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**WISH2 CONNECT**

Quarterly E-Newsletter  
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### TEAM LEAD MESSAGE

Dear WISH 2 Team,

Since the WISH 2 Inception Workshop in November 2024, we have made significant strides in advancing our key deliverables and laying a strong foundation for the program. One of our primary achievements has been the inception deliverables and alignment of the WISH 2 work plan, ensuring that all team members are engaged and contributing to the program's strategic direction. The pre-implementation assessments have been instrumental in shaping our approach, providing critical insights into the current landscape and helping us refine our interventions.

Through collaborative efforts, we have strengthened our evidence generation, learning frameworks, and engagement strategies, setting the stage for impactful implementation. Looking ahead, our focus will be on finalizing outstanding action points from the inception phase, enhancing coordination across teams, and ensuring that our planned activities translate into measurable outcomes. Continuous learning, adaptive management, and reinforcing our commitment to continued health system strengthening and enabling the subnational government health structures in delivering high-quality SRH services.

As part of our commitment to internal learning and knowledge-sharing, we are pleased to introduce the WISH2 Connect E-Newsletter—a dedicated platform aimed at maximizing internal learning, sharing key updates, and fostering collaboration. Published quarterly, this e-newsletter will capture important milestones, highlight best practices, and provide a space for collective reflection. We encourage all team members to contribute by sharing insights, stories, and lessons from their work to enrich this learning platform.

Happy Reading!

Elias Girma,  
WISH 2 Team Lead

### Contextual Landscape Review: Findings from Country-Level CNAs

The WISH 2 consortium recently convened for an in-depth review and synthesis of the Country Needs Assessment (CNA) findings, setting the stage for evidence-driven program implementation. Conducted across seven countries, Burundi, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Zambia.

## CNA Review & Synthesis

### Key Insights from Pre-Program Assessments for the WISH 2

PRESENTED BY



The CNA provided a robust analysis of key thematic areas essential for improving SRH services. The session brought together consortium partners to present topline insights from pre-program assessments, offering a robust analysis of the current landscape across key thematic areas.

As part of the CNA dissemination, webinars were conducted per country, where consortium partners presented their findings based on their thematic expertise. These webinars served as a platform for cross-learning and collaboration, ensuring that insights from different contexts inform program adaptations.

Additionally, a key learning piece has been identified for an upcoming webinar, where best practices and innovations emerging from the CNA will be discussed in greater depth. [Read More](#)

## Strengthening SRHR in South Sudan: Collaborative Solutions and Next Steps

The first Steering Committee meeting for the WISH2 programme in South Sudan, held on February 12, 2025, at the Pyramid Hotel in Juba, marked a significant milestone in the country's efforts to advance SRHR, especially in the face of growing humanitarian challenges. Convened under the leadership of the Ministry of Health, the meeting brought together key stakeholders, including representatives from UNFPA, UNICEF, UNHCR, and implementing partners, to assess the current landscape of SRHR service delivery and strategize around emerging risks and priorities.

The meeting created a high-level platform to review implementation progress, identify operational bottlenecks, and reaffirm collective commitments to upholding the rights and well-being of women and girls in South Sudan. Stakeholders engaged in in-depth discussions on the complex and evolving humanitarian context and its implications for access to SRHR services.

A central concern raised by participants was the drastic reduction in funding for both humanitarian aid and SRHR programming. Multiple partners reported that recent funding cuts from key donors, including multilateral and bilateral sources, have led to supply chain disruptions, stockouts of essential reproductive health commodities, and gaps in service coverage, particularly for vulnerable populations. These disruptions are exacerbating the existing challenges faced by women and girls in accessing quality family planning, maternal health, and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) services.

The meeting concluded with a call to action for all stakeholders to advocate jointly for restored and diversified funding, enhance inter-agency coordination, and integrate SRHR services into broader humanitarian response plans. The Ministry of Health reaffirmed its commitment to providing leadership and policy direction, while partners agreed to strengthen data-sharing, harmonize interventions, and mobilize resources to sustain critical services. [Read More](#)



## FCDO Delegates Visit FGAE Clinics to Strengthen Collaboration

On March 26, 2025, representatives from the FCDO Ethiopia visited FGAE's Saris Medium SRH Clinic and the Dr. Widad Kidanemariam Memorial Maternal and Child Health Center in Ethiopia. The primary goal of the visit was to assess ongoing projects and explore strategies to enhance collaboration in the evolving donor landscape. The visit fostered open dialogue, allowing for the sharing of successes, challenges, and areas for improvement at FGAE. Key insights were shared that could shape future initiatives and funding approaches, ensuring they meet the specific needs of the communities served. The emphasis on partnership underscored the importance of collaboration between FCDO Ethiopia and FGAE in improving health outcomes and addressing critical health needs.

In addition to site visits, the FCDO delegation engaged with frontline health workers, youth representatives, and community members who shared first hand experiences about accessing SRH services. These interactions provided valuable context on service uptake, youth engagement, and gender-responsive programming, reinforcing the importance of a rights-based, people-centered approach. The visit also served as an opportunity to highlight the alignment of FGAE's work with broader national and global SRHR priorities, particularly in reaching underserved populations, including adolescents, persons with disabilities, and those in low-resource settings.

The FCDO Ethiopia visit is expected to pave the way for actionable strategies that will enhance service delivery and better support the health needs of local populations. Moving forward, both organizations are committed to strengthening their partnership to achieve lasting impact in the communities they serve.

# LOCAL VOICES

## HUMANITARIAN HIGHLIGHTS



### The Silent Struggle: Women and Girls Bear the Brunt of Sudan's Conflict

In the shadows of Sudan's ongoing conflict, millions of women and girls face an escalating crisis of violence, displacement, and deprivation. Their stories, often unheard, paint a harrowing picture of resilience amid adversity. Among these women is Amina, a 26-year-old mother of three who fled her home in Khartoum after her neighborhood was shelled. Eight months pregnant, she walked for days to reach a displacement camp, only to find herself in yet another struggle for survival.

*"I had no time to gather anything. I just took my children and ran,"* she recalls. The journey was perilous, with armed groups controlling the roads and preying on vulnerable travellers. Once she arrived at the camp, her challenges only deepened. The nearest clinic was overwhelmed, with no medical supplies or trained professionals available. *"The nurses here do what they can, but they told me if there are complications when I give birth, I might not survive,"* she says, fear etched on her face.

Since the war erupted in April 2023, the number of individuals at risk of gender-based violence has surged to over 12 million, tripling in just over a year. UN officials warn that sexual violence, intimate partner violence, child marriage, and female genital mutilation have become disturbingly common, with countless survivors suffering in silence due to stigma and fear of retaliation.

Clementine Nkweta-Salami, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan, marked the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on November 25, 2024, by issuing a dire warning: the humanitarian crisis has left women and girls dangerously exposed, their protection systems shattered. A UN Women report from September 2024 confirmed that by December 2023, the number of people requiring GBV-related services had doubled to 6.7 million, a number that has likely risen since.

Among the 5.8 million internally displaced women and girls, many are trapped in an unrelenting cycle of abuse, their voices drowned out by the chaos of war. Since the war erupted in April 2023, the number of individuals at risk of gender-based violence. Alarming, 64% of female-headed households are now food insecure, compared to 48% of male-headed households, forcing women to make impossible choices between safety and survival.

Amina's story is not unique. With nearly 70% of health facilities in conflict zones shut down, an estimated 1.12 million pregnant women are left without maternal care, forcing many to give birth in unsafe conditions. The lack of prenatal care has led to rising maternal mortality rates, and for those who survive childbirth, postnatal complications remain untreated.

Amina knows the risks all too well. *"I haven't had a check-up in months. I just pray that my baby will be okay,"* she says, resting her hands on her pregnant belly.

Health care, once a lifeline for survivors of GBV and reproductive health services, has all but collapsed. As more women and girls flee to seek refuge, the risk of GBV continues to mount, their vulnerability compounded by lack of shelter, legal support, and medical services.

Despite the bleak reality, women in Sudan persist, their strength unwavering. Local and international humanitarian organizations like IPPF are working tirelessly to provide safe spaces, medical assistance, and psychosocial support, but the need far outweighs available resources. Now, more than ever, urgent action is required to amplify their voices by prioritizing gender-sensitive humanitarian aid.

As the world watches and their suffering deepens, the question remains: Who will break the silence before their pain becomes just another footnote in history?

# PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



SBC Learning Central  
Putting Learning into Action!

## JHU Offers Online Courses for Partners

The WISH 2 Project, in collaboration with the Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs (CCP), has launched four self-paced online courses designed to enhance knowledge and skills in Social and Behavior Change (SBC) for improved SRH outcomes. Available from January 2025 in both English and French, these courses aim to equip SRH professionals, program implementers, and advocates with practical strategies to address social and gender norms that impact SRH interventions.

The WISH 2 Learning Hub invites all interested professionals to take advantage of this opportunity to enhance their expertise and contribute to meaningful change in SRH programming.

For more details and to register visit the learning website: <https://learning.breakthroughactionandresearch.org/>  
OR contact [wish2learning@jh.edu](mailto:wish2learning@jh.edu). Don't miss out—start your learning journey today!

## JHU-CCP Enhances SBC Capacity Across WISH 2 Partners

The Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs (JHU CCP) recently held a dynamic 4-day capacity-strengthening workshop focused on SBC and activity planning. This workshop brought together 28 participants from diverse backgrounds, including government representatives, program staff, and stakeholders from the seven WISH 2 project countries.

The goal of the workshop was to build on insights gained from the SBC landscape analysis and the foundational courses offered through the WISH 2 Learning Platform. It became an engaging, interactive platform where participants could develop actionable SBC strategies to improve SRH across the region.

The workshop also covered crucial topics such as developing an SBC Monitoring Plan, Engaging Communities for SRHR, and Shifting Social and Gender Norms. [Read More](#)



## Transforming Maternal and Reproductive Health in Somalia: A Collaborative Path Forward



In Somalia, where maternal mortality rates remain among the highest in the world, a collective effort is underway to bridge critical gaps in emergency obstetric care and reproductive health services.

From 3-6 February 2025, key stakeholders gathered in Mogadishu for a ground-breaking dialogue process aimed at shaping a more responsive and resilient maternal health system. Facilitated by IRC and Ips and hosted by the Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH) Somalia, this assessment and consultation brought together government agencies, NGOs, healthcare providers, and development partners to co-create solutions for some of the most pressing challenges in maternal and reproductive health.

The discussions resulted in a shared roadmap focused on expanding access to emergency obstetric care, improving workforce capacity, and addressing policy and financing gaps. A data-driven approach ensured that recommendations were not just theoretical but actionable, reflecting Somalia's unique healthcare landscape.

# PROJECT HIGHPOINTS



## In Focus: Evidence & Learning Inception Workshop in Oxford, UK

The WISH Dividend: Evidence & Learning (E&L) Inception Workshop, held in Oxford, UK, brought together key stakeholders, WISH Dividend partners, and FCDO representatives to develop Year 1 activities of the Evidence Generation, Learning, and Dissemination Plan.

This collaborative workshop focused on three priority Learning Agendas; delivery in humanitarian settings, disability inclusion, and SRHR rollback—identified through consultations with WISH2 partners and FCDO.

This workshop was instrumental in ensuring alignment between partners, refining evidence generation strategies, and strengthening the foundation for knowledge-sharing within the WISH Dividend framework. As WISH2 moves forward, the insights gained will guide program implementation, enhance adaptive learning, and contribute to building resilient SRH services in diverse contexts. [Read More](#)

## Strengthening Contract Compliance Capacity Across the WISH2 Consortium

In early March 2025, the WISH2 Consortium successfully hosted a three-day online training focused on strengthening contract compliance across all implementing partners. Held on March 4th, 5th, and 11th, the sessions brought together representatives from all WISH2 partners through virtual platforms, creating a dynamic and engaging environment for learning.

The primary objective of the training was to enhance the capacity of project teams to effectively implement the WISH2 contract, with an emphasis on understanding compliance obligations, managing risks, and promoting ethical standards. A significant portion of the training was dedicated to key compliance requirements. Topics included contract terms and conditions, fee structures, cost eligibility criteria, asset management protocols, branding and publicity obligations, and standards for reporting.

This training marks a significant step towards building a more resilient, accountable, and high-performing WISH2 Consortium, ensuring the successful delivery of our collective mission to advance SRHR in the communities we serve.

**Photo for Illustrative Purpose:**  
**Disclaimer:**  
Please note that the image used in this story is a group photo and does not depict the actual workshop referenced. Due to the absence of consented photographs from the event, we have chosen this image solely for illustrative purposes

## Strengthening Insights: WISH 2 Client Exit Interview Inception Workshop

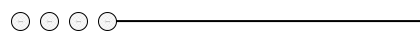


The Client Exit Interview (CEI) Inception Workshop for the WISH 2 program took place from March 4-6, 2025, at Movenpick, Nairobi, bringing together key stakeholders, including IPPF, IPPF MAs, JHU, and IRC.

The workshop aimed to refine the CEI approach, ensuring robust data collection and analysis to enhance service delivery and client experience across WISH 2-supported facilities.

The workshop provided a platform to reflect on previous CEI rounds under WISH2ACTION, drawing key lessons to inform the next phase. Participants reviewed and refined the CEI study design, methodology, and analysis plan to align with program objectives and logframe indicators.

Sessions focused on adapting the CEI questionnaire, prioritizing critical questions, and integrating country-specific adaptations to improve relevance and effectiveness.



# NEXT ON THE CALEDAR

Traveller	Traveler Destination	Travel Dates	Purpose of Travel
Wanjiru Mathenge, Nelly Odoyo, Abednego Rotich, Nancy Mberesia, Tigist Kassa, JM Vianney	South Sudan	TBD,	WISH 2 Country Programme Support, Safeguarding Training
Hellen Karoki, Abok Barnabas, George Odinya, Musa Muga, Fabrice Niyongabo, JM Vianney	Burundi	TBD	WISH 2 Country Programme Support, SG training
Abednego Rotich/Elias Girma; Lilian Nkonge/Abok Barnabas; Hellen Karoki/Wanjiru Mathenge	TBD	May 2025	WISH 2 Donor Visit / Quarterly Review







## Reminders:

- ✓ Ensure that all travel approvals, including financial matters, are secured at least two weeks before departure.
- ✓ Share key outcomes from meetings within five days of your return.
- ✓ Update contacts if there are any changes.

## Next on the Calendar (May – June 2025)

### Internal

#### May - June 2025

-  28th May – WISH 2 Quarterly Review Meeting
-  12th May - Rollback of Rights - TWG Meeting
-  14th May - WISH2 Contract Training for WISH 2 Hub
-  14th May - National Launch of the WISH 2 Project – Ethiopia
-  May 2025- HEAT Training
-  4<sup>th</sup> June - 2nd National Steering Committee Meeting -South Sudan

### External

#### May - June 2025

-  29 April – 5 May – Maternal Mental Health Awareness Week 
  - ◆ Raising awareness on mental health challenges before, during, and after pregnancy.
-  12-18 May –Women’s Health Week (UK) 
  - ◆ Encouraging women & girls to prioritize their physical, mental, and social well-being.
-  28 May | Global Menstrual Health & Hygiene Day 
  - ◆ A critical discussion linking menstrual health policies to real-life actions.
-  24 - 27 June 2025, 8th RHNK Pan-African AYSRHR Scientific Conference, Sarova Whitesands, Mombasa, Kenya



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 Internal Link: <https://ippfglobal.sharepoint.com/>

