



Collecting Data on Sexual and Reproductive Health in Humanitarian Settings Lab

Status Update

May 2020

Lead Partners:

University of Ottawa

National Abortion Federation of Canada

PROGRESS TO DATE:

- **Rapid assessment** in Jordan completed in partnership with community-based organizations and the UNFPA Jordan Office, including formal data collection through key information interviews and focus group discussions representing frontline workers across nine different humanitarian organizations.
- **Established new partnership** with WHO to incorporate this project's materials in a global project (toolkit) dedicated to collecting a core set of Sexual, Reproductive, Maternal Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health indicators in humanitarian settings.
- **Global collaboration** between University of Ottawa and the WHO to expand original research protocol and data assessments to additional countries, mapping challenges associated with collection and indicator development in six different humanitarian contexts.
- **Confusions and delay challenges** were experienced from the Pompeo expansion of the [Global Gag Rule](#). The Inter-Agency Working Group on Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) in Crises (IAWG) has been critical in approving clarifications to support abortion-related data collection and remains vigilant in the initiative's developments.

INNOVATION IN THEIR APPROACH:

- **Global window of opportunity:** The IAWG released an updated edition of their global resource, the [2018 Inter-Agency Field Manual and Reproductive Health in Humanitarian Settings](#) (IAFM), which provides explicit guidelines to data collection, monitoring and evaluation in different emergency phases.
- **Aligning with global dialogue:** The initiative will leverage the release of the IAFM to advance the current reawakened discussions about data in conflict settings to address a research gap with the support of a global collaborative dedicated to improving data collection on SRH indicators in humanitarian settings.
- **Strengthening capacity:** Building on established partnerships, this initiative will strengthen the capacity of global SRH research in Canada by targeting applied learnings towards training and resource and action mobilization for SRH Coordinators and local field teams to improve their data collection processes.
- **Rapid assessment of six countries:** The six countries reflect a diversity of current humanitarian settings and rigorous evaluation of the pilot interventions will enable tool creation for stakeholders to facilitate expansion, support scale up, and promote adherence to the global guidelines. Supporting adherence to global standards and establishing models for data collection in the humanitarian sector requires this broader approach.

NEXT STEPS:

- **Data collection:** complete rapid assessment and analyses in expanded countries for tool piloting and context evaluation.
 - Expanded countries with WHO partnership (Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq and Somalia in addition to Jordan and Bangladesh).
- **Tool development:** validate findings with global stakeholders to develop and synergize tools with global multi-lateral and bilateral data collection practices in abortion and SRHR.
- **Dissemination and Partner Engagement:**
 - Results disseminated to global stakeholder dialogues in high-level WHO meetings to advance tool development and embed indicators devised into the WHO toolkit. The Lab's tools are being aligned with requirements of multilateral and bilateral donors to approach a comprehensive accountability framework.
 - In-depth engagement with the Government of Jordan to incorporate developed indicators into *Jordan's ten-year national strategy for SRHR*.
 - Robust dissemination planned alongside national host-country stakeholders and global partners (WHO and UN agencies) to develop practitioner training to strengthen SRH data processes, implement policy engagement strategies, conference presentations and peer-reviewed journal publications.
 - The National Abortion Federation of Canada will be leading national policy engagement in Canada to ensure abortion-related data collection continues to be incorporated into federal government priorities.

INSIGHTS SHARED:

- **Rapid assessment findings:**
 - Global standards for abortion-related data collection are not being met.
 - Misconceptions and misinformation on the legal status and prevalence of abortion pose major barriers to data collection on adequate and routine abortion and post-abortion care.
 - To mitigate their challenges in SRH measurement, humanitarian agencies working in SRH are positive about and receptive to values clarification and training sessions on the updated IAFM.
- **Mitigating instability:** Inherent to working in the humanitarian context is encountering instability. As an example, the Pompeo expansion to the Global Gag Rule created unexpected challenges, project delays and confusion as to what activities are permitted by agencies receiving funding (directly or indirectly) from the US government. Working with experienced and readily adaptive partners, such as the WHO country office and IAWG member agencies, key challenges have been

mitigated in the following ways:

- Clarification from the IAWG on data procedures is helping the humanitarian sector move forward with clarity and keeping the project's site data collection on track.
- The WHO has prioritized this initiative and sees the value in abortion-related tools and providing resources to expand this project to additional countries; all with the goal of incorporating developed tools of this project into a global toolkit.

REFLECTION:

"The Collaborative has been instrumental in us being able to partner with WHO on the expanded project. That we were an organized collective with a strong study protocol, ethics approval, and close partners in multiple countries is what gave us legitimacy such that we could lead the larger project. Although this is a work in progress, it feels as though this is exactly what the collaborative was meant to do."

- *Angel Foster, Lead Principal Investigator, University of Ottawa*

RESOURCE:

- [2018 Inter-Agency Field Manual and Reproductive Health in Humanitarian Settings \(IAFM\)](#)