

WISH2 CONNECT

Quarterly E-Newsletter
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TEAM LEAD MESSAGE

As we close the first quarter of WISH2 implementation, I am pleased to share that the project has made a strong and successful start. Project delivery is progressing steadily, with achievements captured both quantitatively through our KPIs and qualitatively through inspiring success stories from the field.

The first quarter was also marked by important monitoring exercises and visits from donors and stakeholders, which not only reinforced confidence in our work but also encouraged country teams to sustain and even surpass their performance in the coming months.

We also recognize that there is room for improvement, particularly in how we engage with our partners and stakeholders. Strengthening these engagements will be key to ensuring even greater impact as we move forward in particular engagements with national and sub-national level ministry of health and other government and community structures to ensure maximum impact on system strengthening for sustainability.

Looking ahead to Quarter 2, our focus will be on consolidating the gains made so far, deepening country-level implementation, and strengthen cross-country collaboration, enhance engagement with partners stakeholders, and address identified gaps to ensure that no one is left behind. With the commitment of our teams and the support of our partners, we are confident that WISH2 will continue to deliver meaningful impact in the months and years ahead.

Happy Reading !



Strengthening Partnerships for Improved SRHR in Ethiopia: FCDO Delegates Engage with Ministry of Health and WISH 2 Consortium

On 23 June 2025, a high-level delegation from the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and WISH 2 project met with His Excellency Dr. Dereje Duguma, State Minister of Health of Ethiopia, to reinforce collaboration on advancing SRHR in the country.

The delegation included Dr. Sarah Goldsmith, FCDO WISH 2 Programme Health Advisor; Sarah Harvey-Kelly, FCDO Ethiopia Office WISH 2 Focal Point; and the WISH 2 IPPF Africa Regional Office team. They were joined by representatives from partner organizations, including FGAE and consortium partners IPAS and JHU. UNFPA also participated to support the SRHR engagement under the WISH 2 project.

Following the consultative meeting, the delegation visited FGAE's Northern Area Office, WISH2 service delivery sites in Mekele and surrounding areas, providing delegates with first hand insight into how the project is reaching underserved communities in humanitarian context.

They have also visited Alasa and Romanat health facilities, two small communities in the South-eastern Zone of Tigray. Through such engagements, the FCDO, Ministry of Health, and consortium partners are building stronger foundations for sustained, coordinated, and impactful SRHR interventions in Ethiopia.



H.E. Dr. Dereje Duguma, State Minister of Health, addressing the delegation on advancing SRHR collaboration in Ethiopia.



FCDO and IPPF delegates visit Romanat Clinic in Tigray.

Boosting FP Uptake through Door-to-Door Campaigns in Zambia

In the heart of Zambia's rural and underserved urban communities, women and girls often face invisible barriers to accessing family planning. Health facilities are far, stigma is real, and myths about contraceptives persist. For adolescents, persons with disabilities, and women living in poverty, these challenges are even greater leaving many without the information or services they need to make informed reproductive health choices.

To close this gap, the WISH 2 project introduced an innovative door-to-door campaign across eight provinces, bringing family planning information and services directly into households. The impact was immediate: CYP rose from 29,329 in April to 46,830 in May, with sustained growth in June. In remote areas, the uptake of long-acting methods among women increased by 7%, reflecting greater confidence and autonomy in their decision-making.

"The door-to-door strategy proved to be a powerful and effective approach for increasing access to FP services at the community level, as it gave women the privacy and space to ask questions they would never raise in public," reflects one health worker involved in the campaign.



After the door-to-door campaign, more women in Zambia are now accessing essential SRHR services.

Madagascar Holds First WISH 2 Country Steering Committee Meeting



The first WISH 2 Country Steering Committee meeting is under way, bringing together partners to strengthen collaboration and advance SRHR priorities.

On 5 June 2025, Antananarivo hosted the inaugural meeting of the WISH 2 Country Steering Committee, chaired by the Ministry of Health. The session brought together a wide range of stakeholders including Parliamentarians, and line ministries, who had also been part of the WISH2ACTION initiative.

The meeting was marked by strong participation and renewed commitment to advancing the project's goals. Members emphasized the importance of ensuring that the WISH 2 project not only serves communities but also engages them as active partners. Discussions highlighted the need to consider young people and persons with disabilities not just as beneficiaries, but also as stakeholders and partners, actively involved in advocacy and the operationalization of activities. In addition, participants stressed the importance of strengthening private sector engagement at the sub-national level, to complement government-led efforts to expand access to SRHR services.

In addition to this first CSC meeting, courtesy visits were conducted with regional health officials in June and July. These visits aimed to carry out facility assessment of government health facilities and to introduce the new regional WISH 2 staff members.



Courtesy visits with regional health officials focused on assessing government health facilities.

LOCAL VOICES

Shifting Perspectives: Building Bold Leadership for Reproductive Rights in Burundi



Through WISH 2, Ipas is empowering 27 key actors in Burundi to drive SRHR change with workshops, dialogues, and legal review.

In Burundi, where sexual and reproductive health remains highly sensitive, Ipas Burundi is driving transformative change through the WISH 2 project, funded by the UK's FCDO. By strengthening civil society engagement and championing rights-based approaches, Ipas has empowered 27 key actors through VCAT workshops, multi-stakeholder dialogues, and legal reviews.

These interventions have dismantled misconceptions, fostered accurate understanding of abortion laws, and encouraged more progressive attitudes. Encouragingly, 15 participants now fully understand the legal framework for therapeutic abortion, 12 have adopted less stigmatizing views, and 8 have pledged active support for advocacy initiatives.

These results highlight how informed dialogue and reflection can shift perspectives, reduce stigma, and nurture bold leadership for reproductive rights in Burundi.

“Before participating in the workshops, I carried my own doubts and prejudices about abortion; it was a subject shrouded in silence and stigma. But the VCAT sessions facilitated by Ipas opened my eyes to a new perspective. I was able to unpack my biases, connect with the real-life experiences of women, and re-center my thinking around their rights and dignity. Today, my peers and I feel empowered to advocate with confidence, grounded in human rights, even when facing resistance. We now have the tools and convictions to challenge stigma and push for a more just society, where access to post-abortion care is recognized not as a privilege, but as a fundamental right.”

Ethiopia Launches WISH 2 and National Steering Committee for Women's Health in Humanitarian Settings



A MoU was signed between WISH 2 partners and the Ministry of Health to strengthen SRHR in Ethiopia.

In June 2025, FGAE officially launched the WISH 2 project at both national and regional levels in Addis Ababa and across the project regions of Tigray, Afar, and Amhara.

The launch brought together key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Health, FCDO, regional signatory bodies, zonal health officials, organizations of persons with disabilities, and representatives from Woreda health and women's social affairs offices. The event unveiled the project's strategic framework and roadmap, underscoring clear objectives and implementation strategies. Strong emphasis was placed on collaboration and consortium engagement, with keynote addresses from national and regional authorities reaffirming the importance of WISH 2 in addressing women's health priorities in line with Ethiopia's national health agenda.

To further strengthen programme coordination, FGAE established the WISH 2 National Steering Committee on June 27, 2025. Led by the Ministry of Health and composed of consortium members and key SRH partners, the committee is mandated to provide strategic guidance, oversee implementation, and support the rollout and scale-up of the project.

Serving as a technical advisory body, it will also provide inputs on work plans, needs assessments, best practices, policies, and guidelines. Together, these developments highlight Ethiopia's commitment to expanding access to integrated SRHR services, fostering multi-sectoral collaboration, and ensuring the sustainability and long-term impact of WISH 2.

LOCAL VOICES

HUMANITARIAN HIGHLIGHTS

WISH 2 Client Stories from South Sudan: IPPF One Project, Many Journeys ...

Across communities, women face different realities when it comes to reproductive health. Some carry the burden of misinformation, others struggle to make decisions in silence, and many grow into champions who inspire change. Through the WISH2 project, women are finding safe spaces, accurate information, and supportive care that allow them to take charge of their futures.

Here are the stories of three women whose journeys reflect the diverse ways WISH2 is changing lives.

Choosing Her Future in Silence

At just 24, she stepped into the clinic quietly, her face marked with determination. A university student and mother of two, her academic journey had been interrupted by closely spaced pregnancies. She longed to resume her studies and secure a brighter future.

Much of what she knew about contraception came from peers and media sources, but she had no clear idea how to begin or where to find trustworthy guidance. What she was certain of, however, was her desire to return to university and pursue her degree. She had heard from friends that Implanon could be a suitable method, but when it was unavailable, she opted for Sayana Press, a decision that was both practical and deeply personal. What made her story even more striking was her insistence on confidentiality. She wanted her decision hidden from her husband, knowing the risks, yet unwilling to let go of her autonomy. The service provider, trained under the WISH 2 project, encouraged her to discuss the decision with her husband and suggested she take time to reflect. But ultimately, she was assured of her right to choose for herself, and her request for privacy was respected.

Through the WISH 2 project, she found a youth-friendly, confidential service that honored her voice and supported her choice. In that safe space, she regained control of her life and her future.



From Myths to Informed Choice

For another 24-year-old student, the barriers looked very different. She was not hiding her decision but was instead overwhelmed by fear and misinformation. From her peers and community, she had heard repeatedly that contraception could cause infertility, infections, and long-term health problems. These myths clouded her judgment, creating doubt even as she recognized the importance of protecting her health and education. Education, for her, was the foundation of a better future, and she did not want anything to stand in the way.

When she visited a WISH 2-supported clinic at Juba International Hospital in South Sudan, she encountered something new: patient, respectful counselling from a trained provider. Each of her fears was carefully addressed with facts, and every question she asked was met with compassion. Gradually, her doubts gave way to trust. By the end of the session, she chose the Combined Oral Contraceptive pill, her first step into family planning.

Thanks to WISH 2, she did not just receive a method; she gained the confidence to make decisions based on knowledge rather than fear. Her story is a powerful reminder of the importance of accurate information and respectful care.



From Client to Community Champion

At 28, she entered the clinic with a smile confident, informed, and supported. This was her third visit, and she already knew the method that best suited her needs. Unlike others who struggled with secrecy or misinformation, her journey had been steady and affirming.

Her strength was rooted in the support system around her: her husband, her mother, and even her husband's family encouraged her to use family planning. With their backing, she could continue her work and education without compromise, a change that her loved ones could see clearly in her progress.

Inspired by her own journey, she has now stepped into a new role as a community champion for WISH 2 project. With knowledge and encouragement gained through the WISH 2 project, she speaks openly about her experience, dismantling stigma and motivating other women to learn, choose, and lead. For her, empowerment is not just personal, it is something to be shared.



Each of these women represents a unique journey: one of secrecy, one of overcoming fear, and one of leadership. Together, they illustrate the transformative power of WISH 2: creating safe spaces, dispelling myths, and nurturing champions. By supporting women at every stage of their reproductive health journeys, the WISH2 project ensures that no matter where they begin, they can move toward a future defined by knowledge, choice, and dignity.

PARTNERS SPOTLIGHT

Somalia : Faith-Based Messaging for Family Well-being - JHU

Somalia reached a key milestone under the WISH 2 project with a powerful Social and Behavior Change capacity-building workshop held in Mogadishu. Led by JHU in collaboration with IRC and Ipas, the workshop brought together 20 diverse participants including representatives from federal and state Ministries of Health, Benadir University, Muslim Scholars, CSOs, women, youth, and people with disabilities.



The goal of the workshop was to co-create culturally grounded messages on birth spacing that align with both Islamic teachings and public health priorities.

“My perspective has changed,” shared one Somali Imam. “I now plan to have a thoughtful conversation with my wife about child spacing, so we can raise a healthy, happy family together.”

This personal shift from a religious leader who once aspired to have 20 children, reflects the broader impact of the workshop. Participants explored *tanzim al-nasl* (birth spacing) as both a health necessity and a faith-aligned responsibility.

“This is the best approach to engaging the community, and I am confident the messages developed will be well received and contribute to the envisioned social norm change,” said Abdulkhadir Wehliye of the Ministry of Health.

The workshop underscored the power of trusted voices, especially religious and community leaders in shaping social norms and promoting healthier futures for Somali families.

Zambia Advances Sustainable Abortion Ecosystem Through National Dialogue - IPAS



Ipas Zambia and the Ministry of Health, under the WISH 2 Project, hosted a two-day Sustainable Abortion Ecosystem (SAE) Dialogue to review national progress and co-create strategies for inclusive, long-term abortion care. The dialogue convened Ministry of Health officials, CSOs, consortium partners, and key SRHR actors to reflect on progress and align future priorities.

Using the Ipas SAE framework, participants assessed eight ecosystem components essential for building sustainable abortion care in Zambia.

Since the baseline review in 2021, progress has been made, with five components advancing toward sustainability. However, three critical areas like Individual Knowledge and Agency, Community Social Norms and Support, and Financing, remain in the emerging category, signalling the need for continued investment and collaboration.

With government leadership, strong partnerships, and a clear roadmap, Zambia is making decisive strides toward ensuring that all women and girls have access to safe and sustainable abortion care.

From Coalition to Catalyst: COMARESS and the Rise of SRHR Accountability in Madagascar - Options

A Movement Rooted in Resilience



In Madagascar, the Coalition des Mouvements et Associations des Réseaux des Secteurs Sociaux (COMARESS) was founded in 2015 as a unifying platform for civil society.

When Options partnered with the coalition in 2019 under the WISH project, COMARESS had strong grassroots reach but needed technical structure and strategic direction. Through targeted training and capacity building, including evidence-based advocacy and budget analysis with partners such as Ipas and JHU, the coalition transformed into an organized, influential force in SRHR. Recognising its latent potential, Options began supporting COMARESS under the WISH project, not merely as a partner, but as a catalyst for transformation.

By the WISH 2 phase, COMARESS had matured into a high-performing coalition, securing funding streams, influencing national policy, and expanding its reach in 2025 by mobilising women-led and disability-led associations in Toliara and Toamasina. These local groups gained new skills in data use, budget tracking, and government engagement, strengthening accountability from the ground up.

Today, despite funding challenges, COMARESS continues to innovate through diversified resource mobilisation while gaining recognition from national leadership. From its grassroots beginnings to its role as a catalyst, COMARESS is laying the foundation for sustainable and scalable SRHR accountability across Madagascar.

Community-led transformation and inclusive FP access in fragile settings - IRC

In the heart of Rubkona County, South Sudan, a place often defined by conflict, displacement, and fragility, Nyamuch stands tall. A community leader, women’s representative, and mother, she knows too well what silence costs.

The turning point came when Nyamuch and other women leaders received targeted training from the IRC under the WISH 2 project as part of a locally led initiative in early 2025. The workshop focused on accurate family planning information, counselling techniques, and communication tools tailored to the cultural and humanitarian context. These trained community leaders began organizing outreach through school visits, peer dialogues, and household

outreach, they have demystified family planning, challenged myths, restored trust in health services and bridged the gap between health providers and women in displacement.

“Before, we lived in fear, unwanted pregnancies, no information, no voice,” says Nyamuch, a local women’s representative and community mobilizer. “Now we speak for ourselves, and our daughters will too.”

Rubkona’s story is a testament to grassroots leadership in fragile contexts. It shows that when women lead, health systems shift, even in crisis. Scaling this model across similar settings offers a pathway to resilience, proving that when women are empowered to speak and act, communities begin to heal, and progress takes root.



Nyamuch leads women in reshaping the family planning narrative in Rubkona

PROJECT HIGHPOINTS



Strengthening WISH 2 Implementation in South Sudan and Burundi Updates

During Quarter 1 of 2025, WISH2 made significant progress in advancing programme delivery and strengthening systems in fragile contexts. From 23–27 June 2025, a joint mission was carried out in South Sudan, bringing together teams from programme, finance, risk, operations, safeguarding, monitoring and evaluation, learning, and communication. The mission focused on reviewing project delivery, strengthening safeguarding practices, assessing risk management, and capturing evidence of impact through a monitoring trip. Field visits and partner engagements highlighted both achievements and operational challenges, while also showcasing the resilience and commitment of country teams working in complex humanitarian settings.

In Burundi, WISH 2 provided dedicated programme support and safeguarding training, reinforcing country capacity to deliver services safely and effectively. The training built awareness among staff and partners on safeguarding standards, risk management, and accountability measures, while also fostering stronger integration across programme and operational functions. These efforts are ensuring that WISH 2 not only delivers results but does so in a way that prioritizes the safety, dignity, and rights of all clients and communities.

Together, these initiatives underscore WISH 2's commitment to building robust systems, supporting country teams, and embedding a culture of accountability and learning across the programme. By combining technical support, capacity strengthening, and on-the-ground monitoring, WISH 2 continues to make meaningful progress in expanding access to quality sexual and reproductive health services in some of the most fragile and underserved settings.

Compliance Corner

WISH2 Hub Staff Complete Online HEAT Training

H Hostile
E Environment
A Awareness
T Training

In the first quarter, WISH 2 staff at the hub level successfully completed the Online Hostile Environment Awareness Training (HEAT) course.

The training was designed to strengthen staff preparedness and resilience when working in fragile and complex settings, where safety and security considerations are an integral part of project delivery. The purpose of the course was to equip participants with practical knowledge and skills to identify risks, respond

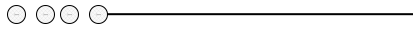
effectively to emergencies, and make informed decisions in challenging contexts.

Foundations of Compliance

Tip: Keep the T&Cs handy (printed or bookmarked). Before making project decisions, ask: Does this fit with the T&Cs? Revisiting the Code of Conduct in team sessions, it's not just a signature; it's a daily habit. Regular refresher sessions and short training also keep everyone confident in applying them.

Think Terms and Conditions (T&Cs) and Codes are just formalities?

They're really the foundation of how we work with FCDO, our playbook for using funds wisely, protecting people, and staying accountable. The Code of Conduct brings those rules to life in daily decisions.



NEXT ON THE CALEDAR

| Traveller | Traveller Destination | Travel Dates | Purpose of Travel |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------|--|
| Abok, Lianora, Hellen, George, Juliet, | Zambia | Sep 28 - Oct 4 | Attending JHU's HCD training and provide country programme support |
| Rodah and Nancy | South Sudan, Ethiopia | 08 Sept-10 Oct 2025 | To support & QA centralized enumerator training |



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 (September – October 2025)

Internal

Sep - Oct 2025

- 17 Sep (TBC) - OPM and FCDO VIP Visit - Ethiopia
- 17 16th Sep - Sensitization Session on the Cluster Model
- 17 16th - 18th Sep 2025 - Development of SRH Advocacy Agenda with MoH and SRHR CSO network from – South Sudan
- 17 Sep (TBC) - National Steering Committee Meeting - Ethiopia
- 17 Sep (TBC) -JHU HCD Training
- 17 Oct (TBC) – Q2 Report Submission

External

Sep - Oct 2025

- 17 17–19 Sept - CIRHT-UM SRHR Scientific Conference - Gulu, Uganda
- 17 23rd Sep - SRHR & Sustainable Financing Discussion Virtual Financing Panel – Online
- 17 26th Sep - World Contraception Day, Global
- 17 1-3 Oct- Adolescence, SRHR & HIV Workshop - Gaborone,

WISH 2 Connect - E- Newsletter

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Partnership | Progress | Prosperity

Women's Integrated Sexual Health
Eastern and Southern Africa

