division of labour between Share-Net International and the four country nodes (the Netherlands, Bangladesh, Burundi, Jordan) in view of their respective mandates and capacities; and taking into account the history of Share-Net before the creation of Share-Net International;
4. To assess the governance structure between the Secretariat, the Steering Group, the Core Group, the country nodes and their members (organisations and individuals);
5. To review strategies and opportunities for enhancing collaboration and communication among members and other stakeholders;
6. Formulate recommendations about how to strengthen the platform, ensure continuation/sustainability and to improve its ability to realise its objectives.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The evaluation draws on earlier research on social-change networks, particularly by Wilson-Grau and Nuñez (2007). They identified four quality criteria for such networks: 1) Democracy (the members' participation in decision making), 2) Diversity (enabling heterogeneous actors to make a creative and constructive contribution), 3) Dynamism (active participation and enhancing interaction between its members) and 4) Performance (engagement in purposeful action) (Wilson-Grau & Nuñez, 2007).

Based on an unpublished framework of Bijlmakers (Radboud University) and Dusseljee (Rutgers), both members of the Steering Committee of Share-Net International, we add a fifth component: 5) Identity. In these five topics, we integrated the four evaluation criteria, that were mentioned in the ToR: Relevance (Performance), Effectiveness (Performance), Efficiency (Democracy) and Sustainability (added to the framework as a separate chapter). The way we will link these quality criteria to the evaluation questions is made explicit in Annex 1.

Hereafter, we present the key concepts, as defined by Wilson-Grau and Nuñez:

"Democracy - In addition to being a recognised value, democratic management is a necessity in a network. Success depends on equity in the relations and exercise of power within the network. The members are autonomous organisations. In a network, when its members participate in taking a decision, that is the best guarantee that the decision will be implemented.

Diversity – A unique strength of a network resides in the variety of its membership because of their distinct social, economic, political and cultural contexts. Part of the genius of this organisational form is that its members share common values and a collective purpose but beyond that have different conceptions and strategies to achieve change. The challenge is to enable each one of these heterogeneous actors to make a creative and constructive contribution.

Dynamism - The network promotes and is nourished by the enthusiasm and energy characteristic of a voluntary membership. It maintains dynamism to the extent the network is able to balance the diverse contributions of members with joint, sustained collaboration. For this, the leadership must stimulate and strengthen democratic internal processes, the active participation of all members and effective work in alliances. A network must enhance interaction between its members. It facilitates rather than directs innovative proposals for action.

Performance – The relationships between organisations and individuals engaged in purposeful action characterises a network. The quality of the interaction is a result of the quality of how the network operates." (Wilson-Grau & Nuñez, 2007)

Identity – The network has a specific uniqueness. This added value can be specified and visualised to external people and organisations and can be used for profiling. The leaders reflect the identity of the Network in their personality and position. (Bijlmakers & Dusseljee, n.d., unpublished)

Sustainability – The capacity of the network to continue to exist and to keep members motivated and engaged to contribute to the purpose of the network.

3. METHODOLOGY

Overall, this evaluation is based on two main principles: a participatory approach and a mixed methods approach.

Participatory approach. This evaluation was participatory in nature involving the commissioner in all steps of the evaluation design. In line with work by Wilson-Grau and Nuñez (2007), our experience in previous evaluations - e.g. two end of programme evaluations of the Dutch-based SRHR programmes UFBR and ASK - is that involvement of the commissioner, as well as other key stakeholders in partner countries, results in a more valuable evaluation for all stakeholders involved whereby learning is a central aspect of the evaluation. We included several participatory tools in this proposal, such as the Participatory workshop to engage key actors in the Netherlands, and incorporated regular communication with the commissioner in the evaluation process.

Mixed methods. A limitation of this evaluation was the tight timeframe and the fact that fieldwork in Burundi, Bangladesh and Jordan was not included. However, we feel that with a mixed method approach, we were able to obtain a clear view of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the programme. We used a combination of different and complementary methods – including a documents analysis, an online survey and qualitative interviews. This allowed us to draw a complete picture of the processes and activities of Share-Net International and how they contributed to the outcomes. The different methods used are hereafter briefly described. For a full overview of how the methods are linked to the research questions, see Annex 1. Also the tools used (interview guides, survey, etc.) can be found in Annex 2.

3.1. Documents analysis
A desk review of key documents was performed in order to obtain insight in the activities of Share-Net International and how these activities contribute to Share-Net International's objectives. As such, we identified how the members and other stakeholders make use of the knowledge platform's services, e.g. by organising/attending expert meetings or applying for grants, which goals are reached and whether or not this was done in an efficient way with regard to timing and budget. In addition to answering research questions, results of this document analysis were also used also for the development of research tools such as the online surveys, in-depth interviews (IDI), focus group discussions (FGD) and the participatory workshop, as well as to develop draft lists of people to invite for these components of the evaluation.

3.2. Online surveys (including participation rate)
We conducted two surveys: 1) among members, i.e. people actively involved in Share-Net, and 2) among passive users, i.e. people registered for newsletters (Annex 2.2 and 2.3 –Box 2). Contact lists

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Box 2. Several types of affiliation

People can be involved in Share-Net in several ways, going from subscribing to newsletters, participating in activities, to being part of certain organizing "commissions" (working groups, committees). However, a clear distinction between the different types of affiliation is lacking and several definitions are used inconsistently: subscribers, members (persons vs. organisations; paid vs. non-paid), active members, users, registered users, etc. This might be partly due to the fact that the websites are still under construction and because the different nodes use different approaches.

With regard to this evaluation, it complicated the decision of who to address for which part of the evaluation. As with all networks, some people are more involved than others and normally the more closely involved a person is, the better he or she is informed about the structural organisation of the network. Therefore we decided to divide participants into 2 groups, i.e. active and passive

Survey among members - We developed an online survey to identify how the members use the platform and how the network is structured and functions. More particularly, we gained insights in how each of the members of Share-Net International is involved and how this contributes to sharing knowledge, and what they do with the acquired knowledge. At the same time, they were asked to evaluate Share-Net International's activities and express their needs and priorities, as well as to give their perspectives regarding the organisational structure of Share-Net International, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the network.

Survey among passive users - This was a short version of the survey described above and was administered among the registered users; the people who are connected to the platform but who do not actively participate in activities. We included the questions that gauge how the registered users use the platform and as such get insight in how each of them is involved (which platform tool/information they use most), how this contributes to sharing knowledge, and what they do with the acquired knowledge. At the same time, they were also asked to evaluate Share-Net International's activities and express their needs and priorities.

The surveys were programmed in SurveyMonkey and potential participants received a link that directed them to the questionnaires. We did not sent out the online survey to the Jordan members as the establishment of the country node was not yet sufficiently advanced. The questionnaire was translated into French for the participants from Burundi.

In total, 280 people participated in the online survey. However, 10 did not report any affiliation (i.e. they skipped the question which resulted in a missing value; 3 active members and 7 passive members); these participants were not considered in the evaluation since they could not be included in one of the different Share-Net networks and additionally had many missing data. Another participant, a member of Share-Net Jordan, was also excluded from the analysis since the online survey did not focus on Jordan due to its recent start-up. As a result, the final sample size is 269.

Of the 269 participants, 59 were affiliated to Share-Net Bangladesh, 33 to Share-Net Burundi and 177 reported that they were either affiliated to Share-Net Netherlands, Share-Net International or chose the option 'no affiliation' (Table 1). During analyses, those of Share-Net Netherlands and Share-Net International were grouped, and also the latter group, 'no affiliation', was included in the group Share-Net Netherlands/International. This was based on the fact that the evaluation team had noted that members are not always aware about the distinction or even existence of Share-Net International versus Share-Net Netherlands. Also, it can be assumed that participants of Bangladesh and Burundi would have no such confusion about their affiliation.

The participation rate is presented in Table 1. In total, the survey had a response rate of 17%. The response rate was higher for the active participants (20%) than for the passive users (16%). An overview of characteristics of respondents can be found in Annex 3.

Table 1: Response rate per country and type of respondent.

AFFILIATION*	Invited by email per group			Participation per group		
	Active users n	Passive users n	Total** n	Active users n (%)	Passive users n (%)	Total n (%)
Netherlands International No affiliation	334	798	1132	57*** 17%	120**** 15%	177 16%
Bangladesh	14	385	399	10 71%	49 13%	59 15%
Burundi	13	54	67	5 38%	28 52	33 49%
Total	361	1237	1598	72 20%	197 16%	269 17%

* participants who reported 'the Netherlands', 'International', and 'no affiliation' were grouped for analysis purposes. Those who did not report any affiliation (missing value) were excluded.
**some emails bounced; as a result, the actual number of invited people is slightly lower, and thus the participation rate slightly higher.
*** 37, 18 and 2 participants reported 'the Netherlands', 'International' and 'no affiliation', respectively
**** 73, 23 and 24 participants reported 'the Netherlands', 'International' and 'no affiliation', respectively.

3.3. In-depth interviews

The evaluation included in-depth interviews with two types of respondents:

- With Share-Net coordinators in the Netherlands and the country nodes to get the perspective of key informants on strengths and weaknesses in the functioning of Share-Net and identify enabling and constraining factors and to discuss future plans and sustainability of Share-Net;
- With a selection of members in the Netherlands, Bangladesh, Burundi and Jordan to get the perspective of key informants on strengths and weaknesses in the functioning of Share-Net and identify enabling and constraining factors; to assess how members use and work with Share-Net; to identify the needs and priorities of Share-Net members and whether they are met; and to discuss future plans and sustainability of Share-Net.

We did 16 in-depth interviews (some had multiple respondents) in the Netherlands and three to four interviews in respectively Burundi, Bangladesh and Jordan via Skype (in total 11 interviews were executed in these three countries) using a semi-structured interview format as well as narrative interviewing techniques. An overview of the (type of) respondents can be found in Annex 4. The in-depth interviews covered all key research themes. The item list for the in-depth interviews closely followed the already developed research questions.

3.4. Focus Group discussion

A Focus Group Discussion with a selection of Share-Net members in the Netherlands was organised in order to get the perspective of key informants on strengths and weaknesses in the functioning of Share-Net and identify enabling and constraining factors; to assess how members use and work with Share-Net; to identify the needs and priorities of Share-Net members and whether they are met; to assess interaction between the different members; to discuss future plans and sustainability of Share-Net.

In order to obtain a balanced view of how members generally perceive the network we included both active and less active members. Together with the secretariat we decided which members to invite. The discussion guide was based on the theoretical framework.

3.5. Google analytics and Mailchimp

In order to assess how the website and newsletter of Share-Net International are used, data from Google Analytics (website) and MailPoet (newsletter) were consulted. Due to safety restrictions, the data of Google Analytics was retrieved by the Share-Net Secretariat: usage of the last year was evaluated in terms of origin of the visitors, and the numbers of sessions on the website (including bounce rate). Through MailPoet, which was consulted directly by the evaluation team, the opening and click rates of the newsletters were reviewed, as well as the links that are most visited.

3.6. Observation by field visits

To observe how different Share-Net members interact together and to what extent and how the meetings take into account the overall objectives of Share-Net we attended two meetings; a working group session and a general meeting of the Steering Committee of Share-Net International. Observations took place in November. We used a brief checklist of criteria to assess while participating in these sessions.

3.7. Participatory Workshop

While we initially proposed to do a workshop based on the PIPA method (Participatory Impact Pathway Analysis) we reoriented this towards a participatory workshop. Based on the preliminary results of the online survey, interviews and focus group discussions, we identified a few core challenges that Share-Net is confronted with – in the fields of the governance structure, diversity and sustainability - and that deserved thorough discussion. We decided to use this as a basis, using certain methods proposed by the PIPA method, but not following the entire PIPA process. The participants of this workshop were chosen in discussion with the secretariat. The main selection criteria for participation were 1) the participation and understanding of Share-Net International (people with experience and knowledge), 2) the ability to think strategically about the future of Share-Net and 3) the variety of the group as a whole (people with different backgrounds including representatives from governments, civil society organisations (CSOs) and knowledge institutions as well as people involved in steering group, core group and secretariat of Share-Net International and the Netherlands. A list of participants is included in Annex 4.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS: PRELIMINARY REFLECTIONS

The research findings were based on the mixed methods approach and made use of triangulation of data. The results were divided in six sections following the four criteria of Wilson-Grau and Nuñez (2007) (Democracy, Diversity, Dynamism and Performance), the added criteria of the framework of Bijlmakers and Dusseljee (n.d.) (Identity), followed by the evaluation criteria 'Sustainability' (see chapter 2). The criteria are discussed in separate chapters. We have slightly adjusted the order; Performance will be discussed first, followed by Democracy, Diversity, Dynamism, Identity and Sustainability. For each section the general findings of Share-Net International and Share-Net Netherlands will be discussed, followed by specific findings for the other three country nodes.

In this section we present a number of issues that are important to take into account when interpreting the data of the evaluation study.

Short timeframe after start in Jordan and Burundi
In particular in Jordan, and to a lesser extent also Burundi, the activities of Share-Net have just started. Hence, it is difficult to evaluate any effectiveness or results yet. In these countries, we did interviews that mainly focused on the process of establishing the country nodes, the barriers and facilitators in this process, and the perceived need and added value of establishing the country node and of being part of Share-Net International.

Furthermore, Share-Net Burundi has known some difficulties in the start-up phase, including political instability, unrest and insecurity in the country and the death of one of the main collaborators. Furthermore, there are a number of topics that are more difficult to address in Burundi (e.g. as one of the respondents noted *"In Burundi, SRHR is associated with the promotion of homosexuality. In most African countries, this is not yet well understood. Also homosexuality is illegal in Burundi. Therefore, we needed to be cautious, needed to apply a positive approach."*). The activities have only been established recently – e.g. the website was only put online in June 2016 and is up till now providing information mainly in English. At the time of executing the research, only two newsletters have been sent out (August-September 2016 and November-December 2016) – which obviously has an effect on the outcomes of Share-Net Burundi. In Jordan, a newsletter was sent out which was closely connected to former activities of the host organization. The website is in preparation.

Lack of consistent use of names and definitions.
While conducting the evaluation study, it was noticed that a lack of clear definitions has caused misinterpretation and confusion at many levels. While this sometimes caused extra challenges in the evaluation, we believe it also hampers the efficiency as well as the branding of the network. There was often confusion regarding terminology. Share-Net, Share-Net International, the Knowledge Platform, the Platform, etc. Both in documents as during conversations, misunderstandings arose due to inconsistent use and the multiple names for one network. Consequently, it is often hard to clearly link activities, reached goals or for example complaints to one specific network. Especially the difference between Share-Net International and Share-Net Netherlands is vague (see below). The same confusion exists for how different types of users are named (see Box 2).

Confusion/overlap between Share-Net International and Share-Net the Netherlands
In all parts of the study – documents analysis, interviews, focus group discussions, workshop, online survey – it became clear that there is a very strong interlinkage between Share-Net Netherlands and International. For many people involved in this evaluation it created confusion as to what entity they

belonged to and what the different responsibilities and objectives of each entity were. Even people closely involved in Share-Net often cannot clearly explain the difference. An example of this confusion: if you read the text under 'Who we are" on the Share-Net Netherlands website, it states *"Share-Net* International*, the Knowledge Platform on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) seeks to combine the expertise and strengths of Dutch organizations, Southern partners and key international actors working in the area of SRHR."* Also several respondents in the online survey indicated they did not clearly understand the difference between Share-Net International and Share-Net Netherlands, which may have resulted in misunderstandings of certain questions.

Low response rate
The response rate to the online survey was relatively low[2] (17%; 20% among active users and 16% among passive users - see Table 1). While it is a rate that is common for online surveys, we would have expected it to be higher among the more active users (staff of member organisations more closely involved in the activities of the networks).

It is likely that those who did respond are indeed more closely involved in Share-Net. The advantage is that these respondents have a grounded opinion on the various aspects of Share-Net; however, the disadvantage is that possibly the voice of a group of Share-Net users who are less involved is less represented.

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[2] In comparison, the online survey for the evaluation of the Belgian Be-Cause Health network reached a participation rate of 23%

5. PERFORMANCE

Research questions:
To what extent does Share-Net International responds to members' needs and priorities in each country? RELEVANCE
Are the objectives of Share-Net clear to all Share-Net users? RELEVANCE
Does Share-Net interact, dialogues and negotiates with other social actors?
To what extent are the goals of Share-Net International achieved through knowledge sharing, translation, use and generation at the output and outcome levels? EFFECTIVENESS
Do members and other stakeholders make use of the knowledge platform's services in each country? EFFECTIVENESS
To what extent do Share-Net users participate in the activities? (comes from democracy)
How do members in each country use the knowledge they acquire through Share-Net activities (meetings, website, newsletter and others) in their communication and collaboration with colleagues/partners in their own respective organisation and networks? EFFECTIVENESS
How do members perceive the international collaboration within Share-Net International?

Box 3. Highlights on Performance

General:
- Share-Net International's strategies are in line with the causes of the problem it is aiming to solve and is fulfilling a need of stakeholders working to improve SRHR worldwide; therefore the relevance is high.
- It is an active network
- There is consensus by members that objectives 2, on knowledge sharing, and objective 6, on learning, are realised.
- Challenges remain related to goals of facilitating policy making, feeding new research knowledge in the network and translation of knowledge into practice.

- Intercountry sharing and learning is limited.
- As the objectiveness are partly met, the effectiveness of Share-Net could be further -improved, especially in terms of translation of knowledge and inter-country collaboration.

Most valued activities:
- Netherlands/International: newsletter, face-to-face meetings
- Bangladesh and Burundi: website, face-to-face meetings
- Research activities are much valued in Bangladesh, Burundi and Jordan.

5.1. The need for Share-Net

Box 4. Need for Share-Net from a theoretical perspective: the problem tree

As part of the evaluation, a problem tree was developed to study the central problem that Share-Net is aiming to address (i.e. limited progress in the field of SRHR and HIV). Based on a draft developed by the evaluators, the problem tree was adapted and sharpened by participants of the participatory workshop to make it more fitting to Share-Net (Figure 1). A clear view on the causes of the problem allows to identify how Share-Net aims to intervene to address the problem.
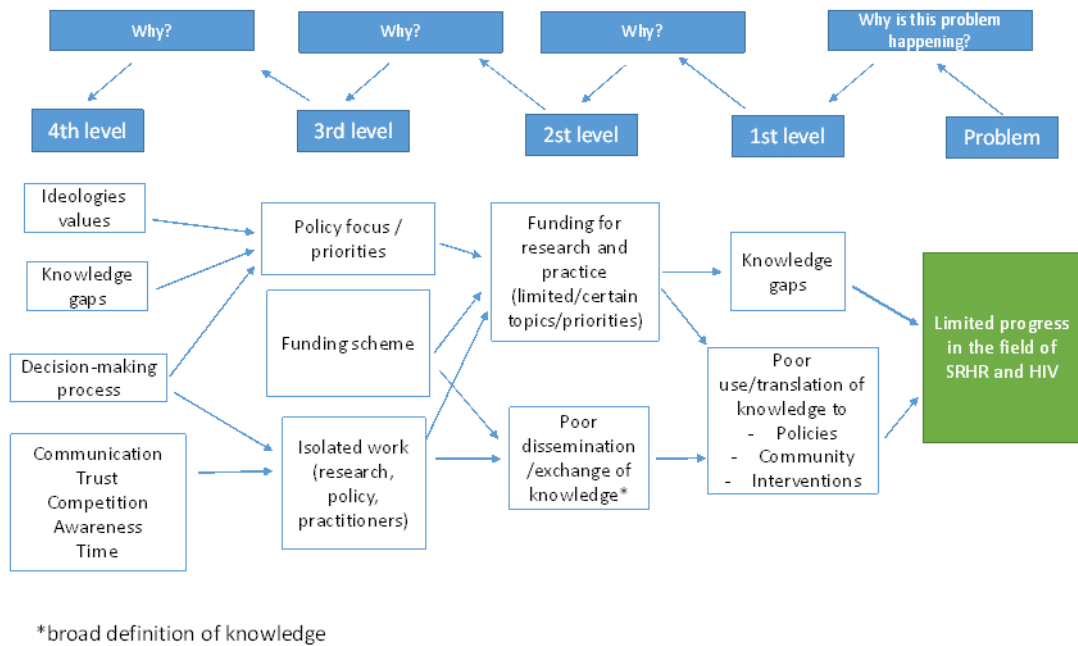
Figure 1: Problem tree of Share-Net that gives insight into the central problem Share-Net is addressing

Share-Net aims to contribute to solving the problem of limited progress in the field of SRHR and HIV. Knowledge gaps and poor use/translation of knowledge are – apart from other major causes - factors leading to this problem. Share-Net directly intervenes on these two factors by aiming to create new knowledge (objective 3) and to make sure that existing knowledge is identified, shared and used by different stakeholders (objectives 1,2, 4, 5 and 6). From this perspective, Share-Net International's strategies are in line with the causes of the problem it is aiming to solve and is fulfilling a need of stakeholders working to improve SRHR worldwide.

5.1.1. Need for Share-Net in each of the countries

The opinions on the need for country nodes are less ambivalent compared to the need for an overarching Share-Net International. From the collected data, we can conclude that Share-Net addresses a clear need in the four counties, as it is the only network present that aims to join actors in the broad SRHR field.

In the Netherlands, Share-Net has a long history. According to the qualitative fieldwork, Share-Net is still indispensable and unique:

"Without Share-Net there would be less sense of togetherness. The importance of Share-Net is underestimated, we are really working together on the current state of affairs on SRHR. Without Share-Net we would all be working isolated in our own silos, in our own organisations." (Dutch interview respondent)

In the three new country nodes, Share-Net is also appreciated. It did not necessarily fulfil a latent and active need; in general the collaboration between a wide variety of actors working in SRHR issues has been limited or even absent. Once the networks were established, however, most respondents feel that Share-Net has an important network function in their country.

In *Bangladesh*, Share-Net is found to connect organisations that otherwise would work quite isolated. It also brings researchers together and helps to disseminate research findings that can be used in programme implementation. In *Burundi*, all participants agree there is a real need for Share-Net, also

because SRHR issues in Burundi are very urgent. It depends on the views of specific stakeholder however, to what extent they value the sharing of knowledge; for example an embassy will have already access to a considerable amount of information, which is not the case for other organisations. In *Jordan*, respondents also emphasize the need for Share-Net Jordan, especially as next to the policy focus on family planning also other SRHR issues can be addressed. The broad scope of Share-Net International stimulates stakeholders to also take other topics into account. In Jordan, a specific group in need of SRHR knowledge and services is the large group of Syrian refugees.

Overall, participants of the online survey stated that a major reason to join Share-Net is to access information on SRHR and receive information on conferences, meetings, etc. In Bangladesh and Burundi, members initially also joined for the international network opportunities that Share-Net offers. In general, expectations regarding accessing funding/grants are low, which is not surprising since only few organisations are involved in conducting research and there are limited funding opportunities via the small grants and NWO-WOTRO research. Furthermore, relatively few members – except in Burundi – join Share-Net to influence policy making. An overview of initial reasons to join Share-Net can be found in Annex 5, Table i.

5.1.2. Need for Share-Net International

Most members are aware of the existence of Share-Net International and they express Share-Net fulfils a clear need. However, several members in Bangladesh and Burundi also indicate that to them Share-Net International is not that 'vivid' and that they have no clear understanding of it. In the survey, approximately 7 out of 10 participants say they have heard of Share-Net International as an overarching platform (Table 2).

Members differ in their opinion on the need for an overarching Share-Net International. Only half of the active members affiliated to Share-Net Netherlands/International, express the need for an overarching Share-Net International network next to a Share-Net in their own country. In Bangladesh, also half of the survey respondents indicate this need, although only 8 responded to this question. This is likely due to the limited knowledge of the role of Share-Net International and to the confusion between Share-Net Netherlands and Share-Net International. In Burundi, all four respondents express this need (Table 2).

Table 2: Knowledge of and need for Share-Net International.

	International & Netherlands	Bangladesh	Burundi	Total
Have you ever heard of Share-Net International as overarching platform (yes)	111/161 69%	38/52 73%	22/29 76%	171/242 71%
Is there a need for an overarching Share-Net International besides a Share-Net in each of the countries? (yes)	23/46 50%	4/8 50%	4/4 100%	31/58 53.5%

Most Dutch interview respondents agree that it is important that SRHR networks at a national level are set up in developing countries, as they are aware of the advantages of such networks. This applies especially in developing countries where a united front can help to address the often very sensitive, complex and challenging SRHR issues. However, Dutch members differ in their opinion on whether this international network creates an added value for their own work. While organisations find it useful and appreciate the direct knowledge exchange, others have more reservations. Some members are not active in the three new Share-Net countries, or are not well informed about the situation in these countries, and hence, do not see much added value for the work of Share-Net International. Some other Dutch members, although active in these countries, still do not actively engage with these Share-Net platforms as they already have their own personal network.

In the three country nodes of Bangladesh, Burundi and Jordan the need for an overarching Share-Net International network seems slightly more clear, although also in these countries different voices are heard. For some of the country coordinators, knowledge exchange with other country nodes and with the Share-Net International secretariat is much valued, especially in terms of setting up and management of the SRHR platform in their own country. In general, respondents feel that nodes could benefit from sharing knowledge internationally, especially when similar topics are addressed. In addition, respondents in Bangladesh and Burundi mention that when a country tends to focus on a limited array of topics, Share-Net international can stimulate to broaden the focus.

Some interview respondents, in particular from Jordan, state that sharing knowledge with a country in the region with a similar cultural background or higher income countries in Europe would also be valuable. In that sense, some interview respondents feel that the number of countries is limited and that the choice for countries is donor-driven.

5.2. Importance of objectives of Share-Net International

In the interviews, knowledge sharing (goal 2) and learning and collaborative exchange (goal 6) are mentioned as most important goals. This is also confirmed by the survey (Figure 2);60% of all members choose these two goals as most important (respondents were asked to choose three out of the six objectives they felt are most important). The active members assess the ambitions of Share-Net International as fairly ambitious: on a scale of 0-10 a median score of 8 is given (N= 45; standard deviation=2).

Interestingly, goal 1 'Identifying SRHR knowledge' is more valued in Burundi and Bangladesh compared to the Netherlands. Also, the goal of facilitating processes to inform policy makers is valued more in Burundi (Figure 2). In Burundi, the ministry of Health participates in activities of the platform, which is highly appreciated by the members of Share-Net Burundi, as their work becomes more aligned with and used by the government. (It should be kept in mind the numbers that completed the survey in Burundi and Bangladesh were low).
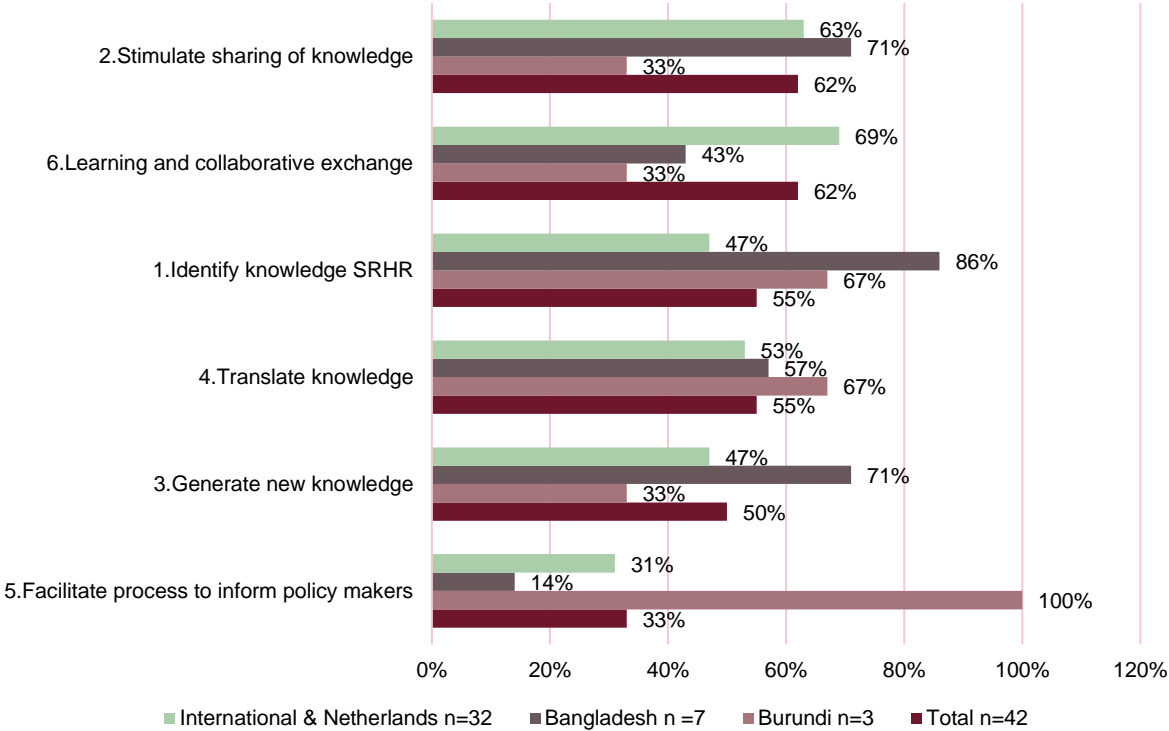
Figure 2: Most important goals of Share-Net International according to active members.

In the Netherlands, the goals for Share-Net International are identical to the goals of Share-Net Netherlands, the networks are closely intertwined and the members of Share-Net Netherlands all work internationally. The other Share-Net country nodes, while they generally adhere to the objectives of Share-Net International, have a different interpretation of the objectives, or would like to adapt them. There are two major differences in the focus of Share-Net Bangladesh and Share-Net Burundi compared to Share-Net Netherlands/International.

First, there is more emphasis on reaching a larger community. Whereas in the Netherlands, members see Share-Net mainly as a network by and for professionals, members from Bangladesh and Burundi interpret the goal of 'translation of knowledge' also as sensitization: because of taboos and misinformation in the area of SRHR, there is a need for more open discussions and the dissemination of correct information towards the community.

"Share-Net Bangladesh has the role to provide correct information to the community as to weaken the taboo." (Bangladesh respondent)

"It is my opinion that Share-Net firsts needs to focus on these initial objectives. But I think it would be better to expand the objectives slowly, in the direction of the inclusion of a larger audience. We should not limit ourselves to exchanging information and research, but we should also organize activities targeting a wide audience. As in Burundi, we cannot only pass information through the website and newsletter, we need to be more innovative in spreading the information to the entire population, even those that have not been to schools." (Burundi respondent)

Second, in Burundi and Bangladesh goal 5 'facilitating policy processes' is interpreted as advocacy and policy influencing. In the Netherlands, several respondents comment that there is a consensus among members not to involve in joint lobby & advocacy work, because of the diverse background of members (*"There is an agreement that Share-Net cannot speak with one voice"* – Workshop participant). In contrast, especially in Burundi, advocacy is seen as an important way to address SRHR issues, as a Burundi respondent stated:

"In the field of advocacy we organize 1) research 2) sensitization meetings on the level of the provinces and communities and 3) workshops to reinforce the policies based on evidence."

Advocacy is even mentioned in the mission of Share-Net Burundi: *"Its mission is to improve Burundian SRHR through open communication, knowledge-sharing, research facilitation, and advocacy geared towards healthy policy-making".*

Although advocacy is not an objective in the Netherlands at the moment, some respondents stated in the future advocacy might become more relevant. In the current policies SRHR is one of the four central themes of development cooperation, but this might change in the near future. At 15th March 2017 there will be national elections in the Netherlands which might lead to a shift in policies.

5.3. Activities

5.3.1. Face-to-face meetings
We can conclude that Share-Net acts as an active network with many activities and active members. Face-to-face meetings are among the most appreciated activities in all countries. The concept of sharing information face-to-face with members of different backgrounds (employees of NGOs, researchers, policy-makers, practitioners) is one of the core activities of Share-Net. On average two out of three survey respondents have participated in face-to-face meetings (66%; 163/248) and many would like to participate more (79%; 192/244). Around one third of the participants helped organizing

an activity in the past (35%; 88/248) and six out of ten would like to help organize activities in the future (59%; 146/247). Interestingly, the participation rate in face-to-face meetings is significantly lower in Bangladesh (41%; 22/53) compared to the Netherlands/International (70%; 116/166) and Burundi (86%; 25/29). This is likely related to the fact that Bangladesh is a large country and the network is also quite large, with 500 members. It also focuses more on the online platform compared to the other counterparts (e.g. through posting blogs of practitioners in the field). As the country coordinator formulates *"most of the members use the website: physically joining group meetings is more challenging and happens to a lesser extent".* For a complete overview of participation in, and (willingness to help the) organisation of meetings, see Annex 5, Table ii.

In the Netherlands, members explicitly mention the increased professionalization of expert meetings and conferences compared to the time Share-Net the Netherlands was only depended on membership fees. Increased budgets in the last years and a good functioning secretariat helped to professionalize the activities of the network (see also 6.4.). Especially high-level international speakers and occasionally background papers were much appreciated by the Dutch members. However, the number of activities like face-to-face meetings as well as meetings of both core group and steering committee was considered to be very high. According to members of the secretariat, facilitating all these events took most of their time, leaving less time for reflection and more strategical thinking about the interconnections between the events. One Dutch respondent mentioned results of small grants have been presented, but it was not discussed what findings imply for the broader SRHR agenda. Some respondents concluded that activities could be better aligned and exchange between activities, such as small grants and expert groups, could be more strategic.

An activity that was particularly appreciated by Burundi members was the proposal writing workshop in Uganda; also in Jordan, where this workshop is planned, it was mentioned as something members looked forward to. In general, several respondents indicated, through open questions in the online survey, that Share-Net could indeed play a greater role in building capacity of member organisations.

In Jordan, not many activities have been set up yet, but a round table on child marriage was organized (31/08/2016). As one of the first concrete results of knowledge exchange within Share-Net Jordan and based on the recommendations formulated, the Higher Population council (HPC) is conducting a study on child marriage using the data generated during the 2015 Population and Housing Census. Based on the results of this study, Jordan started to develop a policy brief on child marriage funded though Share-Net. Also a training workshop was given in the field of "Empowerment of women" in two regions of Jordan (middle and North). The training aimed to raise awareness of local leaders and chiefs of societies on the importance of woman empowerment.

5.3.2. Working groups

A specific type of face-to-face meetings are the working groups where members actively collaborate together. These working groups take place in the Netherlands and Burundi. In the Netherlands, members regularly come together in 8 thematic working groups to share knowledge with each other on that particular topic and to prepare events. As a member in the Netherlands said:

"The added value of the expert meetings is also to be found in the preparation of this meetings whereby members collaborate in working groups. This is very useful; because of the exchange, you know what is happening elsewhere. You also see that everyone is working in different manners."

According to respondents of the online survey affiliated to Share-Net Netherlands/International, working groups indeed mainly function as a means to organize expert meetings and conferences (79%; 31/39) and to offer network opportunities nationally (67%; 26/39). They are considered as 'the backbone of Share-Net' and there is a high consensus among Dutch members that the working

groups function as bridging platforms that bring together various stakeholders in the SRHR domain. They were highly appreciated and referred to as being relevant, up-to-date and useful; members assess the groups to a lesser extent as innovative (Annex 5, Table iii). In general, the working groups are a good illustration of the member driven character of Share-Net and are considered crucial for the network's functioning. As a Burundi respondent states: *"At present, the technical working groups are the most important for Burundi. These are the lungs of the organisation".*

5.3.3. Newsletter and website

Each country node sends newsletter to its members and also a Share-Net International newsletter is distributed quarterly. (Annex 5, Table iv). The newsletters are much appreciated, as they give a quick update on what is happening in the sector. The newsletter is linked to the website, facilitating members to gain more information if they want to. In a comment in the online survey a respondents is clearly positive about what is shared:

"There is so much information available from different sources. It would take me a lot of time to screen through all and make the selection myself. With for example the newsletter, Share-Net make the selection for me in one overview. I feel up to date with access to the latest news and resources in my field. Also regarding the events: it is all there."

However, we noticed that there is some confusion about email lists and it is not entirely clear who does and does not receive which newsletter.

In the new country nodes, the newsletters were just set up. In Burundi, two newsletters have been sent out. In Jordan, one newsletter has been published, connected to the newsletter Promise of the Higher Population Council. The second newsletter is being prepared.

Share-Net international and all the country nodes also set up and maintain websites where information is shared with the members (with the exception of Share-Net Jordan where the website is still under construction). Members mainly visit the website of the nodes they are affiliated to. Websites and newsletters are described by survey respondents as being relevant and up-to-date and useful; members assess them to a lesser extent as innovative (Annex 5, Table iv). Based on the survey data, we can conclude that members are relatively active on the websites of their own country node: a third of the survey respondents has (also indirectly through the secretariat) shared information on the website of their node (32%; 80/246). Interestingly, two third of the members shared online Share-Net information with peers or colleagues, illustrating that the information on the websites is relevant and actively used by members (69%; 171/246) (Annex 5, Table v). However, as the qualitative interviews show, the websites are mainly used as a resource as opposed to an interactive forum, except for Bangladesh, that actively engages members via blogs. In Burundi, the secretariat is waiting to receive a training on website maintenance; hence, it is expected that the website will then more actively be updated, promoted and used.

Box 5. A closer look at the Share-Net website

According to Google Analytics, the Share-Net International website had 7761 unique visitors in the last year, spending 8503 sessions* on it. During the last year (December 2015-November 2016), the Share-Net International website is visited primarily by people in India and the USA (2412 and 1179 respectively), followed by Nigeria and Bangladesh (480 and 467 respectively). Only 426 people of the Netherlands have visited the website in the last year (vs the 798 email addresses of users received from the

secretariat). Unfortunately, the website has a very high bounce rate** (86.9%) which means that visitors do not click further. Only 1.37 pages are visited per session. The high bounce rate could be explained by 1) the common name of Share-Net; the name Share-Net is not unique and the websites of Share-Net International, the Netherlands, Bangladesh and Burundi are not at all among the first hits when entering "Share Net" in Google, and 2) people might

visit the website through links in the newsletters, but don't visit other pages than the one they were re-directed to. Based on a brief analysis of the websites, the evaluation team noticed a few important issues. The website of Share-Net International does not clearly presents itself as an overarching organisation; it is difficult to find the links to the other Share-Net websites. Furthermore, it is also not clear that the websites of the separate country nodes are linked to other country nodes. Other issues that need specific attention; the members mentioned on the Share-Net International webpage are the same as those from the Netherlands (while one would expect information about all members of all country nodes), and as a non-member there is very little information on the website of Share-Net

Bangladesh. Similar comments were given in the online survey: *"Please make the website more user-friendly!"*, *"Website not much really used for sharing"* and *"Difficult search. Have been searching for the Bangladesh website!! but could not find it! no clear link from one to the other when searching!"*.

* A session is a group of interactions that take place on your website within 30 minutes. In other words, a session lasts until there's 30 minutes of inactivity.
** It is the number of visits in which a person leaves your website from the landing page without browsing any further.

5.3.4. Research opportunities

With the start of Share-Net International, two types of research activities were established under Share-Net International: the small grants and the NWO-WOTRO research programme. The majority of respondents acknowledge the importance of these research opportunities within Share-Net. The organisations that obtained a small grant are very positive about this seed money stating it would have been difficult to conduct this research without funding. Some commented in the online survey that the size of the grant is too small. Especially Bangladesh members value the grants.

"They (the grants) are excellent – although a small grant is not so much money - and essential for people who focus on SRHR. As SRHR is often a side-topic [in projects in Bangladesh], thanks to these grants it can be a main topic. The receivers appreciated the grants a lot so they can continue and focus on their work regarding SRHR.!" (Bangladesh interview respondent)

So far, the knowledge created through small grants has not been shared widely among members. In January 2017, a first meeting was organised for the Dutch members in the Netherlands to share lessons from the small grants[3]. In the other countries– as far as we know – no information was shared on lessons learned that came out of small grants.

Members valued the NWO-WOTRO programme and appreciated that a large sum of money is devoted to research on SRHR. However, unless members are closely connected to these studies, they do not know much about research executed with support of NWO-WOTRO programmes. There were several complaints about lengthy NWO-WOTRO processes as well as questions whether the kind of research – like PhD trajectories - was most apt in the target countries.[4] As research projects just started and it takes long before results are produced, feeding back lessons to both policy and NGOs takes a long time. As one respondent argued:

"Because of the long procedures of NWO-WOTRO you miss a part of the reason why Share-Net was set up in the first place; to integrate knowledge."

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[3] This event was delayed partly due to long-term sickness of Share-Net International secretariat coordinator and the subsequent overload of the Share-Net secretariat in the Netherlands.
[4] The stakeholders in the countries don't have sufficient information on how the NWO-WOTRO process is designed. Share-Net International has no say in the amount of funding that goes to NWO-WOTRO and are only consulted in identifying research gaps and developing a call for proposals. In the selection committee is a representative of Share-Net, but only as an observer.

A positive effect however, is that due to these research activities, knowledge institutions have joined the platform, which is a prerequisite to increase knowledge exchange between the different groups of stakeholders. In Jordan, stakeholders were disappointed about the lack of involvement in the NWO-WOTRO procedures, while in Burundi the NWO-WOTRO funding is among one of the most valued activities.

In general, research activities are seen as least useful by the survey respondents (these findings are likely related to a small part of the members which interested in these opportunities) (Annex 5, Table vi). Nevertheless, all members participating in this research, express that the membership is useful to them.

5.4. Reaching objectives

5.4.1. Reaching objectives on country level
In general, members that were interviewed in all country nodes are quite positive about the results of Share-Net. shows the assessment of survey respondents on goals achieved. Active respondents are most positive that knowledge sharing and learning and collaborative exchange is reached.
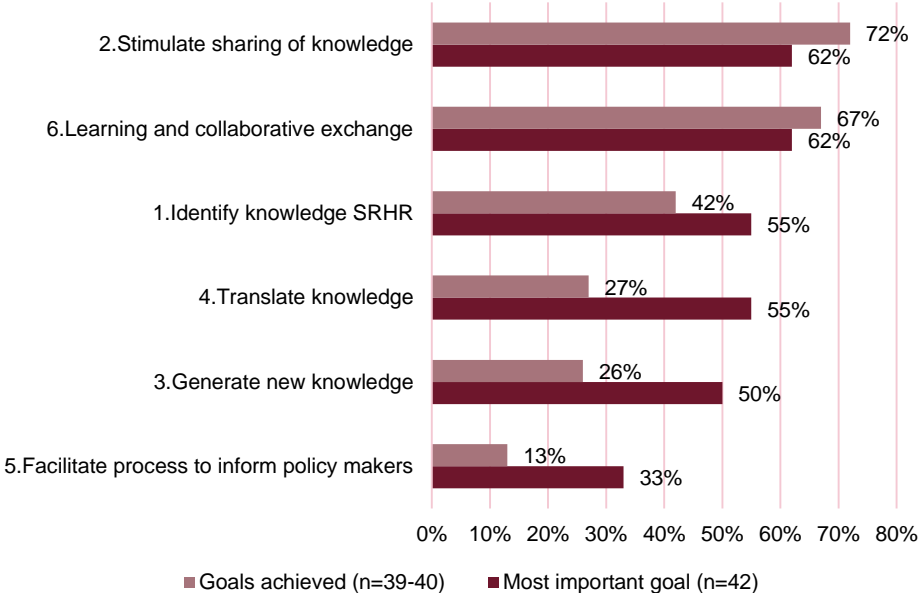
Figure 3: Comparison on most important goals with assessment of goals achieved.

In Burundi, members noticed a shift towards a culture of sharing. For example, one respondent did a document review before the start of Share-Net Burundi, which took a month going from organisation to organisation to find documents. Now these documents can be found on the website of Share-Net Burundi.

"Before the platform, everybody did research and kept it in the cupboard. Others were not aware of this research. Today, we share knowledge, research results are no longer in the cupboard, but are shared. Now we are aware of what is happening."

Challenges
Although respondents are mainly positive about the effectiveness of Share-Net, there are still some challenges.

With regards to goals 3 and 4, the generation and translation of knowledge respectively, respondents feel there is no sufficient focus on research, the translation of research and the application of knowledge (only 26%, respectively 27% of the active respondents believe goals 3 and 4 have been reached, respectively, see Figure 3).Translating research findings to policy briefs was said to remain lip service; in many cases universities do not have or do not make time for these kind of activities. It was suggested MFA could set clearer targets and conditions to stimulate knowledge sharing. A literature review focusing on youth friendly services and CSE which was prepared for the youth week was mentioned as a good example.

More use could be made of the work of the Share-Net working group Linking research and practice. De Haas (2016) noted that key informants provided various suggestions for improving the flow of knowledge between research, policy and practice; (1) creating a more transparent demand for and supply of knowledge; (2) developing and pushing a joint knowledge agenda; (3) increasing opportunities for strengthening linkages between research, policy and practice; (4) developing a system for learning and knowledge sharing; and (5) focusing learning on implementation processes.

In line with this, some members in the Netherlands felt NGOs were not always open to learn from 'critical friends' from research, policy and experts. This applied especially to nuanced information which was not in line with the programmes they developed. The funding by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was also said to be a barrier for knowledge sharing as it leads to competition between members and less openness.

For members it was also unclear if goal 5, facilitating of processes to inform policies, was achieved. In the Netherlands, it was unclear for members whether knowledge generated within Share-Net was used to feed into the policy making process by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). Because policy processes are influenced by many factors and involve many officials, it is difficult to tell if and how knowledge is effectively used in policy making. However, representatives of MFA participated in nearly all Share-Net activities and our research findings shows some examples of knowledge uptake by policy advisors.

According to the interviews and also the survey, Burundi members are much more positive on this goal; The ministry of public health has started to prioritize SRHR. This cannot only been attributed by Share-Net Burundi, but it has certainly helped, according to Burundi interview respondents.

Box 6. Application of knowledge and learning

It is important to note that the six objectives that Share-Net is aiming for are actually more strategies than goals. This notion is already integrated in the strategic note of Share-Net International 2016. According to the draft Theory of Change that was developed, the ultimate objective of Share-Net is that the different stakeholders – researchers, policy makers and civil organisations – actively use the gained knowledge (Share-Net Secretariat, 2016).

In order to decide if Share-Net is actually successful, it is important to understand whether people actually use the knowledge that has been shared or generated. This is more difficult to assess and this dilemma is recognised in most of the country nodes. In Bangladesh and Burundi a remark is made that more monitoring is needed to better understand the impact of Share-Net. In all countries it is obvious that knowledge is shared, but is not clear what

people actually do with info provided, and whether (organisational) learning actually takes place. Although this evaluation captures some examples of learning that is taking place, a different study design would be needed to understand this more deeply. Discussions are also raised by members if superficial versus in-depth learning is taking place. This evaluation will not be able to provide a thorough answer to these discussions.

However, members can give examples in interviews how they used knowledge in their work and this is also confirmed by data form the survey. For instance, some members indicated they used information of Share-Net in writing proposals or in education for students. Three out of four survey respondents (74%; 179/243) think they obtained new knowledge, experience and expertise on SRHR issues through Share-Net and almost two third has

been able to integrate this new knowledge, experience and expertise in their own work (64%; 155/242). In addition, 44% (106/241) of the members agree that Share-Net undertakes activities your organisation cannot do, illustrating that for almost half of the members Share-Net operates in a niche that cannot be taken up by their own organisations (Annex 5, Table vii).

5.4.2. Knowledge exchange between countries

As has been mentioned in the section on the need of Share-Net International (section 5.1.2.), knowledge exchange between countries is still limited. The main tool for inter-country exchange is the Share-Net International newsletter that is jointly developed by the secretariats and distributed under members of the different country nodes. Most international exchange occurs between members of the secretariats: at international events taking place in the Netherlands whereby the coordinators of the three other country nodes are invited or occasional visits of members of the Dutch secretariat to the country nodes. There are few direct interactions between the three other country nodes. Some respondents argued that the added value of Share-Net International has been insufficiently used and that knowledge exchange between countries has not been high on the agenda. The Share-Net International secretariat confirmed that up to now most effort was put in establishing good working country nodes. Looking at the survey data, the majority (76%; 23/32) of the active respondents did neither agree nor disagree there was sufficient communication between the country nodes. This might indicate that a large number of respondents did not know about the exchange or did not really take a position regarding the communication between countries.

Since the interest of members for this intercountry knowledge exchange is limited, it should also be questioned whether Share-Net should prioritise this form of exchange. Some respondents in Jordan and Burundi indicated knowledge exchange within the region or with European countries would also be valuable. The respondents in Bangladesh were more positive about inter-country knowledge exchange:

"The good thing is, Share-Net International tries to connect the main SRHR issues in different countries, and this is a wonderful thing. We are now sitting with people in Jordan, Burundi,…we are learning from each other and this cannot be done in one country."

5.4.3. Unexpected results

Especially for Dutch members, Share-Net has functioned as a 'stage', 'market place' and 'neutral ground'. First of all, Dutch Members mention that through events and websites, Share-Net can be used as 'a stage' to present and showcase work. This is particularly relevant as part of relation management towards the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an important donor, who is present on most of the events. In addition, Share-net also functions as a 'market place', for example to publish job opportunities or to find collaborative partners. As some members indicated, this potential could be used more, for instance in offering and finding internships for students. Importantly, and discussed in more detail in Chapter 7, Share-Net creates a 'neutral ground' where stakeholders with different backgrounds, sometimes competitors, can meet. And through all the events important network opportunities are created, which is not a formal aim of Share-Net in itself, but considered an important reason to join for many members (Annex 5, Table i).

6. DEMOCRACY

Research Questions:
Does Share-Net have an effective way of communicating internally?
To what extent is there mutual trust among the members of Share-Net and between the secretariat and its members?
Is the interaction between members perceived constructive?
To what extent do Share-Net users contribute to and have equal access to resources?
Has the potential of all members been used effectively? EFFICIENCY
How are decisions made within Share-Net and is this process inclusive and effective; and how are conflicts resolved?
Do members take initiative and do they have an influence on Share-Net's structure and future development?

Box 7. Highlights on democracy

Interaction between members
- The interaction within Share-Net is generally assessed positively in terms of openness, although transparency and coherence between working groups could be improved.

Decision making processes
- Decision making processes were generally perceived positively, however views on participation in Share-Net and in decision making varied considerably; a relative large proportion said they were not actively involved.

Governance
- The governance structure of Share-Net International and Share-Net Netherlands is not clear to its members. This is related to the special position of the Netherlands as a country node; Share-Net Netherlands consists of Dutch members working internationally, while the focus in other countries nodes is on their own country.
- Share-Net International as an overarching structure is not inclusive as the different country nodes are not represented in decision making processes.
- The secretariats in the Netherlands, Bangladesh and Burundi are well appreciated by their members.

6.1. Interaction between members

The interaction within Share-Net is generally assessed positively by its members. Both qualitative and quantitate data shows there is mutual trust and openness between the members and between members and the secretariats. This applies to all countries involved. As one member in the Netherlands said: *"I personally trust the Core Group and Steering group in making decisions."*

While most members participating in the survey said communication was open, there were less respondents who also felt the communication was transparent; : only about half of the respondents (55%) found that communication within Share-Net was transparent. (Table 3). Respondents affiliated to Share-Net Netherlands/International were most critical about the openness and transparency; nearly 8% (4/48) disagreed there was open communication and 14% (6/44) felt communication was not transparent (39%; 17/44 neither agreed or disagreed). The competition of funds might be related to this: although there was generally a good level of trust and openness, and although Share-Net has facilitated the establishment of strategic partnership, competition for money is undercurrent for some members, especially in times of calls for proposals. As one member indicated:

"There is a dilemma in the sense that event are sometimes used as showcases rather than open dialogue, which does not stimulate leaning… This is also partly due to the presence of the ministry, people want to impress rather than learn and discuss failures etc."

Table 3: Evaluation of interaction between members of Share-Net by active members.

	Disagree/ totally disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree/ totally agree	Total
An international environment that promotes open communication	7%	20%	73%	60
There is transparent communication between the Share-Net members in my country	11%	34%	55%	56
A bridging platform that brings together various stakeholders in the SRHR domain	-	8%	92%	60
A gathering of separate units (e.g. working groups) that have little or no interaction with each other	50%	26%	24%	58
A closed community that allows little or no interference of others	64%	24%	12%	58

The large majority of survey respondents in all countries felt Share-Net is a bridging platform that brings together various stakeholders in the SRHR domain. That said, a quarter of the respondents (24%) also felt that Share-Net was a gathering of separate units (e.g. working groups) that have little or no interaction with each other, while a similar amount of survey respondents was neutral (26%). Also, 12% felt Share-Net was a closed community (Table 3).

These findings are in line with the qualitative research; some members in the Netherlands for instance felt that a few larger organisations had a rather dominant position. In Bangladesh, the large distance combined with the focus on online exchange are likely to contribute to this feeling. None of the participants of Burundi thought of Share-Net was a gathering of separate units nor a closed community (n=3).

6.2. Participation in decision-making and organisation and functioning of Share-Net

Share-Net is a rather vivid and active network; members participate in events and there are several opportunities to participate in decision making processes. In general, the majority of participation and dialogue on decision making is occurring within the Steering Committees (and the core group members in the Netherlands) as well as in working groups. Although the network is generally active, there are important differences in the extent of participation between different members.

Not all survey respondents felt that members contributed sufficiently to the decision-making and functioning of Share-Net; only 26% thinks members contribute enough. This applied specifically to the members affiliated to the Netherlands/International. Only 20% felt that all members contributed sufficiently, while 30% felt this was not the case and half didn't know. This picture was somewhat more positive for Bangladesh and Burundi; in Bangladesh 3 out of 8 respondents felt members contributed sufficiently, while half of the 8 respondents did not know if this was the case. In Burundi, nearly all responded positively (3 out of 4).

Table 4: Contributions to and benefits of Share-net according to active members.

	International & Netherlands	Bangladesh	Burundi	Total
	n=46	n=8	n=4	n=58
Do all members in your country/node contribute sufficiently? (yes)	20%	37%	75%	26%
Do all members in your country/node benefit sufficiently? (yes)	28%	37%	100%	34%

Views regarding the participation and functioning of the own organisation in Share-Net differed significantly among members. While 44% described their participation as (very) active, 30% felt it was

(very) passive and 25% was neutral (n=59). The same applies for perspectives regarding the involvement in decision-making of Share-Net: 32% indicated they were (very) actively involved, 29% said they were active nor passive and 39% said they were (very) passive (n=56) (Annex 5, Tables viii-ix).

Asking members whether they considered Share-Net International as a network with a top-down approach or a network where decisions are taken democratically, most people felt it was rather a democratic network. At a scale from 0-10 (0 standing for top-down and 10 for a network were decisions are taken democratically), in Bangladesh respondents rated Share-Net a 5.5, Burundi a 8 and Netherlands/International a 7 (median rates with 1.9, 1.5 and 1.9 the standard deviations, respectively).

6.3. A closer look at interaction and decision making processes for the various country nodes
Share-Net International and Netherlands
In *the Netherlands*, members generally felt the network was member driven and that there was lot of space for members to participate or take the lead, for instance in initiating a workshop. The secretariat was mentioned as an important actor to facilitate this process. As one respondent stated:

"Decision making processes are not bottom up nor top down, but horizontal. A lot is happening jointly. The secretariat is really facilitating this process and is following the input of its members."

Members also have a say in decision making processes, however, in practice members having sufficient capacity in terms of time they could invest, were said to be dominant within the network. As one respondent stated:

"The big organisations are dominant. They have the capacity to win tenders by hiring SRHR experts to write proposals at the cost of smaller knowledge organisations."

The most important way members can voice their views, is participating in business meetings which are organised on a yearly base. However, according to several members, time is usually short to really discuss issues in depth. It was also noted not all members participate in the business meeting and that especially the smaller organisations are not represented, while they might have a specific opinion which is not taken into account.

It must be noted that several active members indicated they were not very keen or interested to participate in decision making processes and that they would rather spend their time working on specific themes and/or participating in workshops.

Decision making processes within working groups and expert meetings were generally perceived as very democratic. This was confirmed during the observation of a steering group meeting and a working group meeting. One member in an interview stated:

"The expert-meetings are so democratic that it becomes tiring. We receive so many e-mails asking us if we approve of certain decisions. In many cases the Share-Net secretariat could take more the lead."

Country nodes of Bangladesh, Burundi and Jordan
In *Bangladesh* all respondents described Share-Net Bangladesh as an open network where users were able to express themselves freely. Even with the current situation in the country – the LGBT community is threatened and repressed – members indicated they trusted each other and the network continues to share information. The good reputation of both host institutions enhances the

confidentiality of the network. Extra safety measurements are however taken into account (e.g. screening sensitive words in textual outings). Given the large number of users and travel distances it is not possible for all the members to come together during Resource Group Meetings. During these meetings however, respondents stated that participants' needs are heard and addressed. For instance, a topic that arose during a meeting - how to include boys in SRHR - got much attention, so it was decided to organize another meeting entirely to this theme (i.e. bottom-up approach).

In *Burundi*, in the short time since its establishment, Share-Net Burundi has succeeded in building trust among its members. They are no longer afraid to share information and they understand that it is important to work together. But it is a *"fluid trust",* that tends to disappear when there is competition over funds. One respondent indicates that the interaction between the members is not yet fluent and that most initiatives come from Share-Net Burundi secretariat, more than from the members. This is linked to the recent start of the network. There is the need to increase the physical interactions among the members through increasing the number of face-to-face meetings. Furthermore, according to the respondents, smaller working groups with active members could be established for specific projects – e.g. writing an article – that would meet each month. This is illustrated by the following quotes of the respondents:

"Since we are only at the beginning, we cannot yet evaluate this. We are sharing, but not yet enough, this can be improved. On the website, in the groups,…"

According to the respondents, Share-Net Burundi is structured to allow for bottom-up decision-making and initiatives. Members can propose activities and changes to the action plan and if they have good arguments, these suggestions can be added. E.g. the decision to organize a writing workshop was taken in the technical working group. Also the Terms of Reference of each technical working group and the action plan were discussed and validated in the groups.

In *Jordan*, activities have just started. Three meetings with the steering group were organized. In the first meeting (May 2016) the functions of the members were discussed, the objectives were reviewed and the work plan of Share-Net Jordan for the next period was discussed. The second meeting (October 2016) focused on the achievements of the project and reviewed the action plan for the year 2017, the third meeting (November 2016) was held with some of steering committee members and the Share-Net international team which visited Jordan (13 – 18 November 2016). People felt the meetings of the Steering Committee are very open and that there generally is trust among the different members. Although respondents were generally positive about the participation of members, they indicated that certain members are less active.

6.4. Governance structure

The governance structure of Share-Net with the different country nodes and overarching Share-Net International is known by members in the various countries in the sense that they are aware of its existence. That said, members mainly feel affiliated with the Share-Net network in their own country. For Share-Net Bangladesh, Burundi and Jordan familiarity with the platform is rather straightforward, but in the Netherlands the governance structure including the name is confusing: Share-Net Netherlands and International are intertwined, and as opposed to the other country nodes, the vast majority of members in the Netherlands work internationally and not within the Netherlands. This is confusing to the members, but also to the outside world. As one member stated:

"To me it [difference between Share-Net International and Share-Net Netherlands] is kind of blur".

The confusion also has implications for the content of the work of Share-Net. For instance, one active member argued the direction Share-Net Netherlands is taking is not clear: is it aiming to be a Dutch SRHR platform or an truly international one? The complex governance structure was also said to lead to inefficiencies as similar issues are usually discussed both in the Steering Committee (Share-Net International) and the Core Group (Share-Net Netherlands), while it is not always clear which activity is part of Share-Net Netherlands and Share-Net International. Moreover, facilitating the two separate structures also requires a lot of work for the secretariat, leaving less space to work on other issues. Some short quotes of Share-Net members are illustrative:

"To me, the Steering Group is like a board, while the core group is more a discussion group ['praatgroep']."

"The Core Group is taking its role very seriously; they want to provide advice on each discussion made by the Steering Group. The decision making process of the Steering Group is already time consuming and as the Core Group has an advisory role it even takes longer."

"The division of which meeting is part of Share-Net Netherlands [steered by the Core Group] and which meeting is Share-Net International [part of tasks Steering Group] is not clear."

Generally, the governance structure of Share-Net International including the various country nodes was perceived as top down, whereby the Dutch dominated. Several members in Bangladesh, Burundi and Jordan participating in this research argued Share-Net International is undemocratic as country nodes are not represented in the Steering Committee and as a consequence, hardly have any influence on decisions taken at this level.

In *Bangladesh*, the Steering Committee is formed by the heads of both host institutions (see box 1) and it plays an important role in guiding the Share-Net Bangladesh platform. While the day to day activities are carried out by the coordinators and the smaller teams of each of the organisations, the Steering Committee lends their expertise for taking important decisions such as which directions they should go or strategies they should follow. They also review reports and activity plans before sharing with Share-Net International. As one respondent said:

"Given their vast experience working on SRHR and communications, they give important insights and help make our activities more practical and effective. I think, the role of the Steering Committee is very important for smooth operation of Share-Net Bangladesh."

In *Burundi*, the interview respondents were very pleased with the decision-making procedures and felt they could influence the functioning and decision-making of Share-Net. Also three of the four interview respondents state that they would prefer to have more face-to-face meetings to increase participation of members in functioning and decision-making.

"Share-Net Burundi is more a bottom-up organization, but with a certain influence of the top of the triangle. But the dominant approach is bottom-up. Everything comes from the technical meetings. E.g. when we decided who could go to the writing workshop in Uganda, this decision was taken in the meeting with all the members."

In *Jordan*, the Steering Group also consist of various high level representatives of the key organisations working on SRHR issues, although it was just set up.

6.5. Role of secretariat

All respondents were positive about the role of the secretariats; the vast majority knew how to contact their secretariat (96%; 52/54), felt their secretariat was easy to reach (94%; 50/53) and that the people working at the secretariats were ready to respond to questions (89%; 49/55). Nearly all (98%; 55/56) felt that the work of the secretariats was crucial for the functioning of Share-Net. These figures are comparable for the different country nodes. This positive feedback is even more remarkable, considering the various challenging contexts in each country as well challenges related to the staff of various secretariats.

In *the Netherlands* members assessed the secretariat very positively, although there were some discussions as well as different views on the desirable role of the Share-Net secretariat; whether it should be 'facilitative and supportive', focusing primarily on serving members or 'take a more proactive and steering role'. Generally members had a good understanding of the amount of work and the limitations of the secretariat. Some members even said they 'over-asked' the secretariat themselves, realizing they could be more active themselves (e.g. by searching for information on the website instead of asking an employee). Members also appreciated the secretariat managed to continue activities when the coordinator was not in a position to fulfil his tasks. As the number of activities is high putting a high pressure on the secretariat, several members suggested to plan less activities or involve the members more. Secretariat staff confirmed the heavy workload.

In *Bangladesh*, respondents pointed out that one of the strengths of Share-Net Bangladesh is the fact that two host institutions are responsible for the network, each bringing in their own expertise. Both are committed to Share-Net and underline the key objectives of Share-Net International and have jointly formulated the objectives of Share-Net Bangladesh. The two teams meet regularly and work by monthly activity plans.

"Having two teams, two different disciplines is not challenging, they complement each other, and that is a strength. One group's specialty is research, the other group collects and collates and disseminates research."

One respondent mentions that priorities might differ in the two organisations and that it might be advisable to visualize or register the time commitment of both groups, as to monitor the input of both host institutions.

7. DIVERSITY

Research Questions:
To what extent are the political positions and ideological contributions of all members reflected in Share-Net's strategies and activities?
Are members diverse enough for the Network's purpose and strategies?

Box 8. Highlights on diversity

Diversity in terms of actors or organisations involved:

- Various kind of actors are involved in Share-Net: CSOs/practitioners, knowledge institutions and governments which is highly appreciated among its members. This applies to all countries involved. However the private sector was largely absent, except for Bangladesh.
- Only 30% of the respondent feel Share-Net is a balanced group of people from different gender.

Diversity in terms of fields or themes addressed:

- Despite the various themes which are addressed, some members still felt the choice of these themes was a limitation.
- Linkages with other topics related to SRHR, like sanitation, migration or sustainability could be further explored according to several members.

7.1. Diversity in terms of backgrounds and gender

Overall

The composition in terms of various kind of actors involved in Share-Net was divers in all countries; CSOs/practitioners, knowledge institutions and governments were well represented. Nearly all members interviewed mention the importance of combining the different sectors in one platform. However the private sector was absent in most countries, except for Bangladesh.

Box 9. Diversity of the survey respondents

Looking at the respondents in the survey (n= 229) ; CSO representatives were by far the largest group (44%), followed by members attached to a university (21%), international organisation (10%), ministry (9%) , freelance (7%), and 'other' (8%).

The respondents were highly educated: 74% completed a master degree and even 13% a PhD, while another 13% obtained a bachelor. 61% were female, 38% male and 1% transgender/other/don't want to answer.

Nearly half of the respondent (48%) feel that working groups are balanced in terms of gathering people with different backgrounds (41% was neutral - Table 5).

Looking at diversity in terms of gender, it appears the network is dominated by females. Only 33% of the survey respondent feel Share-Net is a balanced group of people from different genders. Looking at the composition of working groups, only 27% feel working groups are balanced in terms of gathering people of different gender (Table 5). Looking at the composition of the survey respondents, it appears especially in the Netherlands females dominate; 73% of the survey respondents were female, while overall 61% were female.

Table 5: Perspectives on diversity in terms of gender and backgrounds.

	Very disagree/ disagree	Neutral	Agree/ very agree	Total
Share-Net is a balanced group of people from different genders	35%	32%	33%	57
Working groups gather people with different backgrounds	11%	41%	48%	44
Working groups are balanced in terms of gathering people of different gender	16 36%	16 36%	12 27%	44

Share-Net International and Netherlands

Nearly all members interviewed in the Netherlands mention the importance of combining the different sectors, sometimes also referred to as 'blood types', in one platform: researchers, practitioners and policy makers. In the Netherlands, CSOs especially mention the relevance of exchanging knowledge with scientists, while for scientists it was useful to obtain a better understanding of CSOs working on SRHR issues. Although multi-stakeholder exchange was highly valued, according to several respondents still the 'usual suspects', and particularly a group of larger CSOs dominated the network (referred to in Dutch as 'het wereldje'). Although some initiatives were organised focusing on the role of the private sector, such as a breakfast meeting with the private sector, only a few (social) enterprises participate in the network. The importance of involving the private sector was already mentioned in 2010 for a stocktaking exercise for Share-Net Netherlands (Jurgens, 2010). As some respondents mentioned more thought could be put in the objectives of involving the private sector; e.g. do you want to engage with producers of SRHR products (supply side) or are you aiming to discuss conditions of employees working in the private sector.

The network is perceived as 'mainly white, and dominated by females ' by the various members. As one interviewee suggested;

"If the country nodes would be represented in the Steering Committee [of Share-Net International] you would already have more diversity in terms of ethnicity and religion".

In contrast to other country nodes, Share-Net Netherlands consists of Dutch organisations working internationally and does not involve organisations focusing on Dutch SRHR (with only a few exceptions). There were different opinions if this focus should change or not. Some argued for instance SRHR is related to transnational linkages and global challenges which would justify an increases focus on SRHR issues with a transnational dimension.

Interestingly, some professionals who are (also) working on SRHR issues in the Netherlands argued they have difficulties to participate because of a lack of time. This particularly applied to the group of professionals directly working with clients like doctors and midwives and to people working in the private sector. It was argued 'the culture' of Share-Net was more geared towards CSOs and research and less to the private sector. As one respondent stated:

"Time is money. CSOs can spend a whole week for [the organisation of] a thematic meeting. […] They [private sector] have a different view on the world. If you want to involve more companies you have to consider this far better [than is currently done]."

A limited number of individual members (mainly consultants) are involved in the network, while there are many more active in the field of SRHR. It was argued the fee was a barrier for individuals to become a member. As various meetings are open to a wider public, individuals can still participate in Share-Net activities. However, some respondents argued it is also relevant to have these individuals

as (paid) members 'on board'. As there are many consultants operating in the field of SRHR, they are an influential group and therefore it is also important to engage them in the network.
Other groups of organisations who were identified to be not (well) represented within the Dutch network are media organisations, international organisations, organisations focusing on the supply side of SRHR as well other Dutch ministries.

Country Nodes of Bangladesh, Burundi and Jordan
In *Bangladesh*, with over 500 members, Share-Net Bangladesh is a broad network bringing together researchers, government, (development) practitioners, but also profit and non-profit organisations. However, the majority of the members is involved in SRHR research and one of the respondents feels they still need to attract more policy makers, people of the private sector as well as organisations involved in related topics such as water and sanitation, or education. Another member also believes it is one of Share-Net's function to create more linkages at international level with other initiatives on SRHR.

In *Burundi*, a diverse group is involved including non-governmental organisations, ministries, international organisations, universities and research institutes, religious and community leader. As the network is still young, it is too early to draw strong conclusions on diversity. The participants in the meetings of Share-Net Burundi are selected by the member organisations based on their expertise related to the topic being discussed. Some organisations send their Monitoring and evaluation staff, some send technical experts from various backgrounds, including doctors, psychologies, social scientists, researchers and statisticians. This was said to allow the groups to be reflective. According to one respondent, the mix and match is done more on the level of the expertise of the participants than on their socio-demographic characteristics. Hence, in the composition of the technical working groups there is not always a balance between men, women, young and old. The respondents argue it is up to Share-Net Burundi to discuss and negotiate with the members to send a representative that responds to their needs.

In *Jordan* the platform just started and a Steering Committee was composed where mainly 'high level representatives' of organisations are involved. According to one of the respondents, the most important issue related to diversity, is the language: if the platform wants to exchange knowledge, and wants to link research and practice, the information should be available in Arabic. All professionals at manage level have a good understanding of English, however this is not the case for people working at grass-roots level, with communities.

7.2. Diversity in terms of fields or themes addressed:

Themes within SRHR
As a SRHR network, Share-Net covers a wide variety of themes; eight themes were chosen democratically. Still it was argued that some themes are dominant in the work of Share-Net, like Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy, Comprehensive Sexuality Education and Youth friendly Health services. In the Netherlands, these topics are partly influenced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the other countries, emphasize was placed on different themes although still closely connected to donor country the Netherlands. Some respondents felt this was a limitation and that particular topics are not sufficiently addressed (see also the survey results discussed below).

In *the Netherlands*, it was argued that the focus on working with fixed thematic working groups also creates less flexibility to switch to other topics and to less openness within the network. As a result, some members feel less connected to these topics and fall outside the scope. Moreover, the focus on specific issues also limits possible linkages with the private sector. As one interviewee argued:

"The CPD agenda [International Conference on Population and Development] is the broad framework for SRHR. Many do not know they [members working on SRHR] are in fact working on a small part of this agenda. Maternal health and Family planning is the largest part of this agenda. Maternal health is such a crucial component, and what is Share-Net doing on this topic…? It is fine if you choose for certain themes as youth or CSE as long as you aware of this."

Another respondent missed attention for and information over crucial international SRHR issues like the ZIKA virus: *"The ZIKA virus was mega and it was not an issue within Share-Net at all, because the country nodes were not dealing with this issue and Share-Net is bound to the pillars of BZ [MFA]."*

While there is much overlap between SRHR and HIV , there is still no full integration of these topics and many activities are organised separately in the Netherlands. The division has a long history; before the establishment of Share-Net, professionals focusing on HIV/AIDS and SRHR have been working quite separate from each other, which is also related to a separation of support programmes of the Dutch MFA. It was stated that diversity in terms of real participation and coherence in discussing topics, is not guaranteed by just having a diverse group of people 'on board'. Just by the set-up of events or the choice for specific themes, events can attract a particular group of people, for instance people working only on HIV/AIDS, or people focusing mainly on Comprehensive Sexuality Education.

In *Jordan*, the focus on specific themes, although discussed in consultation with Jordan SRHR organisations, was felt to be a limitation; especially for research funding.

In the online survey, we asked respondents in the Netherlands, Bangladesh and Burundi, if which topics were not sufficiently covered (Figure 4). Infertility, biomedical aspects of SRHR, HIV/AIDS, sexual diversity, and health services were mentioned most as topics which were not sufficiently covered.
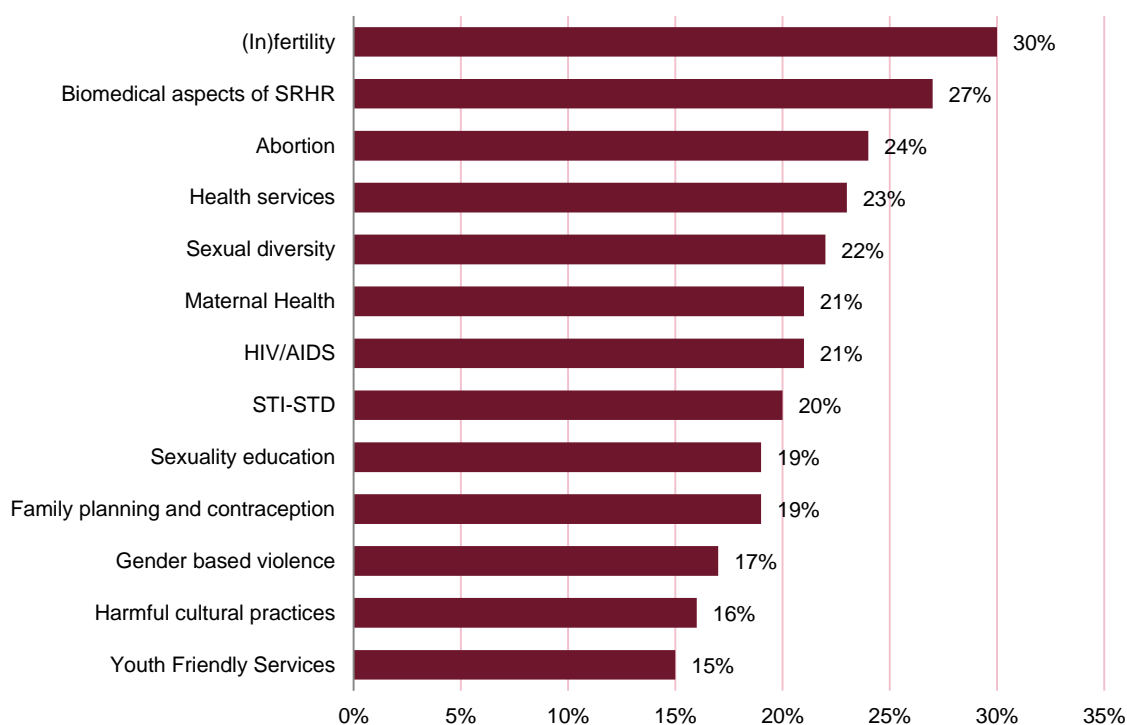
Figure 4: Topics that are not sufficiently covered by Share-Net, according to the survey participants (n = 268)

Linkages with themes outside SRHR

As a network on SRHR issues, it is evident that the focus of Share-Net is primarily on SRHR. However some members in the Netherlands felt linkages with other topics like migration or sustainability could be further explored. This could improve policy coherence for (sustainable) development and would also be in line with the SDGs. Occasionally linkages were explored like an expert meeting on migration. It was also discussed there were no or hardly any linkages with the other four knowledge platforms initiated and funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and focusing on main themes of Dutch development cooperation policy: security and the rule of law, inclusive economic development, food security and water.

In *Bangladesh*, however, instead of focusing on the SRHR area only, Share-Net Bangladesh also includes those organisations who have SRHR as side-topic or cross-cutting theme, as well as the organisations who work on related issues as water and sanitation (important for e.g. menstrual hygiene management). Still, as was discussed above, Bangladesh respondents mention these cross linkages do not receive enough attention yet.

8. DYNAMISM

Research Questions:
To what extent is the network flexible, and the structure facilitative and supportive to adapt to changing circumstances?
Are the resources flexible and adapted to the strategic needs?
Do members take initiative and do they have an influence on Share-Net's structure and future development?
To what extent do all Share-Net users contribute to and benefit fromShare-Net's achievements?
Were the goals achieved on time? EFFICIENCY
Has the budget been used in an optimal way between 2013 - 2016? EFFICIENCY

Box 10. Highlights of dynamism

- The network has a flexible approach on practical issues.
- Member driven: so the network is 'as dynamic as the input of its members'.

- Bangladesh and Burundi members are more positive on dynamism of the network compared to International/Dutch members.
- Connections with other networks/stakeholders could be strengthened.

Share-Net International and the Netherlands

Most respondents felt Share-Net has created a new positive dynamic in their countries (72%). The figures were quite similar for the various countries. In Bangladesh even all 8 people felt it created a new positive dynamic. However, the majority of Dutch/International members do not feel that Share-Net is a flexible network that easily adapt to changing circumstances, only 43% agree with this statement (Table 6).

Table 6: Dynamism of Share-Net.

	International & Netherlands	Bangladesh	Burundi	Total
	n=46	n=8	n=4	n=58
The Share-Net network has generated a new positive dynamic in the SRHR sector in my country (yes)	67%	100%	75%	72%
Do you feel Share-Net is a flexible network that easily adapts to changing circumstances? (yes)	43%	75%	100%	52%

From the observations and interviews we can conclude that Share-Net does have a rather flexible approach in practical issues, with regards to events and activities. The secretariat is very facilitative, following the input of the members. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the donor, also provides sufficient space to manoeuvre in at least practical decision making, although members of the secretariat would welcome more flexibility in the budget. Why are Dutch members still hesitant to label Share-Net as dynamic? This might be caused by the fact that the network is as dynamic as its members. Since the network is member driven; initiatives that respond to urgent issues will only happen when members take the lead. The way how Share-Net is set up, with a yearly work plan and planned activities, is not really geared to responding to emerging trends outside. In addition, some of the connections with e.g. other (SRHR) networks could be strengthened. The extended budget of Share-Net International compared to its predecessor Share-Net The Netherlands is seen as an enabling factor for dynamism; there is more room for events and follow up.

Country Nodes of Bangladesh, Burundi and Jordan

The assessment of the Bangladesh and Burundi members on the statement that 'Share-Net is a flexible network that easily adapt to changing circumstances', is more positive compared to the Dutch/International members. In Bangladesh, 75% and in Burundi all participants feel this is the case (Table 6).

In Bangladesh, the network is somewhat more focused online and members are asked to post blogs. It is likely that these blogs reflect actual events and discussions and make the network more dynamic compared to for example the Netherlands, although it is also clear that this input from members is stimulated and encouraged by the country coordinators and does not happen by itself. Another example that shows the flexibility of the platform is related to the safety issues. The website, in consultation with Share-Net International, was adjusted after the murder of an activist.

In Burundi, according to the respondents, Share-Net Burundi is flexible and adapts easily to changing circumstances. One respondent said that Share-Net Burundi *"follows the rhythm of the local situation"*. On the other hand, although the action plan was somewhat flexible, the flexibility to add additional activities is limited due to budget limitations.

For the country node of Jordan it was too early to assess dynamism within the platform, although the delay of setting up the platform and the change of the coordinator could also be perceived as flexibility of the Share-Net International network and an adaption to changing circumstances. Respondents emphasised the platform was just set up, and that they needed more time to work on the website and organize activities.

9. IDENTITY

Research Questions:
What is the unique selling point of Share-Net and is this used to profile and promote Share-Net?
Do members identity themselves with Share-Net (and is their identity as a Share-Net member balanced with their organisational identity)?
To what extent do Share-Net users have a sense of belonging? *(comes from democracy)*

Box 11. Highlights on identity

- Share-Net is well known and appreciated in the sector in the Netherlands – for the other country nodes it is too early to tell. Nevertheless, people don't distinguish between Share-Net the Netherlands and Share-Net International.

- The unique selling point of Share-Net is that in the involved countries it is the only network covering the broad field of SRHR.
- The main divisive factor is the competition between organisations if funding is involved..

In the survey we asked about the respondents' sense of belonging to Share-Net (Table 7) and asked them whether or not they agreed with a number of items related to identity (Table 8).

Table 7: Sense of belonging among active Share-Net members on a scale from 0 – 10.

	MEDIAN (sd)	n
International & Netherlands	6 (2.3)	48
Bangladesh	4 (2.8)	8
Burundi	5 (2.1)	3
TOTAL	6 (2.4)	59

The sense of belonging to Share-Net is highest in the Netherlands, though the difference is not significant. This seems self-evident as the members in this country node have been collaborating for a long time already. Given the fact that Bangladesh and Burundi have only recently established their networks, a score of 4-5 out of 10 is not surprising (Table 7).

Table 8: Aspects of identity expressed by active Share-Net members (Weighted average of score from 1 to 5 totally disagree – totally agree).

	International & Netherlands	Bangladesh	Burundi	Total
	n=45-48	n=6-8	n=4	n=56-59
I often experience conflicts in choosing to spend time in Share-Net rather than spending time in my primary work organisation or institute.	3.1	2.6	2.0	3.0
Share-Nets vision and mission are in line with the mission and vision of my primary work organisation or institute.	4.1	4.1	4.5	4.1
I feel that most Share-net members have a strong sense of ownership of the network.	3.4	3.4	3.8	3.4
I think Share-Net is a strong brand; in our sector everybody knows what the network stands for.	3.9	3.4	3.3	3.8

	International & Netherlands	Bangladesh	Burundi	Total
	n=45-48	n=6-8	n=4	n=56-59
Share-Net is mainly driven by joint values of its members	3.7	3.9	4.0	3.7
I feel connected with different members of Share-Net	3.6	4.0	4.0	3.7
I sometimes experience competition between members of Share-Net	3.5	3.1	2.0	3.3

Most items in Table 8 score similarly across the countries: the member institutions share their vision and mission with Share-Net, there is a rather positive sense of ownership, the network is driven by joint values and the respondents feel connected with the different members. Logically, more respondents from the Netherlands think Share-Net is a strong brand, but also the respondents from the other countries tend to answer this item positively. In the Netherlands and in Bangladesh members sometimes experience competition, while this is less the case for Burundi. A possible explanation for this last figure is the very low response rate, and that mainly those very closely linked to Share-Net – and not in competition for funding – have responded. A similar hypothesis could be used for the first items about the conflict in spending time on Share-Net activities that is highest in the Netherlands and lowest in Burundi. The latter could also be linked to the number of activities that is currently much higher in the Netherlands than in the recently started Burundi network.

A final identity question focused on whether the respondents present his/her organisation as a Share-Net member. All respondents answered always or sometimes in the different nodes, except for about 39% (19/49) from the respondents associated with the Netherlands or international.

Share-Net International and the Netherlands
According to the respondent in the interviews, Share-Net is well known and appreciated in the sector in the Netherlands. Mainly the fact that Share-Net is a focal point – by contacting one person, you can reach the entire SRHR sector in the Netherlands - is much appreciated.

Respondents feel they belong to Share-Net – even though the distinction between Share-Net International and Share-Net the Netherlands is often not clear, as previously mentioned. There is no specific identity with either Share-Net International or the Netherlands; the difference is completely unclear to most members. The level of identification with Share-Net is logically positively linked to the level of participation.

As is reflected in the survey data, the only divisive factor between the members is the competition for funding, including the need to profile one's organisation in this perspective:

"Share-Net should be a platform to stay up-to-date about the latest developments in SRHR but I feel in reality members involved in organising activities are often concerned with displaying their own work which narrows the agenda, and as such the outcomes, of such meetings." (survey respondent)

Interview respondents mainly see that their organisational interests overlap with the Share-Net interests. In particular time constraints limit people in their contribution to Share-Net. This is particularly the case for the private sector and medical professionals working on SRHR.

Country Nodes of Bangladesh, Burundi and Jordan
While there are many other initiatives in *Bangladesh*, Share-Net Bangladesh is considered quite unique because it focuses on sharing knowledge rather than implementation and because it has a

broad focus. E.g. other websites on SRHR topics exist, but these websites often just cover one specific topic (e.g. child marriage or GBV) while the websites of Share-Net Bangladesh and Share-Net International report on all topics related with SRHR. In general, people feel connected with the network but one respondent does report that Share-Net should brand themselves more. *"The name Share-Net itself does not say that much. They should think more about branding."*

Responding to the unique characteristics of Share-Net *Burundi*, all respondents agreed that it is the only platform that canalizes knowledge in the field of SRHR. Nevertheless, suggestions are made to make it more appealing and visible, such as linking up with other portals in other fields, such as agriculture, education and environment. Also better connecting with search engines as Google would be helpful to make Share-Net Burundi better known. All respondents from Burundi feel very connected to Share-Net, though that may also be related to the fact that only very active members were interviewed. *"Share-Net Burundi is our baby." "I feel that the ideals of Share-Net Burundi are my ideals. I feel really encouraged to support and reach the objectives."*

In *Jordan*, there was also no similar network, but it was too early to speak about an identity.

10. SUSTAINABILITY

Research Questions:

How can the positive effects of Share-Net International's activities continue in case the financing of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ceases?

What might be appropriate ways to ensure financing and future sustainability of the knowledge platform?

What are the perspectives of members on how and in what form the platform can continue?

How can the continuation of the national nodes be sustained, in case overall financing for Share-Net International ceases?

Box 12. Highlights of sustainability

- As Share-Net has a long history in the Netherlands – it was established in 2001, see Box 1 with active paid membership, it is likely to continue to exist. Reducing the budget would not lead to stopping activities, but to reducing the number and intensity of the activities.
- It is clear from the in-depth interviews that sustainability and self-sustenance was not well embedded in the set-up of the country nodes of

Bangladesh, Burundi and Jordan and that it is too soon to stop or even reduce the funding in these three country nodes without the risk of Share-Net stopping its activities.
- Over all the different nodes, there is consensus that the most important activities to continue are the face-to-face meetings (possibly reduced in themes and intensity) and the website/newsletter (less frequent).

This paragraph is mainly focusing on qualitative data, as the survey did not include questions on budget and sustainability.

Share-Net International and the Netherlands

Most members interviewed felt that Share-Net Netherlands is a sustainable network that will continue to exist, in one way or another. They mention two main reasons: 1) Share-Net in the Netherlands already has long history and can demonstrate good outcomes and advantages, and 2) because of the commitment of its members who are willing to pay a substantial membership fee. This was widely supported, as it showed true dedication and commitment of the members and also makes the platform more sustainable. With the exception of one respondent, people interviewed felt the contribution should not be increased in case government support seizes, indicating that the financial commitment of the members to Share-Net has its limits.

Many respondents expect that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will continue to support Share-Net, but possible with a reduced budget. In this case, respondents and participants in the workshop make a number of suggestions of what could be changed:
- The amount of meetings and activities could be reduced
- More volunteers could be engaged
- The number of themes could be reduced
- The newsletter could be send out less frequently
- Reducing the involvement of the secretariat and make the network fully member-driven
- Finding other donors. An interesting constraint mentioned by several respondents is that Share-Net is too much Dutch oriented and that it is not a real international network. This has consequences for attracting (international) donors as they are not likely to financially support a Dutch network.

Generally, there was resistance of trying 'to sell' Share-Net services as this would be direct competition with services individual members offer.

Regarding efficiency, the respondents found it difficult to assess if the budget has been spent in an optimal way. Not many members have insight in budget spending. Nevertheless, members feel that the establishment of Share-net International as one of the knowledge platforms and the related increased budget has facilitated many additional activities, involvement of good experts in meetings and more quality of for example preparation or support from secretariat to organize logistics. So the establishment of Share-Net International has resulted not only in organizing more activities, but also in a professionalization of Share-Net Netherlands which has been operational before.

The members within Share-Net who are active in the Steering Committee or core group or are a member of the secretariat and who have more insight knowledge, clarify that there is some underspending of the budget but this can be well justified as the set up and starting phase of Share-Net Jordan and Burundi were delayed. There has also been some underspending of the budgets for the small grants due to a delay in the distribution of these grants (Annual report 2014 & 2015). The only criticism related to the budget by some members are related to the (perceived) relatively high costs of KIT as leading agency. One member said:

"It [the secretariat] is hosted at a knowledge institution, so the staff is expensive."

That said, one other respondent felt KIT used reasonable fees and offered good value for money.

Country Nodes of Bangladesh, Burundi and Jordan
Among the respondents in the Netherlands, there were different views on the relevance of upholding other country nodes. Those members who were well connected to the country nodes, or were more 'in the lead' of Share-Net, feel the country nodes are unique and therefore necessary to continue. Also it was argued that especially Jordan and Burundi were just set up, and that as a donor country, it would require further commitment to continue supporting the country nodes. Members who are more at a distance to these nodes, feel there is less urgency to continue the country nodes in case of budget constraints, especially as the added value is not clear to them.

Furthermore, it was argued that self-sustenance of the various country nodes was not an integrated part of the programme itself. By some members, the nodes were seen as 'donor-driven' or perceived as an 'old' form of development cooperation.

Bangladesh
All respondents feel that there is a need for a platform like Share-Net Bangladesh and believe they should look for other financing sources in case the current funding would stop or decrease. Several options to continue Share-Net Bangladesh were mentioned, including

- Charging members
- Asking other organisations to take up activities.
- Selling services – Share-Net as a sellable product

The first two options are however considered quite unlikely since other organisations also depend on their funding agencies (soft money). Regarding the last option, a business model would be needed but given the fact that Share-Net Bangladesh is still a very young organisation, this needs to be further discussed and developed.

"…provide info for public good, if you make it a sellable product…public good cannot be a sellable product but a part of the products should be financed by themselves, and then other activities through funding of the Netherlands or Bangladesh, etc."

According to the respondents, the priority activities would be the website, the newsletters and the face-to-face meetings. For all respondents, it was difficult to select activities since they are considered equally important, complementing each other. In fact, more activity funding was asked in order to enable them to organize more meetings.

Participants also expressed the need for Share-Net International to continue:

"Share-Net International is important as overarching structure, also if there is less funding there will always be the need for coordination between the nodes."
"Even with less funding, there is a need for Share-Net International. Instead of visiting so many sites, they can get all things in Share-Net International website."

Burundi
While the respondents feel they are on the right track, there is consensus that Share-Net Burundi cannot yet exist without any funding. It is not sufficiently established yet, and the respondents think that if the funding would cease after phase I, Share-Net Burundi could not yet continue. More time is needed to:
- make members fully aware of the importance of Share-Net Burundi. Once they understand the importance they can start to contribute financially themselves.
- generate outputs and impact. Once Share-Net Burundi is sufficiently known, other donors could understand that supporting it is important. But for now, the big organisations, that are still getting to know Share-Net Burundi, are waiting to see what the platform will produce. Therefore, according to a respondent, Share-Net Burundi still need 2 or 3 years of seed funding before they can be released.

Another suggestion to improve sustainability was to start generating own income.

If the funding would stop, there is agreement that the most important activities to continue are the website and the working group meetings. Also research is important to continue, but here the focus could be on less expensive research such as literature reviews.

Jordan
As mentioned before, in Jordan, Share-Net was primarily seen as a research platform. Grant facilities were seen as one of the most important activities to sustain, alongside face-to-face meetings. As Share-Net Jordan was just set up, people felt the platform first needed to show its relevance before discussing sustaining the platform. Seeking for other funds was mentioned as one option: most respondents had extended experience in applying for funds and especially people working for CSOs relied on different funding mechanisms.

As set out in the work plan of 2016, a strategy will be developed to incorporate sustainability within Share-Net including the country nodes. This will include the identification of potential international and national partners and funders across sectors, and development of proposals and approaches. Although a start has been made, the strategy to improve sustainability needs more attention. In 2016 a market strategy was initiated and a market analysis session was organised at the business meeting of

Share-Net in February 2017 whereby draft financial scenarios were discussed for the future Share-Net.

11. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter we draw conclusions on and formulate recommendations for the functioning of Share-Net[5]. The structure of this chapter is based on the different concepts of the theoretical framework and connected to the six specific evaluation objectives[6].

11.1. Performance

> **Specific evaluation objective 1: To assess the progress of Share-Net International in relation to its mandates and objectives, taking into account the perspectives of its members.**

Knowledge is shared. The most valued objectives are stimulating sharing knowledge (objective 2) and learning and collaborative exchange (objective 6). Members especially appreciate the exchange between the different kind of organisation; for instance, CSOs appreciated the connection to knowledge institutions and policy makers, while Share-Net also offers a platform for knowledge institutions to stay in tune with practitioners. Even in the recently established country nodes, a climate of trust is being created and the members are starting to share information. Share-Net functions as a 'neutral ground' or 'safe haven' which is highly valued, especially in a competitive environment. In the Netherlands it was however argued that in some cases, members could be more open to learning from their 'critical friends' (including researchers as well as other professionals working on SRHR).

Learning processes and use of knowledge. The objectives are only partly met; there are still challenges in knowledge translation. Although knowledge was shared and members indicated to use knowledge in their own work, more could be done to translate scientific knowledge for practitioners and policy makers. The large number of activities organized, seems to hamper more strategic exchange. Several respondents – especially in the Netherlands – indicated the relevance to gain more insights in these knowledge exchange and learning processes.

Theory of Change. Share-Net International has elaborated a Theory of Change (ToC) that stipulates Share-Net's activities, outputs, outcomes, impact and vision. The objectives mentioned in this ToC are different than those mentioned in other Share-Net documents. Based on the analysis of the evaluation team of this ToC and the participatory workshop, we propose an adapted version for the country nodes (Figure 1). This ToC is more limited to the outcomes Share-Net can actually realistically achieve: "SRHR/HIV knowledge is used by Share-Net members". It also puts the knowledge sharing, translation and generation and interaction between members at the centre of the figure. It is a first basic draft and should be elaborated further with stakeholders.

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[5] We use the term 'Share-Net' to include all country nodes and the international platform.
[6] SRHR is by nature a multidisciplinary topic that covers aspects from different research fields. In light of this, the organization of an inter-doctoral school course with PhD students from different schools is a real added value.
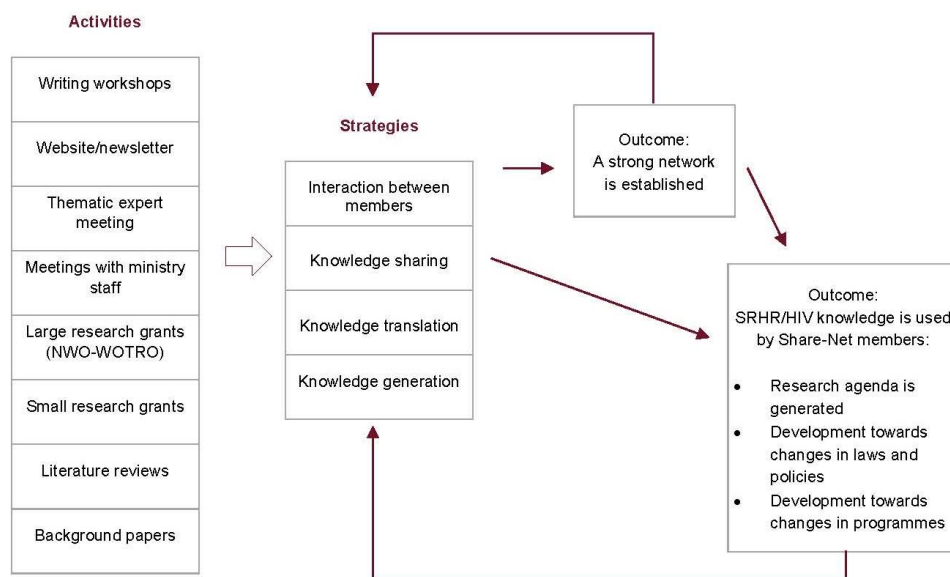
Figure 5: Theory of Change for Share-Net country nodes

Recommendations:

- Knowledge generation. To improve the generation of knowledge, (some) working groups could be requested to identify major knowledge gaps which could then be used to set out specific (closed) calls for proposals. A part of the research funds for small grants could be used for such closed calls, while another part could still be used for open, more thematic calls. Another way to address gaps of knowledge is to set out calls for meta-analyses of literature reviews.
- Knowledge translation. Invest in better translation of knowledge for practitioners and policy makers through the organisation of specific activities for these groups and the publication of practical guidelines and policy briefs:
  - o A critical role in this process could be taken up by the working group 'Linking research and practice'
  - o In order to stimulate the translation of knowledge, collaboration with organisations with expertise in communication (like RedOrgange and RNW/Love matters) could be stimulated as to enhance translation of knowledge to policy makers and/or communities. The cooperation could be 'ad hoc' in the form of workshops with for example media experts sharing lessons regarding communication and social media. In order to establish a more continuous collaboration, communication experts (specific organisations or researchers focusing on communication about SRHR topics) could also be invited to become a member of Share-Net. Their expertise could also be used to monitor knowledge sharing and translation.
  - o The Ministry of Foreign Affairs could set clearer conditions to stimulate the translating of knowledge.
- Knowledge sharing. Next to existing activities, another way to stimulate the sharing of knowledge, is to organise online sessions with experts. Online sessions are cost- and time-efficient and might specifically be beneficial in those countries or regions where travelling is challenging in terms of safety or travel distance. Online sessions could also stimulate inter-country exchange. Also Share-Net International/Share-Net Netherlands could benefit from online discussions; lessons could be

drawn from other knowledge platform like INCLUDE, the Knowledge Platform on Inclusive Development Policies, which introduced a question of the week whereby members in various countries are stimulated to contribute.

- Understand learning processes. Set up a study on in-depth learning processes taking place in the framework of Share-Net to understand how knowledge obtained through Share-Net is precisely used and what Share-Net's ultimate impact is;
- Become a knowledge broker. The secretariat of Share-Net could play the role of knowledge broker more actively, if needed at the cost of some other activities (e.g. lower the number of meetings of the Core Group and Steering Committee, organise less face-to-face meetings or leave more to the members). Activities that could be organised:
  - Organising consultations among members about the desirable forms of knowledge translation. E.g. identifying the form of documents and meetings to make tailor-made knowledge products which could stimulate knowledge uptake (e.g. policy makers might prefer other products than private sector representatives).
  - Even if knowledge is brought in accessible forms and well understood by practitioners, knowledge might still be neglected. Share-Net could invest in small sessions where obstacles for knowledge uptake are discussed in-depth. This is relevant as neglecting crucial information can also have negative consequences for the beneficiaries of programmes.
- Capacity building. While we would not recommend Share-Net organising capacity building workshops, it could stimulate and facilitate mutual capacity building between members by identifying demand/need on the one hand and expertise on the other.
- Country specific ToC. The emphasis on the importance of objectives can differ between countries, e.g. with Burundi and Bangladesh putting more importance on advocacy and addressing communities than the Netherlands. Therefore, it is important to organise a ToC workshop in the different country nodes and for Share-Net International to adapt the generic ToC to the local context and expectations. This will also allow to specify the role of Share-Net International (see also Democracy).

> **Specific evaluation objective 2: To identify how and to what extent Share-Net International is responding to the needs of its members in each country and to assess satisfaction (including value for time investment) among members with Share-Net's activities and agenda setting.**

Need for Share-Net at country level. Share-Net addresses a clear need in the four countries it is working in. It is also the only platform of its kind addressing the broad range of SRHR topics in these countries. Furthermore, SRHR is clearly a public health priority in the three partner countries where Share-Net set up its activities and respondents in this evaluation study acknowledge the importance of sharing knowledge and experiences and aligning activities to address SRHR issues. Respondents agree that Share-Net is taking up tasks that their own organisation would not be able to do.

Need for Share-Net International. Members differ in their opinion on the need for an overarching Share-Net International. Only half of the active members affiliated to Share-Net Netherlands/International, express the need for an overarching Share-Net International network next to a Share-Net in their own country.

Networking and sharing are much appreciated. A great number of activities is being organised – in particularly in the Netherlands, where Share-Net has been operational for a longer time with a relatively large budget, facilitated by a well-functioning secretariat. Face-to-face meetings are among the most appreciated activities. Furthermore, the newsletter and website are widely appreciated. Many say they obtained new knowledge, experience and expertise on SRHR issues through Share-Net and

were able to integrate this new knowledge, experience and expertise in their own work. While opinions are divided on the importance of the large-scale funding through NWO-WOTRO – the timeframe has been too short to see the added value for Share-Net and its members – the small grants facilities are much appreciated.

In particular in the Netherlands, the number of activities is very high and it should be considered to downsize. Also, the activities could be better aligned and exchange between activities such as small grants and expert groups could be more strategic. In the country nodes of Bangladesh, Burundi and Jordan, several respondents expressed the need for capacity building and advocacy, in addition to knowledge sharing. While we would not recommend that Share-Net would take up these new activities, it can be facilitative in organizing activities that link organisations with different capacities to each other and stimulate learning and adding capacity building components to existing activities.

Recommendations:
- Clarify the role and objectives of Share-Net International in relation to the country nodes (see Democracy)
- Alignment of activities: Develop a checklist with four key questions that should be reflected upon for each event: 1) What is the objective of this event and how does it related to Share-Net's objectives? 2) Do we have all expertise required to addressed this topic in a comprehensive manner? 3) Is the event organised in a way the maximum variety of people can attend? 4) How is the event related to other Share-Net activities and could it be aligned better? (also important checklist for Diversity).

11.2. Democracy

Specific evaluation objective 3: To review the division of labour between Share-Net International and the four country nodes (the Netherlands, Bangladesh, Burundi, Jordan) in view of their respective mandates and capacities; and taking into account the history of Share-Net before the creation of Share-Net International.

Division of labour between Share-Net International and the country nodes. In all parts of the study – documents analysis, interviews, focus group discussions, workshop, online survey – it became clear that there is a very strong interlinkage between Share-Net Netherlands and International. For many people involved in this evaluation it created confusion as to what entity they belonged to and what the different responsibilities and objectives of each entity were. Even people closely involved in Share-Net often cannot clearly explain the difference.

Country nodes, collaboration and coordination. While within the different countries, there is clearly a need for Share-Net, many people don't seem to be convinced of the importance of inter-node communication and collaboration. As the contexts are very different in the four countries, knowledge from one country is not necessarily applicable to other contexts. People who indicate that exchange is necessary often see the importance mainly at the international level – to be kept up to date of general developments in the field of SRHR globally. If people speak about exchange between nodes, this is often related to exchange on how to establish and maintain a network, like using the website as an online platform or facilitating face-to-face meetings.

Time investment. Members having sufficient capacity in terms of time they could invest, were most dominant within the network. According to several members, during the business meetings time was short to really discuss issues in depth. Because of these time constraints, it is not surprising that some members perceived the decision making as top down.

Recommendations:

- Set up a new governance structure with clear roles for each entity (see further)
- Collect information into the expectations of inter-country exchange on SRHR topics in order to decide on the role Share-Net International should play in this. This can be done through a series of in-depth interviews with a selection of stakeholders in all countries and/or a workshop during the annual business meeting.

> **Specific evaluation objective 4: To assess the governance structure between the Secretariat, the Steering Group, the Core Group, the country nodes and their members (organisations and individuals).**

Governance structure. There are some issues with the governance structure of Share-Net. In particular, the distinction between Share-Net International and Share-Net Netherlands is not clear, even to people closely involved in the network. Also the linking between the different nodes is limited. Changes in structure are linked to two critically important questions:

- Share-Net Netherlands should decide whether it has the ambition to also be open to members working on SRHR issues in the Netherlands, that is, to really become a Dutch network.
- Share-Net International should decide whether to be a network of Dutch organisations or a truly international network?

Based on this evaluation and on the answer to the two strategic questions, we see two ways of restructuring Share-Net (Figure 6):

- The first governance structure would make a clear distinction between Share-Net International and Share-Net the Netherlands, with clearly distinct objectives and activities. Share-Net International could focus on supporting the country nodes through: 1) managing research funding opportunities; 2) facilitating exchange between country nodes (if there is a need) and 3) building capacity of the country nodes in the field of management of networks. Representatives of the different nodes should be represented in the Steering Committee of this entity. In this proposed revised structure, the four country nodes – the Netherlands, Bangladesh, Burundi and Jordan – would be four independent organisations operating at the same level and with similar objectives: improved the use of SRHR and HIV knowledge and the establishment and maintenance of a strong and sustainable network. All members of the nodes would automatically become members of Share-Net International.
- The second proposed governance structure would fully integrate Share-Net International and Share-Net the Netherlands. In this model the Netherlands is not considered as a separate country node. As there is much confusion among members on the different roles of both entities and given the fact that many activities are overlapping – for the moment both entities share the same objectives – it does make sense to fully integrate them. Such integrated structure would then take up all tasks that currently Share-Net International and Share-Net the Netherlands are doing, but in an integrated manner. This entails that there would be no separate Share-Net the Netherlands, which is not illogical, as Share-Net the Netherlands mainly operates from an international perspective. It would also open up the network for memberships from other countries, which does not mean that there can no longer be activities focused on Dutch organisations or a specific focus on partner countries Burundi, Bangladesh and Jordan. It would simplify the governance structure, by having only one secretariat in the Netherlands (next to secretariats in the country nodes of Bangladesh, Burundi and Jordan). Representatives of the different nodes and representatives of Dutch organisations should be represented in the Steering Committee of this entity.

**Option 1: Make Share-Net International and Share-Net Netherlands two clearly distinct organisations**
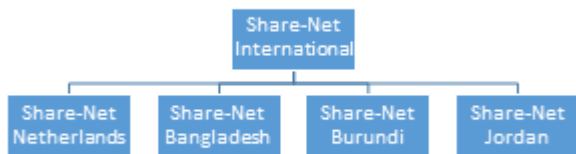
Share-Net International:

- Managing research funding opportunities;
- Facilitating exchange between country nodes (if there is a need);
- Disseminating knowledge about international SRHR trends, policies, processes and activities;
- Building capacity of the country nodes in the field of management of networks.

Share-Net country nodes:

- Exchanging, generating and disseminating knowledge on a national level (this could include international knowledge)
- Networking on a national level
- Building capacity of national members

Option 2: Merge Share-Net International and Share-Net Netherlands
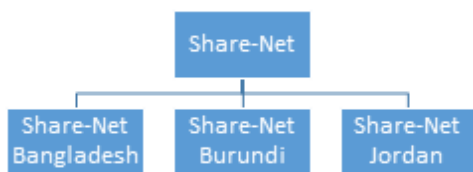
Share-Net:

- Exchanging, generating and disseminating knowledge on an international level;
- Networking on an international level;
- Managing research funding opportunities;
- Facilitating exchange between country nodes (if there is a need);
- Building capacity of the country nodes in the field of management of networks.

Share-Net country nodes:

- Exchanging, generating and disseminating knowledge on a national level
- Networking on a national level
- Building capacity of national members

Figure 6: Proposals for an adapted governance structure of Share-Net.

In both scenarios we recommend a distinction in governance organs between the country nodes and the overarching level. The country nodes would be managed by a National Steering Committee. In the first scenario, the management of Share-Net International would be done by an International Steering Committee that is made up of representative of the National Steering Committees of the different nodes. In the second scenario, the international Steering Committee of the overarching Share-Net would include representatives of the Steering Committees of the different country nodes, plus representatives of the Dutch partners.

In both structures, a good functioning secretariat is important. However, one cannot lose sights of the fact that Share-Net is a network and does not have the intention or ambition to become an NGO on its own, and that the secretariat mainly has a facilitating and not an initiating role in organizing activities. Thereto, it needs to be made clear to all members and member organisations that all are responsible for the functioning of Share-Net. Especially in the country nodes, there is still a 'triangle approach' where the secretariat initiates most activities. This is normal in a start-up phase, but it should be closely followed-up in the coming years that members and member organisations sufficiently take the initiative and responsibility in order to become a member driven network. This is also linked to the sustainability of the network.

The governance structure of Share-Net also has to be considered in relation to general requirements of Dutch-based knowledge platforms which were initiated and which are funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in line with the central themes in the policies on aid, trade and investment.

Decision-making. Members have a say in decision making processes, however, in practice members having sufficient capacity in terms of time they could invest, were said to be dominant within the network. The most important way members can voice their views, is participating in business meetings which are organised on a yearly base. However, according to several members, time is usually short to really discuss issues in depth. Furthermore, not all members participate in the business meeting.

Recommendations:
- Linked to the objectives and Theory of Change, we recommend a restructuring of the governance structure of Share-Net. The main purpose of such restructuring is making sure all entities have a clear role – avoiding overlap which currently generates confusion and inefficiency - and an efficient governance structure adapted to this role;
- If Share-Net wants to be truly democratic, it could be considered to have a minimum number of members present to take valid strategic decisions. Alternative ways to include less active members in its decision-making should be considered such as the use of online polls. Share-
- Ensure that the secretariats grow towards a facilitating-supporting ('knowledge broker') and not an initiating-organizing role. It is obvious that the secretariats cannot just add all the activities proposed in the recommendations in this report on top of their current workload. In case no extension of the size of the secretariat is envisioned, choices have to be made strategically and also member organisations could play a more active role in organizing specific activities.

11.3. Diversity

Specific evaluation objective 5: To review strategies and opportunities for enhancing collaboration and communication among members and other stakeholders.

Diversity in topics. While Share-Net includes a large variety of topics and stakeholders and the topics have been democratically selected, there are certain groups and topics that are not that much addressed within the network. This may for example explain the limited attention that goes to maternal health, which is a key priority in SRHR and international commitments as the Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, we recommend that, in the choice of key topics, an analysis is done of national and international SRHR priorities and that this is taken into account in the selection of themes.

Alignment. Coordination between activities of members in the different countries is limited - e.g. Rutgers is establishing its own network in Bangladesh of organisations working in the field of SRHR, or certain universities (members of Share-Net Netherlands) are doing studies in Burundi, but are not using Share-Net. The individual nodes are very important within the countries, but the potential is not well used.

Recommendations:
- Diversity in actors: (see checklist for event in Performance)
  - ○ Systematically think about possible capacities and stakeholders for each activity that may be missing and strategically link with individuals, organisations or networks that can fill this gap;
  - ○ Consider timing of activities – e.g. outside office hours – and plan well in advance to allow certain groups of people (health professionals & private sector) to participate.
  - ○ While the private sector is playing a central role in other knowledge platforms, it is still largely absent within Share-Net. Involving the private sector is relevant as companies are important

actors on SRHR issues; not only in providing specific SRHR items – such as condoms, hygiene pads – but also in taking up innovations resulting from discussions or research done within Share-Net or by Share-Net members.

- Diversity in themes: Make an analysis of national and international SRHR priorities and take this into account in the selection of themes. Allow each country node to select its own priority themes related to the local context.
- Coordination between country nodes. There is a role for Share-Net International (overarching or integrated form) to link organisations in different countries. This could be done by setting up an inventory/resource of ongoing projects in the field of SRHR. As the network is a members network, each member organization also has its own responsibility to align donor activities and actually link up and make use of SRHR structure in partner countries set up with Dutch support.

11.4. Dynamism

Share-Net has a rather flexible approach in practical issues, with regards to the organisation of events and activities. The secretariat is very facilitative, following the input of the members. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the donor, also provides sufficient space to manoeuvre in practical decision making.

Nevertheless, dynamism could be improved when it comes to following and responding to emerging trends. The way Share-Net is set up, with a yearly work plan and planned activities, is not really geared to responding to national and international emerging trends. Since the network is member driven, initiatives that respond to urgent issues will only happen when members take the lead.

Recommendations:

- Seek a balance in planned activities (work plan) and allowing space for responding to emerging trends. Share-Net could consider earmarking a certain percentage of its budget for addressing unexpected event in the field of SRHR.

11.5. Identity

Member institutions share their vision and mission with Share-Net. There is a sense of ownership among the members and the network is driven by joint values. Survey respondents say they feel connected with the different members. In short, there is a Share-Net identity, even in the countries where it has only recently been established, members have a sense of belonging to the network. In the Netherlands members seem to identify with 'Share-Net' and not with a particular Share-Net entity which is related to the confusion about different roles of Share-Net International and Share-Net the Netherlands. This has consequences to the branding of Share-Net.

Definitions, communication and branding. There is some confusion in Share-Net on how different groups are defined and addressed. Two of the main goals of Share-Net are 1) sharing knowledge, and 2) translation of knowledge. The audience of these activities is however not always clearly defined and as a result participants of the evaluation study expressed different expectations and might have evaluated these goals according to their own priority. For example, participants in Burundi and Bangladesh tended to include the wider "the community" in the target group, while participants from the Netherlands and Share-Net International would generally interpret translation of knowledge as to present results to policy makers. As a result, it is not always clear what is expected from the person or organisation, and what the person or organisation can expect from Share-Net. Defining clear audiences is also relevant in relation to the language used within the country nodes: if the wider audience is targeted communications should be done in Bengali, French, Arabic or other local languages instead of the dominant English communication. In addition, it might hamper the brand "Share-Net" since people do not feel part of the network. This became clear during the online survey

where some of the participants chose the option "not affiliated" although email addresses were retrieved from the secretaries and the websites.

Recommendations:

- Make sure that people know to what entity they belong and the governance structure is clear – this links to democracy. We propose to keep it simple and have two groups of people involved in Share-Net:
  - Members: people working for organisations that are registered as member organisations or people that have registered as an individual member.
  - Users: people that are registered on the website and subscribed to the newsletter, but are not subscribed as members nor working for organisations that are registered as a member organisation nor have registered as an individual member.

  We recommend this terminology to be used consistently in all countries.

- Improve internal and external branding:
  - Google Analytics and MailPoet can provide extra data compared with what the evaluation team could access, conditional on paying for the extra services. It might be recommendable to look into the benefits of such 'premium packages' in order to verify whether Share-Net can use the additional information in terms of usage and impact from newsletters and websites.
  - Based on the chosen governance structure, Share-Net could simplify its websites, making it easier to understand the governance structure and the links to the other country nodes. At the moment, links to the websites of the other nodes are a bit hidden. Many people expect to find them on the home-page right away. This would also make the connection with the other nodes more clear. Other recommendations on the websites of Share-Net are:
    - Link the website to other portals and better connect it to search engines
    - Provide an overview of all the (approved, ongoing and finalised) studies done with Share-Net funding, including links to the reports;
    - Provide a calendar of the different Share-Net activities;
    - The websites do not encourage sharing (e.g. posting a link to a webpage on Twitter). This option could be used more;
    - The presentation of the members needs updating and should include an explanation on how to become a member (cfr. under 'get involved – become member'), and definitely also information on how to become involved as a smaller organization or as an individual;
    - Streamline ways to become involved - There are currently two ways to become a registered user (or newsletter subscriber): through 'get involved – newsletter' or through 'register' (right corner) that require you to complete different fields;
    - Several survey respondents indicate that they find it difficult to search for information on the website so other ways of presenting information need to be considered.

11.6. Sustainability

In particular for the three new country nodes, there was not much attention for sustainability. It is clear that, if the funding would end after the first phase, Share-Net would not be able to continue its work in these countries. Sustainability should be strongly integrated in the second phase of Share-Net. Once a joint vision is shared and the structures are fully operational, sustainability can be reached 1) by membership fees, 2) through diffusion of responsibilities among its members, and/or 3) through seeking grants from other donors and/or the governments in their respective countries. Either way, people should be convinced of the added-value of Share-Net. The next few years will be critically

important in demonstrating this. Thereto, we recommend to install strong monitoring tools to keep track of the realizations of Share-Net. Furthermore, a strategy should be put in place to guarantee institutional commitment from the members – not only engagement at the individual level. Contributions from members could be showcased better in Share-Net's communications. Communication and branding are crucial in attaining sustainability (see further).

Recommendations:
- Sustainability should be a clear priority in the next phase of Share-Net. A key component for sustainability of a network is the creation and promotion of its added value and unique selling point – sharing information and linking organizations in a safe environment - in order to create institutional commitment and donor interest.
- In case of reduced budget: downsize activities and focus on sharing and linking. This direct interaction should not only be done face-to-face, but can also be virtual by embedding notice board or market place applications on the website.

In sum, Share-Net is an active, member-driven and well-functioning network that addresses a clear need in the different countries it is operational in. The governance structure is however confusing, an evolution towards knowledge brokering is recommended, exchange between countries could be further explored, the various activities could be better aligned and sustainability should be a priority in the coming years.

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