Frontline Implementers for SRH in humanitarian crises: Needs, insights and opportunities for a support network.

IAWG Inter-Agency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Crises

SCOPE

Executive Summary.

Background and purpose
The recent global crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic has created a unique opportunity to bring people together, including a network of frontline implementers. COVID-19 opened a possibility to confront issues already present, and of concern to IAWG, such as how to be more inclusive and engaging with SRHR humanitarians down to the field level. The measures required to control the pandemic have forced everyone to learn how to engage more remotely and to do work without field visits at all levels of the humanitarian system. Shared global experience of dealing with COVID-19 can be a starting point to create a sense of belonging through shared conversations on how they dealt with COVID, learning from the experiences and working together as solutions arise, such as vaccine rollout.

With this as the background, SCOPE has conducted a rapid Human-Centered Design (HCD)-led research project to support IAWG with and inform the creation of a vibrant community of practice among SRHR implementers in humanitarian crises: **the Frontline Implementers Support Network**.

The design research encompassed three key objectives:

1.
Identify how frontline implementers currently communicate, what they would like to communicate about, and their visions for how a network would support them

2.
Understand and map IAWG experience with and aspirations for engaging with frontline implementers

3.
Identify a set of potential ideas for the network for co-creation and testing in the next phase

Methodology
The research approach was designed to reach a wide representation of frontline implementers around the globe, applying digital tools to enable rapid and remote engagement to begin understanding their needs. The three key methods/ tools utilized for data collection included: WhatsApp chats with 67 participants from countries such as Yemen, Bangladesh, Niger and Tchad, key informant interviews with participants from these groups through zoom, and google forms which captured the demographics, roles, level of experiences of the participants. To synthesize and analyse the findings we employed HCD-methods including **Affinity Mapping, Needs Area Mapping and Opportunity Area Mapping** to organize, make sense of and derive meaning from the qualitative data.

Findings and Opportunity areas
The HCD-led synthesis and analysis of our findings of needs of the users ultimately brought us to identify 6 key opportunity areas for IAWG to consider and act on in further building the Frontline Implementers Support Network.

1. Opportunity to **build a seamless online and offline network to create a reliable and equitable experience.** Low-bandwidth and poor connectivity is a constant challenge for many frontline implementers in connecting and engaging with other humanitarians. IAWG has the opportunity to:

- Reimagine what "staying connected" looks like. Connectivity may take new forms but should feel the same.
- Enable connections between members at all stages in crisis settings (preparation, acute, and post-crisis).
- Address many functional needs such as bringing people together and facilitate sharing across multiple need areas.

2. Opportunity to facilitate bringing members together to **exchange ways of coping with both professional and emotional challenges** of humanitarian work. Majority of the participants participating in research detail the significance of support from colleagues and professional peers in their work. This creates opportunities for IAWG to:

- Foster collaboration for the purpose of improved professional well being.
- Provide a platform where members can share their personal experiences and get social and emotional support.
- Bring people together across esteem, emotional, and belonging needs.

3. Opportunity to **disrupt unintentional inequality of access to networks and information**. Many respondents felt that those that are male, older, highly educated, have more professional experience have better access to international networks and information channels. IAWG can contribute to:

- Creating equality among represented voices at different levels of the humanitarian system.
- Recognizing and value the contributions of all members - global and local actors, regardless of age, education, language skills.
- Enabling frontline implementers to be part of and to shape global conversations.

4. Opportunity for **frontline implementers** to **create an information validation system.** Frontline implementers seek reliable information from credible sources. This creates an opportunity for IAWG to consider:

- How members can collaborate to validate effective practices and information.
- How to change mindsets to share failures for the success of others.
- Potential to address functional and esteem needs while also meeting evaluation and sharing objectives.

5. Opportunity to support a **member-led network**, which fosters organic learning and sharing directed by members. Key to such a network would be that it is member/community led: It is co-created and developed by members, who decide the main topics and framing of discussions on what is relevant. As such it has exceptionally high potential to address emotional needs across all objectives, and strong potential to meet functional and esteem needs for evaluation, sharing, and advocacy objectives.

6. Opportunity for the network to highlight the holistic needs of its members. The network collects and **utilizes data to amplify and lobby for the collective needs of frontline implementers** and those whom they work with and for.

- It should put data behind abstract needs (emotional and belonging) to utilize for the improvement of the profession.
- Functional needs tend to be the main focus of development, however esteem, belonging, and emotional needs are critical to the network and its members.
- It has strong potential to meet belonging needs in evaluation, sharing, and advocacy objectives.

Acknowledgements.

This report has been developed by Scope Impact for the Inter Agency Working Group for Sexual and Reproductive Health in Crises (IAWG), to support its efforts to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights in humanitarian contexts. The insights in this research represent the experiences and thoughts of people working on the frontlines across the globe and identified opportunities are hoped to support IAWG in the formation of a global support network for frontline implementers that addresses their needs for learning, exchange and interaction.

We are thankful to all the participants around the world, many of whom are extremely busy, working in remote areas with poor connectivity, for the time taken to participate so actively in the research. Without their voices, this work would not have been possible.

We sincerely thank the IAWG, it's Steering Committee members and working groups for the support with identifying participants for the research and guidance throughout. A special thanks to the Government of Netherlands, Alison Greer, Erin Worden, Sarah Knaster and Sandra from IAWG for the opportunity to and support with undertaking this interesting work. We want to thank Bushra Almakaleh, Project Director for Save the Children International in Yemen country office, for reaching out to frontline workers throughout Yemen, facilitating chats and interviews.

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1. PROJECT BACKGROUND & PURPOSE.

IAWG
The Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG) on Reproductive Health in Crises is a broad-based, highly collaborative coalition of 21 steering committee member agencies – representing the United Nations, government, non-governmental, research, and donor organizations. Its broader network includes over 2,500 individual members from 450 agencies. IAWG is committed to advancing the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of people affected by conflict and natural disaster. IAWG has proven capacity to leverage diverse organizations' experience and individuals' expertise to form a coherent, collective, trusted voice on SRHR in humanitarian settings.

Under the IAWG banner, members engage in inter- and cross-sectoral collaboration to respond to SRHR needs quickly and innovatively during emergencies, as exemplified by IAWG's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Role of frontline implementers in ensuring SRHR in humanitarian crises
The COVID-19 pandemic has demanded rethinking about the usual ways of working in humanitarian contexts. With implementers more isolated due to lockdowns and movement restrictions, local actors - more than ever - have played a key role in driving global efforts to ensure SRHR continuity through adaptation and ingenuity. In tandem with other localization efforts in humanitarian response, IAWG is emphasizing the need to ensure local actors and frontline implementers are put at the center of the SRHR response of its members.

Background on Frontline Implementers Support Network
In March 2020, IAWG launched the COVID-19 Taskforce in recognition of the urgent need for a rapid response mechanism that could source information quickly and co-create tools, programmatic modifications, and advocacy with implementers. Taskforce members expressed interest in additional efforts to support program implementers who are adapting SRHR programs to ensure continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In April, SCOPE submitted a concept for strategies to connect implementers and amplify their innovations through a *Frontline Implementers Support Network*.

Subsequently, IAWG organized three webinars, with support from SCOPE, to allow implementers to exchange information about such COVID-19 adaptations, share common challenges, and gather information about requests for support and ways to connect. To support further development of the *Frontline Implementers Support Network*, and informed by the results of the *Frontlines in Focus* webinars and ongoing input from IAWG members, SCOPE embarked on design research to inform creation of a vibrant community of practice among SRHR implementers in humanitarian crises. *(For detailed Scope of Work see Annex 1.)*

2. METHODOLOGY.

Design Research Approach.

To help inform the creation of the Network, the Scope team, in collaboration with IAWG secretariat staff, developed a strategy for conducting a rapid Human-Centered Design (HCD)-led research project. The research approach was designed to reach a wide representation of frontline implementers around the globe, applying digital tools to enable rapid and remote engagement to begin understanding their needs. This also provided an opportunity to explore different approaches to engaging frontline implementers in different humanitarian settings.
(See Annex 2. for detailed design research plan)

Design Research Objectives.

The design research encompassed three key objectives:

1. Identify how frontline implementers currently communicate, what they would like to communicate about, and their visions for how a network would support them.
2. Understand and map IAWG (including SWGs) experience with and aspirations for engaging with frontline implementers.
3. Identify a set of potential ideas for the network for co-creation and testing in the next phase.

Design Research Methods.

Scope conducted the design research through virtual focus groups, key informant interviews, and surveys to capture demographic information about the participants. Digital tools helped to reach a wide range of participants around the world. These digital tools consisted of WhatsApp, Zoom and Google Forms.

Whatsapp chat ('The Frontline Chat')

As WhatsApp is a platform that is familiar and frequently used by frontline implementers, it was decided to conduct group written discussions via WhatsApp, with the intention of creating a focus group-like atmosphere where participants would respond to each other in addition to cues and prompts from the facilitator.

Several chats were planned to enable discussions in different languages and different parts of the world. Participants were prompted with a question each day over the course of 4 days, requiring as little as 5 minutes and no more than 15 minutes each day to respond to via WhatsApp messaging. Participants were asked about: what platforms they use for sharing information among colleagues, how they learn about new practices, express needs and challenges as related to communicating, sharing and learning during times of crises, and their vision for the future. Chats were held in English, French and Arabic, with the help of facilitators who have experience working with SRH in these languages and contexts.

Registration and exit survey

Participants were asked to register for 'The Frontline Chat' by completing a short survey via Google forms asking about their organization, position and familiarity with the technology. They also completed a short survey in Google forms at the conclusion of the chat asking about their experience with the chat and if they would like to continue to be part of the network co-creation.

Key informant interviews

Interviews of approximately one hour each were conducted via Zoom in English, Spanish, French and Arabic, to further explore themes that emerged in the WhatsApp chat and elicit rich information about the experiences of frontline implementers and their needs.
(See Annex 3. for a matrix of frontline chat and interview tools, including e-mails, registration and exit survey, and questions guides)

Who We Spoke to.

We defined frontline implementers as **"those working on the frontlines who often don't have an opportunity to engage or have a voice in discussions about standards or guidelines. They might be managers from civil society organizations or youth-led organizations or field office leads for national NGOs who want to build connections with others in the field and have opportunities to learn and share. They might be in remote areas or working in urban or peri-urban areas, but their work is not likely at national level."**

We planned for five WhatsApp chats aiming for one global group in English and four country-specific groups from: Bangladesh, Yemen, Niger, and Colombia. The countries were selected to represent different regions, humanitarian contexts (protracted, cyclical, acute, urban), and to ensure adolescent and youth participation. For each of the Frontline Chats, we aimed to identify 15-20 people. We asked IAWG members to assist in recommending and recruiting participants and also reached out to frontline implementers who registered for the three COVID-related webinars held in May and June. Specific organizations and contacts in each country were also asked for assistance in recruitment.

We ultimately held four WhatsApp chats including a global group with representatives from 17 countries* (English), and three country-specific groups as follows: 1) Bangladesh participants (English), 2) Yemen participants (Arabic) and 3) Niger and Tchad participants (French). Participation ranged from 5 to 25 frontline implementers across the group. We were unable to recruit enough participants for the Columbia group, so we held interviews with some representatives instead. The table below provides more information about the participants in each group.

* Participants in the global group where based in: Democratic Republic of Congo, Venezuela, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Cameroon, Uganda, Pakistan, Slovakia, South Africa, Tanzania, Sudan, Malawi, Thailand, Chad, Bangladesh and Egypt

Who We Spoke to.

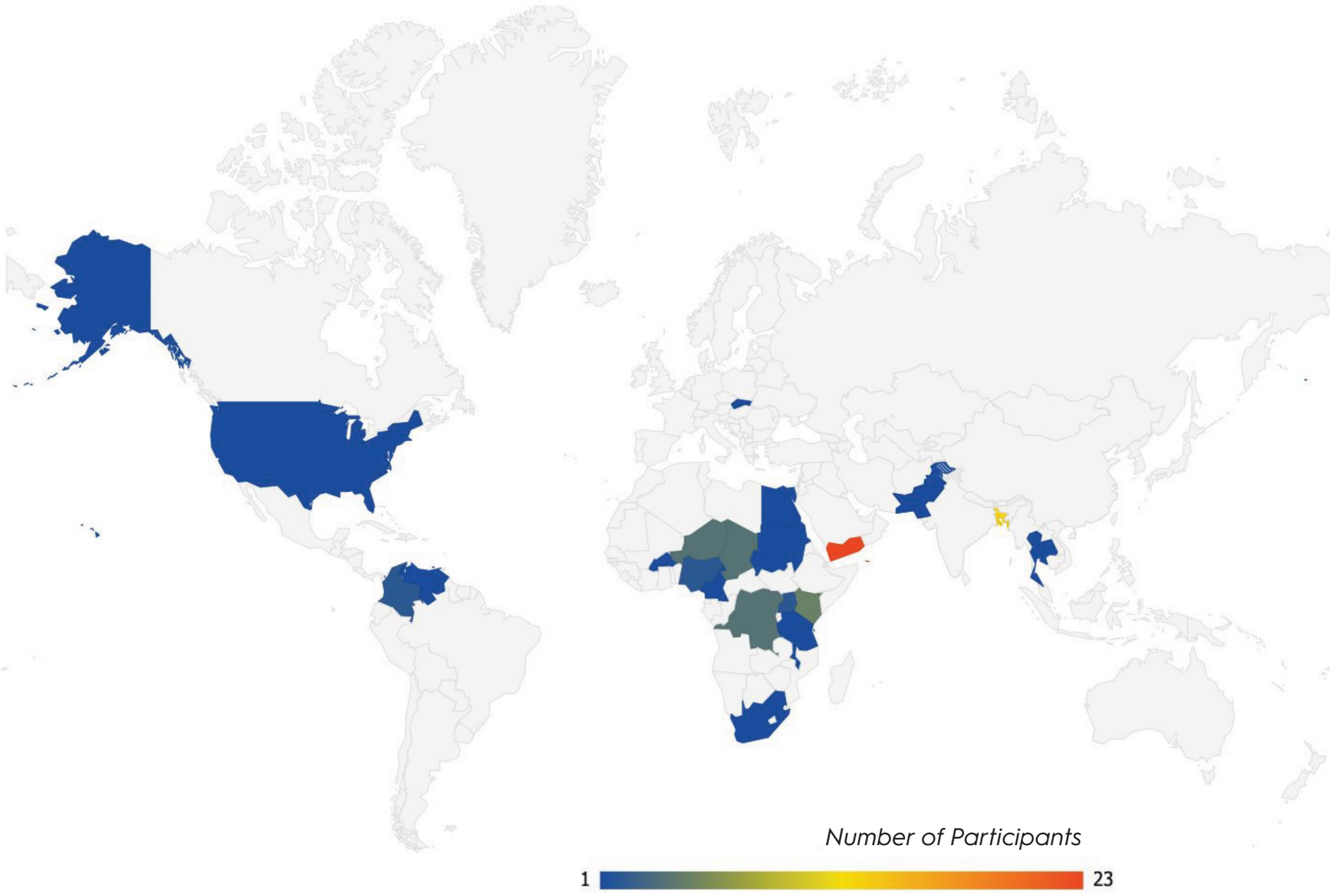
Group	Number of registered participants	Types of organizations/ frontline implementers participants
Global Group	27	UN, EU/ECHO, INGOs, Local NGOs/CSOs
Bangladesh Group	12	UN, INGOs and Local NGOs
Yemen Group	21	Local NGOs, CSOs, Midwives and Medical Responders
Niger/ Tchad Group	7	INGOs and Local NGOs
Total	67	

The most active in the WhatsApp chat groups and those thought to bring in interesting perspectives to the discussion were asked to participate in a follow-up interview. We conducted 5 total interviews with frontline implementers and health workers based in Colombia, Yemen, Bangladesh, and Kenya.

For more on how the WhatsApp chats were organized and their dynamics see Annex 4. WhatsApp groups participants registration lists.

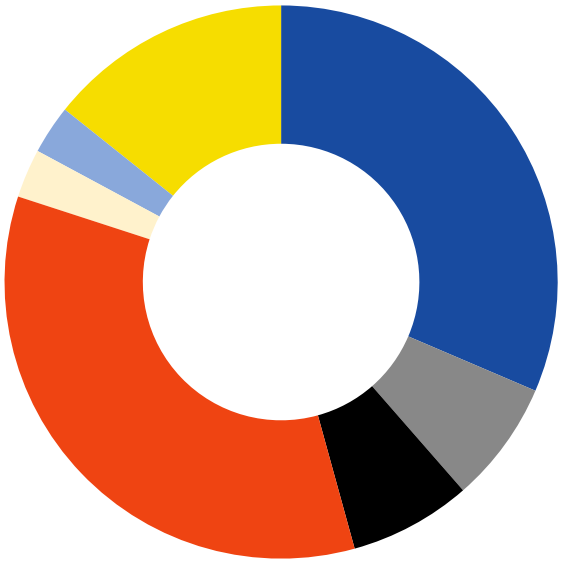
Overall Scope connected to 71 people between the 4 frontline chats and 5 key informant interviews. These participants came from 22 countries, 8 types of organizations, 9 categories of professional roles and near equal groups of experience levels ranging from one to 14+ years.

Who We Spoke to.



Types of Organizations

- INGO
- Health service provider
- Government
- NGO/CSO
- University
- Other/not known
- International Organization - UN



Who We Spoke to.

Participants' years of professional experience

- 14 + years
- 10 - 13 Years
- 7 - 9 Years
- 4 - 6 Years
- 1 - 3 Years

Participants' professional role

- Director
- Programme Manager
- Programme Officer
- Technical Advisor
- Technical/field worker
- Academia
- Health care provider
- Government official
- Other/not known

Synthesis & Analysis Methods.

Qualitative data collection was followed by synthesis and analysis of the findings and insights from the Frontline Chat groups and interviews. Scope employed Affinity, Needs Area, and Opportunity Mapping as methods to organize, make sense of and derive meaning from the qualitative data.

Affinity mapping is a method where (typically qualitative) data is grouped by likeness or affinity. As prominent groupings form, they are labeled with themes which represent the grouping of data. Prominence in this process was identified by frequency of similar data points, provocation of curiosity or non-obvious themes that answered one or more of the project objectives.

Scope created 6 areas for mapping data, one for each research topic and a miscellaneous category. The topics were as follows:

- Characteristics of frontline implementers
- General Learning
- General Sharing
- Learning and sharing in time of Crisis
- Learning and Sharing in the Future
- Miscellaneous

For each topic area an affinity map was created. Each research question was then aligned with the corresponding topic area, enabling themes related to the questions to emerge.
(See Annex 5 a) for the Affinity Map)

After groupings were formulated and labeled with themes, the Scope team sought to understand the explicit and implicit needs expressed by the participants. **A Needs Area Map** was created, which categorized groups from affinity mapping into needs-based areas. These areas are developed by finding patterns in the collective groups. Scope used the Needs Area Map to highlight needs under themes supported by qualitative data.
(See Annex 5 b) for the Needs Mapping)

As themes developed from the Needs Area Map, Scope began to identify Opportunity areas by using **Opportunity Area Mapping**, which is a process that identifies pathways with the potential to address identified needs. This process was conducted through the deliberation of Scope team members based on the collected qualitative data, Affinity and Needs Area Maps. The main needs areas were compared with IAWG objectives in a matrix enabling opportunities to emerge. Initially drafted opportunities were then combined and refined into the main final opportunities.
(See Annex 5 c) for the Opportunity Area Mapping).

3. RESEARCH INSIGHTS.

Key Findings.

Synthesis and analysis outcome

The outcome of the synthesis and analysis process produced three main categories of findings:

a) frontline implementers characteristics
b) learning and sharing
c) improving learning and sharing.

These categories aimed to understand who frontline implementers are by understanding the characteristics they use to identify themselves, how they learn and share through different stages of a crisis (e.g. moments of acute crisis, ongoing crisis, etc.), and lastly how frontline implementers envision learning and sharing could improve in the future.

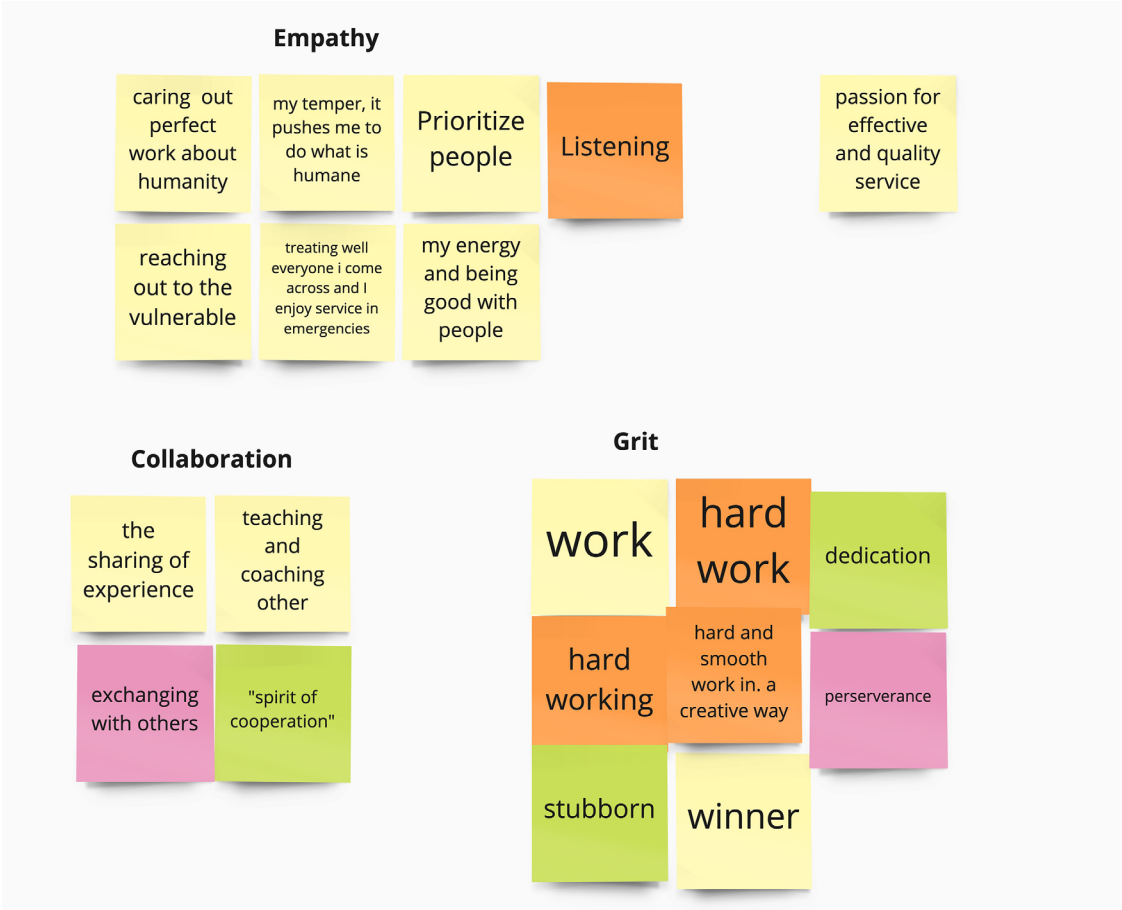
a) Frontline Implementers Characteristics
Understanding the characteristics of frontline implementers will allow IAWG a window into understanding how they see themselves. Understanding characteristics is a starting point for further research that can allow IAWG to develop a voice and functionality to the network that embodies the characteristics of its users.

Prominent self-identified personal qualities included the following and defined by the participants words:

- Empathy: *"treating well everyone i come across"*
- Intuition: *"my instincts. I do trust my instinct"*
- Grit: *"hard working"*
- Composure: *"staying calm amidst chaos"*
- Optimism: *"staying positive at the most vulnerable moment"*
- Collaboration: *"spirit of cooperation"*

These characteristics show similarities that importantly highlight the motivations of frontline implementers and how and why they continue to function in difficult circumstances. As these are the characteristics of the network's users, the network must also embody these characteristics in its

functionality, communication, and visuality. These characteristics might also form the basis for developing relationships between network members.



b) Learning and Sharing

Synthesis and analysis explored learning and sharing in humanitarian contexts. Understanding how frontline implementers currently learn and share is critical to developing a network that can seamlessly be used by members.

Crisis is constantly fluctuating

The findings show that the frontline implementers perspective of "crisis" changes based on the context and area of work. For frontline implementers, crisis can exist at a global, national, regional, and local level. Participants shared the sentiment that crisis times are constant - they only change based on varying degrees of acuity. Therefore, frontline implementers are always seeking or sharing knowledge and resources to address crises. In moments of acute crisis, they seek knowledge but find it difficult to justify the time for learning.

Frontline implementers often seek to learn and share information and resources to address the problems of the moment, those which can be immediately acted upon. For example a frontline implementer aims to provide resources for midwives to help them through complications of a home birth, when referral is not possible and medical doctors are not in close proximity. Midwives may need immediate advice in that moment, or may be able to rely on guidance and learning provided before the complication occurs.

It may also be a crisis that requires a solution soon, but not as immediate, since it entails strategic planning to execute effectively. Examples would be when a frontline implementer seeks information on how to improve safety measures among midwifery staff to prevent the spread of SARS-COV-2 or to reorganize antenatal care services in the COVID-19 context

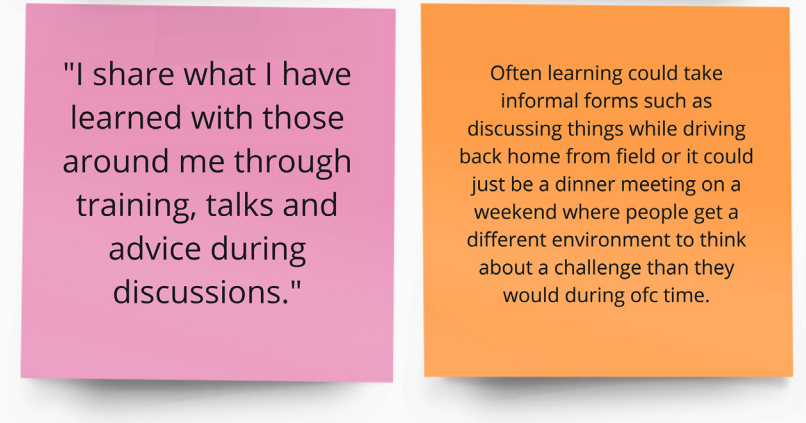
"It is at times difficult to learn and share during crises because you feel as if you are wasting time instead of saving lives and people are always on the move and no one is prepared to share."
Bangladesh Frontline Chat participant

Informal learning and sharing among colleagues is common

Frontline implementers identified ways of learning and sharing that were expected. Among the most commonly mentioned were reading online articles, joining WhatsApp and Facebook groups, attending training and discussing with colleagues in both formal meetings and informal settings. Participants frequently reported being a part of an online group where they learn and share new information and keep a pulse on what is happening in the field.

What stood out from these conventional ways of learning and sharing was the patterns of formality and informality, passive and active learning and sharing. The most commonly mentioned way to formally learn and share among frontline implementers was training and workshops. These training sessions were reported as taking place mostly within an organization or at the local level, yet they are perceived as great opportunities to meet people and build relationships one might not have had otherwise. While informal learning and sharing often happens directly with close colleagues during downtime, such as over meals, learning also happens online across many platforms with colleagues whom they may never have met or communicated with previously. It is these informal moments of learning and sharing that seem to be the most common. They are organic, often autonomous, and lead by motivated frontline implementers.

Frontline Chat Global, Bangladesh, Niger



Frontline Chat Bangladesh, Niger

WhatsApp gives access

Participants almost universally reported participating in WhatsApp groups for the purpose of learning and sharing. Some groups are formulated among colleagues while others join professional community groups. Participants reported that these groups are popular sources for staying up to date on what the professional community is talking about. Often these groups are found through referral from other colleagues or by established trusted formal sources.

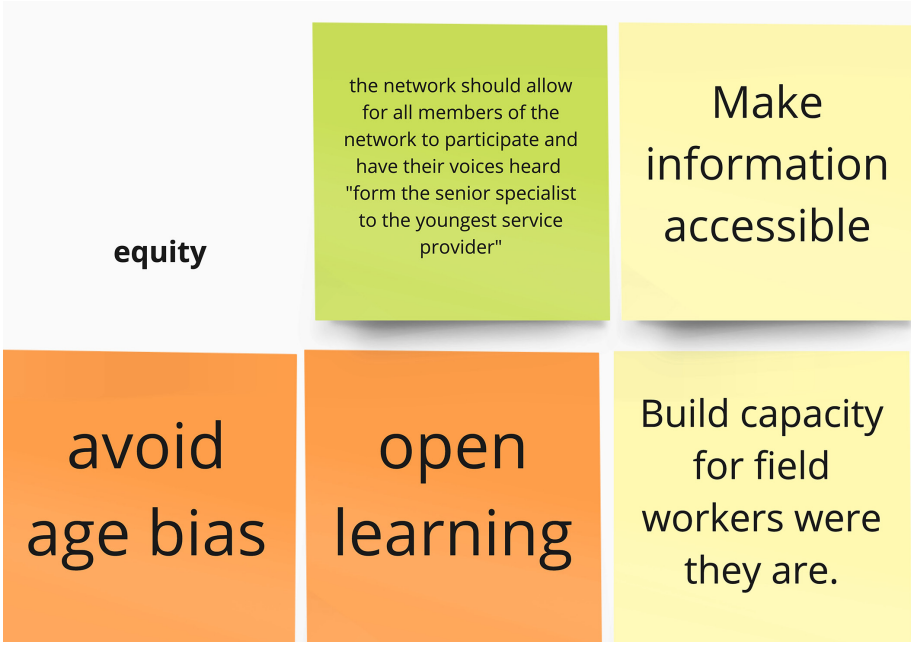
WhatsApp seems to play an important role in learning and sharing information, and for the accessibility of information. In places where internet and telecommunication is a high expense or unreliable resource, WhatsApp is a tool which in some ways acts as an equalizer, as accessing it is inexpensive, requires low internet bandwidth and messages can be downloaded in brief moments of internet access.

c) Improving Learning and sharing
The third category of inquiry focused on understanding how frontline implementers believed the learning and sharing could improve in the future. These findings give early clues into how an ideal future network might function.

Dialogue is unbiased and inclusive
The participants reported that some networks they are part of today have an air of bias which excludes others. Commonly this bias is targeted toward young people or more junior staff, those perceived to have less experience, professionally perceived as lower status, and women.

The degree and type of bias varies depending on the country, content and organization; however, the most frequently mentioned and cross cutting was age bias toward younger individuals. Younger frontline implementers and other members of the community often retreat from professional groups with older, senior and more experienced colleagues as they do not feel like they have a voice in these spaces. As a result, younger colleagues often create their own groups to learn and share, which may result in siloing, with age as a border wall. We also heard from one interviewee that humanitarian networks often tend to favour more educated local development professionals, with fluent English and already strong networks in the international community. While specific internationals were not specifically mentioned, this interviewee explained that this attitude is often within large groups particularly those of large international organizations.

Participants imagined interactions where age was not a limiter to their respect among colleagues.



Frontline Chat Global, Yemen, Bangladesh

Building connections and a voice with government

Frontline implementers who participated in this research imagined channels that connect them more closely to the government. Participants envisioned more visibility to government officials who can participate in effecting positive change by working together with the SRHR and humanitarian community. Some frontline implementers expressed the need for channels that allow the humanitarian SRHR community to lobby for the needs of the field and people it benefits. In the future some believe government officials will work closer in collaboration with the SRHR community. This need is likely to vary according to existing collaboration between governments and the humanitarian sector in a country, and may not be felt as strongly where governments are more responsive.

Way forward,
There should be an overall governing body for NGOs in every Nations states and LGAs as far as we are there to complement government efforts
A lot of policies Will be put in place to back up the settings
Free flow of NGOs in all ramifications to adress issues of emergencies promtly
I felt just having coalitions of NGOs working in thesame tematic area is not enough

Frontline Chat Global

"Establish a close relationship between health personnel and government hospitals"

Frontline Chat Yemen

No communication with government

Not much 'bottom-up' sharing - learning from local context

Key informant interview Yemen

Resources are a call away

The allocation of resources and the need for more resources is always present. Some participants expressed that they would like future networks to provide channels to advocate for funding resources. Often the need for resources are for practical goods, tools and materials for frontline implementers to disseminate to frontline workers.

Issue when funding stopped the channel became less active

Key informant interview Yemen

In times of war money and resources are low. people rely on the phone or books because internet is cut off.

When internet is back FLW take advantage quickly to contact specialists, doctors, or google for what they need

Frontline Chat Yemen

Trainings provide learning and connections

Training is how the majority of participants reported receiving formal information. Information that comes from training is highly trusted and often from respected experts. Frontline implementers frequently mentioned professional training as a way to learn and also provide excellent cross discipline and cross organizational sharing opportunities, as well as ways to connect with other professionals. Some also appreciated connecting with trainers, who are often perceived as very experienced professionals in the field, and can be called upon for advice in the future.

gets info and learns through trainings organized by development & humanitarian organizations

Key informant interview Yemen

Trainings on alternative ways to communicate with others

Frontline Chat Yemen

Trainers from institutes share their number and are happy to contacted after (culturally easy to approach ppl in this way)

Key informant interview Yemen

Share your failure for another's success

A key informant described a culture of perfection among SRHR workers in humanitarian settings. This perspective that one must not make a mistake permeates a frontline implementers' work at multiple levels. Most significantly spoken about among some participants how the perception of perfection creates a barrier to learning from other mistakes.

"We should be humble enough to share failures and of course what and how we learned from our mistakes so as to improve our work and that of others."

Frontline Chat Global

Easy

Easier said than done is the ability to make something "easy." Participants noted the future should bring ease. Technology and structures will improve and therefore learning and sharing will be easier. Participants seemed to expect a new network to bring ease. Ease in communication, connecting, and turning ideas into action.

network as able to support/ ease people into technology/ improve skills

Frontline Chat Global

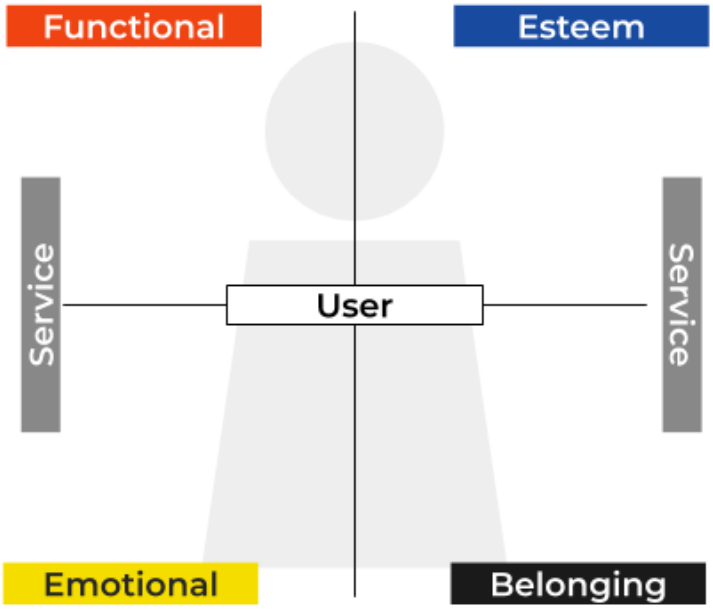
Technology will be more accessible and information dissemination will be easier.

Frontline Chat Global

Needs Map

Based on the Affinity mapping, the Scope team identified the needs within the findings, aiming to understand explicit and implicit needs. These needs emerged in four key categories: *Functional, Esteem, Emotional,* and *Belonging.*

Scope identified that each area has a dual face. While one face focuses on the needs of the frontline implementers - 'the Humanitarian' - the other shows what is required of the network to meet those needs. The needs area map reflects this duality of need and lays out potential areas to explore for the network.



Functional Needs

The network must address the functional needs of its members. These include technology, information, and system bottlenecks.

The Network (The Service)

Must enable communication in low bandwidth areas.

The Humanitarian (The User)

Frontline implementers rely on any available technology to receive and share information (especially during a crisis).

How might the network reach low bandwidth implementers? Creating a network of functions with low bandwidth will increase accessibility.

A network that operates on and offline may serve the needs of frontline implementers in areas of unreliable internet service. Often implementers in these areas rush to access information when service is finally available.

"When internet is back we take advantage quickly to contact specialists, doctors, or google for what they need"
- Frontline Chat Yemen participant

How might the network explore serving members on and offline?

Frontline implementers use various formats to learn and share.

Frontline implementers use a wide range of sources to learn and share. Among those described were rapid assessments, interagency coordination meetings, social media (facebook and instagram), WhatsApp, reading online articles, and talking directly to colleagues.

Formal ways include reading articles, workshops, and training. Informal ways of learning include conversations over lunch, car rides to work, and social media groups. Mentoring between peers was noted as an important part of the learning and sharing culture among frontline implementers.

How might the network facilitate learning and the exchange and development of ideas, including

Telecommunications networks can be unreliable. Many frontline implementers do not rely on any specific technology to learn and share information, but use whatever is available in the moment.

Simplicity is an important factor to increase the ease of access.

"In areas difficult to access where the internet connection did not allow it, we used GSM calls to transmit and / or get feedback."
- Frontline Chat Niger participant

How might the network explore existing on many service formats? Websites, WhatsApp, SMS, etc.?

through both formal and informal discussions?

Frontline implementers need efficient, relevant and quality information

Some frontline implementers stressed the importance of sharing in ways that enable easy comprehension.

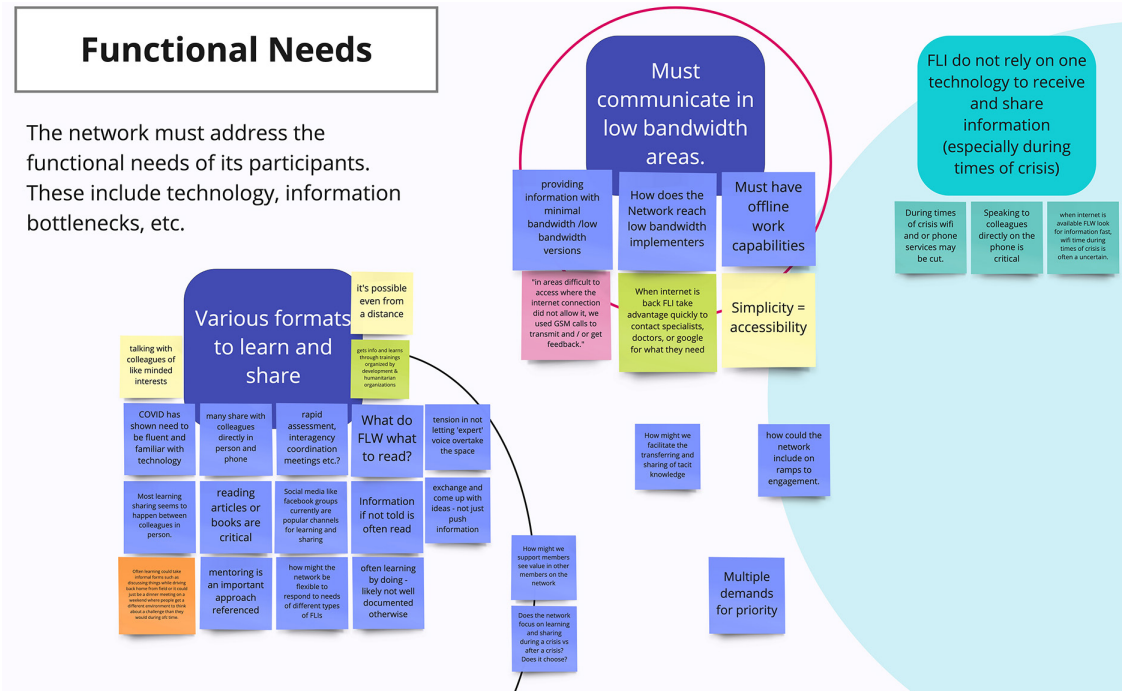
Many shared the experience of feeling high pressure to find quality information fast during a crisis. This drives some to only refer to a select few major sources (WHO for example) of information during times of crisis. They have limited means of learning about innovations happening on the ground in real time.

How might the network provide ways for implementers to find credible information efficiently in times of high stress and crisis?

Good news needs to spread fast, but it doesn't

Many members indicated how bad news travels fast. They often hear of new interventions that have gone wrong.

How might the network explore facilitating good news traveling fast?



Esteem Needs

The network itself must be respected, so that it supports and strengthens confidence in the information shared in the network. The network must therefore employ methods which boost credible information from members. Esteem also refers to the members themselves. They must have the opportunities to be heard, respected and recognized.

The Network (The Service)

Amplifying the needs of the front-line implementers (including re-sources).

As with many fields, very few frontline implementers have had the ability (privilege/access) to be in expert spaces.

Recognition is often given to those at higher professional levels and with global credentials.

How might the network equalize this access and acknowledge the expertise at the frontline?
How might IAWG use its respect and status to highlight others who might not get the opportunity otherwise or be overlooked?

The network may need to include global and national actors to advocate for resources. How might they participate, while still ensuring that frontline implementers are in the lead? How might they assist the network to capture evidence to lobby for the physical, emotional, and professional needs of frontline workers?

The Humanitarian (The User)

Respect among colleagues is key to how information is accepted.

Respect plays a highly important role in how messages are received, as reported by many participants. Colleagues who respect one another are open to learn from one another.

Similarly, resentment can influence how messages are received: "*in times of crisis and quarrels makes it difficult to communicate.*" - Key informant interview
Many social media platforms have tools to acknowledge and identify good content, ways to build status among peers and tools to show appreciation/respect etc., which can provide inspiration for the network.

How might the network explore ways to facilitate highlighting respected implementers and content? How might the network support all members to grow respect within the community?

Attracting people to the network.

The Network could utilize current influencers in the field to attract frontline implementers to the network.

Oriententing people to the network is important. How might the network welcome people to join and help new members to navigate the network?

How might the network explore its ability to develop a sense of belonging for a wide range of individuals? Frontline implementers must gain a sense of membership and respect the network as a resource.

Because word of mouth and recommendations are so valued, one question is how the network could support friends inviting friends to join?

Earning credibility among frontline implementers.

It may become important to show how IAWG information is reviewed and validated to maintain credibility.

How might the network validate "good" information?

How might the network help frontline implementers sift through information and combat misinformation?

"Challenge will be in controlling quality and authentic information"
- Frontline Chat Global participant

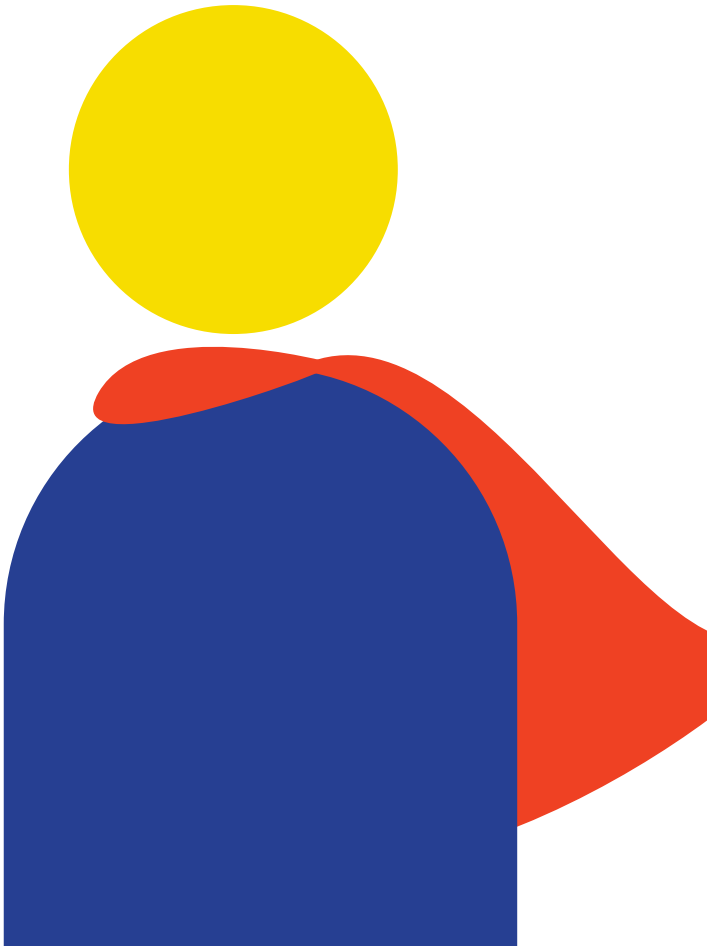
Each person has a "superpower" to contribute to the network.

In the Frontline Chats, participants were asked to identify their "superpower" in other words, what do they feel is their best characteristic which contributes to their work.

The following characteristics were most commonly cited: grit, persistence, patience, collaboration, optimism, composure, intuition, and knowledge.

This raised the question of how the network might draw on members' individual strengths to contribute to the network?

"A small village from Yemen can help someone around the world"
- Frontline Chat Yemen participant

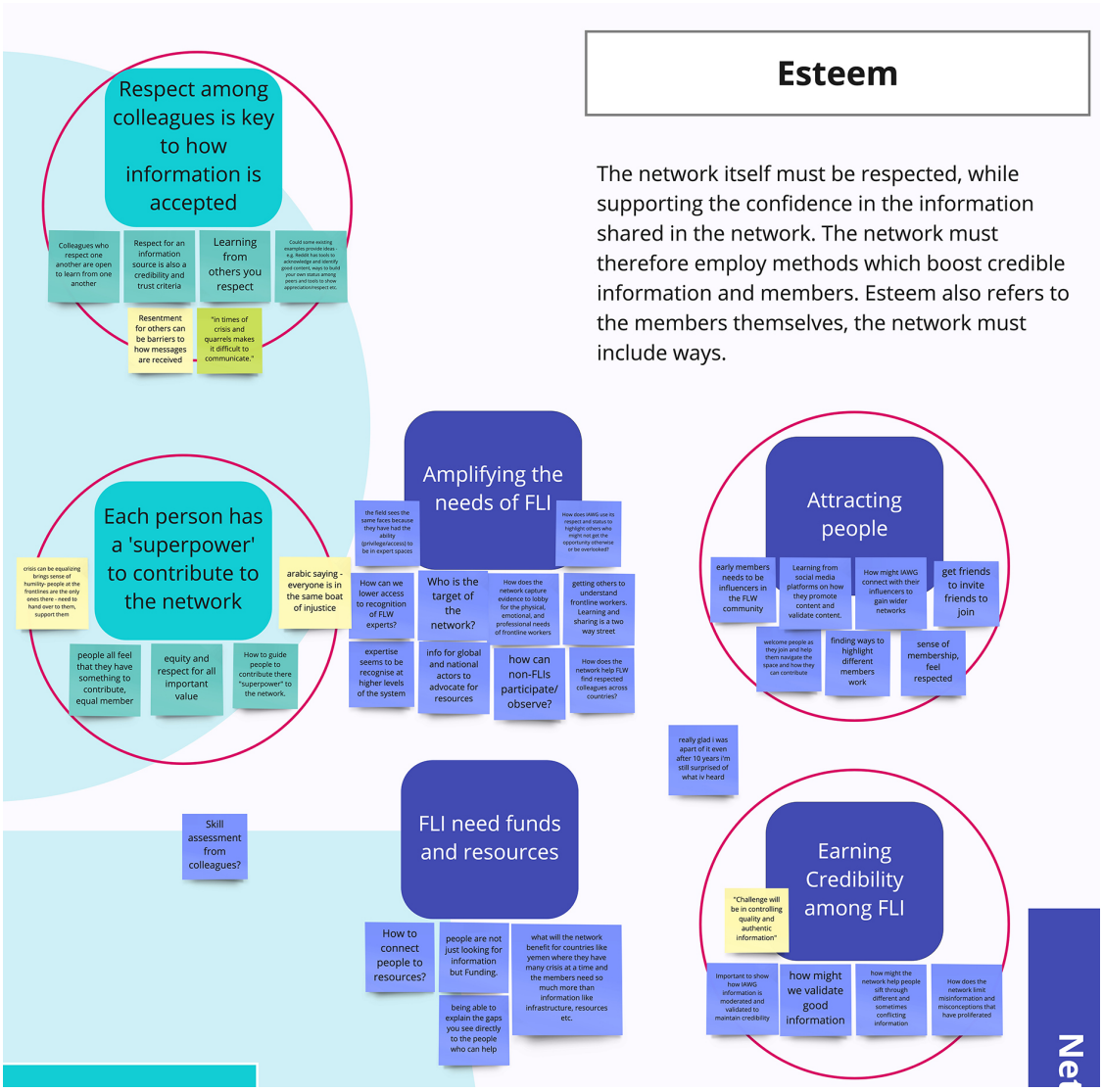


Frontline implementers need funds and resources.

Many participants discussed the need for not only information, but also funding or resources (like medicines). For some lack of resources was the primary need.

How might the network link implementers to funding and resources?

How might the network be able to explain gaps in information and resource needs directly to decision makers (funders and government)?



Emotional Needs

Frontline implementers need to take care of themselves as people, not just as professionals, given the high stress and risky environments in which they live and work.

The Network (The Service)

The network must be emotionally safe for participants.

Frontline workers reported the high stress and emotional toll of their work. How might the network include ways to help them cope with difficult emotional challenges

How might the network be sensitive to the emotional needs by adopting models like trauma-informed harm reduction?

How might the network share resources that might assist members, such as for psychological first aid and psycho-social support?

Relationships need to be established before a major crisis hits.

Some participants reported the need to have connections before a crisis hit, as during crises the situation is chaotic and it can be difficult to connect.

During acute crises, some implementers reported needing credible information quickly. Therefore they tend to seek known, credible sources where they feel most comfortable and trust the source. New sources are not often sought during these moments. Post-crisis reflections - such as

The Humanitarian (The User)

Dealing with guilt as a result of frontline work.

Many participants reported feeling that their decisions may often directly affect the survival of someone's life.

How might the network be able to help participants cope with guilt?

Frontline implementers are people with lives outside of their work duties.

Many participants reported struggling to juggle work and personal life. Because implementers are highly committed to their work and have high emotional investment this can make work-life balance difficult. The result of this imbalance leads to burn out and high stress.

How might the network assist implementers in adopting practices that may help balance the demand brought on by humanitarian work?

experience with Covid-19 might build solidarity across diverse set of people.

How could the network explore ways to connect implementers together as an act of crisis preparation?

How does the network explore ways to change a culture of work life dominating personal life?

Connecting to frontline implementers' sense of motivation.

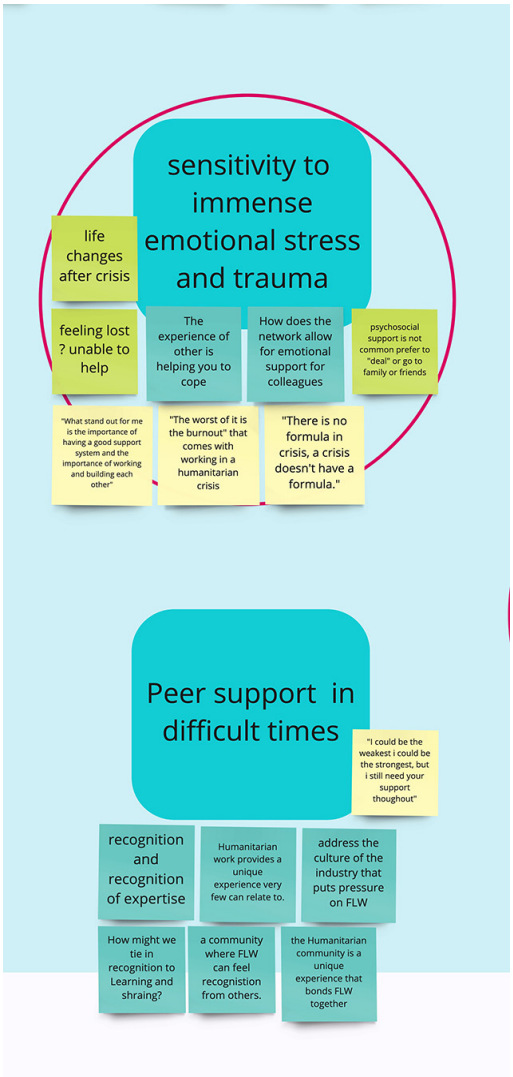
"During an emergency situation when people move miles away, their only goal becomes providing service to the survivors"
- Frontline Chat Bangladesh participant

Implementers are deeply dedicated to their work often at the detriment to their own wellbeing. Many implementers encounter burnout.

"You would be the strongest person in crisis but you are the weakest when it comes to yourself. You play a strong person on the outside but on the inside you are crushing"
- Key informant interview

Many participants indicated how important humanitarian work is to them. One key informant interviewee described to have found his/her purpose doing humanitarian work and this is what drives his/her motivation.

How might the network understand and facilitate personal motivations of implementers to provide content that is not only informational but motivating?



Peer support to immense emotional stress and trauma.

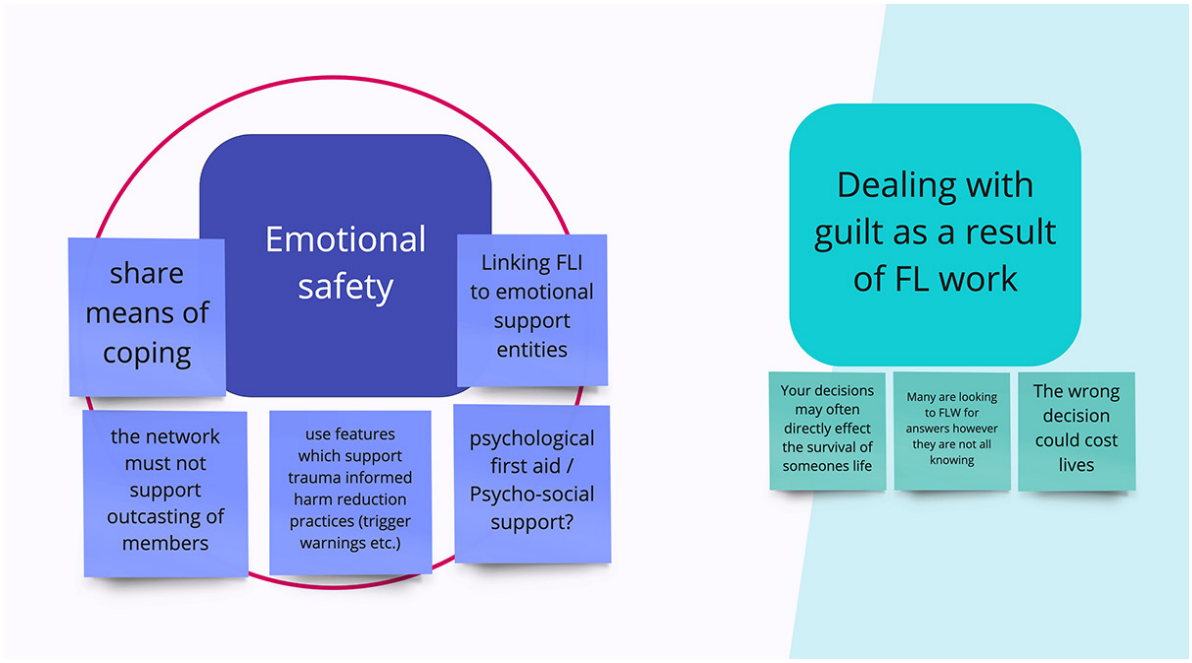
"What stands out for me is the importance of having a good support system and the importance of working and building each other" - Key informant interview

Many implementers discussed the need for emotional peer support.

"I could be the weakest i could be the strongest, but i still need your support throughout"
- Key informant interview

The humanitarian community has the potential to be a unique network that bonds frontline implementers together.

How might the network facilitate emotional support for members? Learning and sharing is not only about doing work but learning how to do work in healthy ways physically and mentally.



Belonging Needs

Frontline implementers need to take care of themselves as people, not just as professionals, given the high stress and risky environments in which they live and work.

The Network (The Service)

Merging communities across countries, cultures and social groups.

Many participants discussed the desire to connect with implementers outside of their usual colleague network.

How might the network facilitate putting implementers together who might not have otherwise met?

How might the network explore speaking with a voice that communicates well across many cultures? How can it create a common language?

Supports equality of access to information and participation.

Participants discussed how poor internet often means being left out from accessing information or certain spaces as their unreliable connectivity can make them 'difficult to deal with'.

Young implementers, in particular, spoke about how they seek spaces that are not biased, as they feel they are not able to fully participate in some events and networks.

The Humanitarian (The User)

The community supports each other to overcome challenges.

"We should be humble enough to share failures and of course what and how we learned from our mistakes so as to improve our work and that of others."
- Frontline Chat Global participant

Frontline implementers are keen to work together to solve problems and often seek out their peers for advice.

Implementer communities have a history of collaboration. How might the network explore, build and expand on ways implementers support one another to overcome difficult challenges in their work?

Creating and maintaining relationships.

Frontline implementers often turn to their networks in times of crisis and they share many characteristics with each other.

How might the network leverage this to build solidarity and connections between people?

"The network should allow for all members of the network to participate and have their voices heard from the senior specialist to the youngest service provider"
- Frontline Chat Yemen participant

How could the network actively counteract bias in dissemination of information and during moments of implementer to implementor interaction?

Dismantling power inequalities.

Some participants described the inability to connect to networks and social groups and to be recognised by the professional community. Generally they feel they do not have a place in humanitarian networks due to barriers around telecommunication connectivity, internet access, language, age, and years of professional experience.

How might the network explore and help break down systemic structures that act as barriers to access for some frontline implementers?

How might local frontline implementers who are often the most excluded from humanitarian networks be heard, share their experiences, get access to good practices, emotional support, etc.?

"Interesting to be interacting with people all over the world, colleagues we have never met but that we want to interact with because of who they are, what they focus their life on"
- Frontline Chat Global participant

How might new members be oriented and welcomed to the network?

No Humanitarian must be left behind.

As reported by many frontline implementers: Local implementers are often left behind and local solutions are not shared.

Many implementers indicated that young voices are often ignored.

"Everyone's experience should be valued and respected."
- Frontline Chat Bangladesh participant

How does the network explore novel structures for highlighting members and solutions that break conventional biases?

Organic and collaborative learning and sharing.

During the Frontline Chats many participants described learning and sharing information with colleagues and friends over the phone, lunch, social media. Many of these moments were described as not planned for learning and sharing.

Though not explicitly said, participants and interviewees described many learning and sharing moments and forming of groups that occur naturally.

How might the network support members to learn and share new practices and adaptations with colleagues as a primary way of information exchange?

How might the network leverage social media interactions to support organic connection and collaboration?

Maintain existing channels for teams to learn and share.

It is common among participants to use social media as an important way to learn and share in their work. How might the network build off social media to facilitate sharing and learning?

How might the network integrate modes of formal and informal learning was to share that already knowledge exist among frontline implementers.

Opportunities.

The recent global crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic has created a unique opportunity to bring people together, including a network of frontline implementers. COVID-19 opened a possibility to confront issues already present, and of concern to IAWG, such as how to be more inclusive and engaging with SRH humanitarians down to the field level. The measures required to control the pandemic have forced everyone to learn how to engage more remotely and to do work without field visits at all levels of the humanitarian system. Shared global experience of dealing with COVID-19 can be a starting point to create a sense of belonging through shared conversations on how they dealt with COVID-19, learning from the experiences and working together as solutions arise, such as vaccine rollout.

"...with the COVID-19 crisis, we have learned that apart from the field missions that facilitate us to achieve more results, the distance work with reduction of field missions with more developed expertise have allowed us to produce a result to some extent, I think that its strategies are to be capitalized and improved if a new emergency appears in the world"
Frontline Global Chat participant

With this as the background, we identified specific opportunity areas emerging from the findings in the Affinity and Needs Maps. The opportunity map plots areas of opportunity to build the foundation of the network. This map utilizes findings identified in the needs map and analyzes them along a matrix. On its x axis, the matrix outlines the objectives of IAWG and on its y axis lists the four identified need areas used in the analysis of data found in the research.

Opportunity areas are where the objectives of IAWG (and the future network) intersect with the identified needs of frontline implementers.

Scope identified 6 opportunities for the network as a result of the synthesis. These opportunities were developed by reviewing key needs and discussing what opportunities are possible for the future frontline implementers network.

Opportunities that addressed both the needs that research participants identified and IAWG goals were placed on the opportunity map. Scope then refined these opportunities, synthesising similar needs to create an Opportunity map which was specific enough to provide focus and direction, yet broad enough to explore and refine as IAWG moves forward with further developing the network.

Opportunities

Opt1 Opportunity to build a seamless online and offline network to create a reliable and equitable experience.

Opt2 Opportunity to bring members together to exchange ways of coping with both professional and emotional challenges of humanitarian work.

Opt3 Opportunity to disrupt unintentional inequality of access to networks and information.

Opt4 Opportunity for frontline implementers to create an information validation system.

Opt5 Opportunity to support a member-led network, which fosters organic learning and sharing directed by members.

Opt6 Opportunity for the network to collect and utilize data to amplify and lobby for the collective needs of frontline implementers and those whom they work with and for.

	Objective 1 **Bring people together**	Objective 2 **Evaluate**	Objective 3 **Share**	Objective 4 **Advocate**
Area A **Functional Needs**				
Area B **Esteem Needs**				
Area C **Emotional Needs**				
Area D **Belonging Needs**				

OPPORTUNITY 1.
Opportunity to build a seamless online and offline network to create a reliable and equitable experience.

	Objective 1 **Bring people together**	Objective 2 **Evaluate**	Objective 3 **Share**	Objective 4 **Advocate**
Area A **Functional Needs**	●	●	●	
Area B **Esteem Needs**				
Area C **Emotional Needs**	●		●	
Area D **Belonging Needs**	●		●	

"...opportunities to learn are much easier to find-

if you are blessed with good internet connectivity..."

Frontline Chat Global participant

The ability to access the content of the network and contribute to the network even in areas where internet and phone services are unreliable has high potential to meet key needs of frontline implementers and IAWG's objectives. Frontline implementers are highly motivated to be part of groups and networks, but for many an unreliable connection is a significant barrier to accessing the humanitarian community and other implementers in the space. While the IAWG cannot improve the internet and telecoms service of implementers, it can explore the opportunity to create a network that provides meaningful usability despite unreliable connection.

Functional Needs X Bring people together, Evaluate, Share (A1, A2, A3)

Functions that allow on and offline engagement would increase the network's accessibility. If a future solution creates easy and desirable usability pathways for participants with low internet access, then a greater and more diverse membership group is more likely. The functionality of the network has the potential to bring people together by creating opportunities for typically marginalized groups to have equal access (see opportunity 3). There is an opportunity to explore novel ways members with low bandwidth can learn and share information and connect with one another.

Emotional Needs X Bring people Together, Share (C1, C3)

During times of crisis emotions and stress are high; often, this is when frontline implementers look to their colleagues for emotional support. An on and offline connection to the network can bring people together during these difficult times to share what they are experiencing, even when internet connection is weak or infrequent.

Belonging Needs X Bring people togeather, Share (D1, D3)

Opportunity 1 shows the potential to explore how low bandwidth solutions invite a greater degree of diversity to the network. As a wider demographic of members are able to join, the more the network is able to bring people together who have not typically been able to participate nor been connected.

OPPORTUNITY 2.
Opportunity to bring members together to exchange ways of coping with both professional and emotional challenges of humanitarian work.

	Objective 1 **Bring people together**	Objective 2 **Evaluate**	Objective 3 **Share**	Objective 4 **Advocate**
Area A **Functional Needs**			●	
Area B **Esteem Needs**	●			
Area C **Emotional Needs**	●		●	
Area D **Belonging Needs**			●	

"I could be the weakest, I could be the strongest

but I still need your support throughout."

Key informant interview

Colleague support is incredibly strong in the humanitarian community. Many participants described the significance of support from colleagues and professional peers in their work. The findings show that support occurs across needs areas, creating opportunities for the future network to facilitate member support from a holistic perspective.

Functional Needs X sharing (A3)

Exploring how the network could support members to share information and learning with one another may help them to overcome the challenges that they are facing in their programs. Lessons learned and different ideas about how to solve these challenges could come from many diverse voices around the globe, potentially leading to new ideas.

Esteem X Bring people together (B1)

To attract members to the network, strategies that leverage the respect frontline implementers have for one another should be explored, drawing on influencers to promote and expand membership.

Emotional Needs X Bring people together, Share (C1, C3)

A network that supports emotional needs is likely to bring frontline implementers together. Frontline implementers often have someone in their life that acts as emotional support. This is viewed as critical to cope with the job. Exploring how the network might provide greater connectivity for emotional support presents a huge opportunity to bring people together beyond professional acquisition of information. Sharing of experiences may create the opportunity for peer support among members.

Belonging Needs X Sharing (D3)

Being able to express and share emotional stress in a community of supportive minds creates a great personal sense of belonging. Exploring how the network not only achieves open sharing of emotional stress but facilitates this practice of sharing for people to build meaningful connection and belonging would be key for the network.

OPPORTUNITY 3.
Opportunity to disrupt unintentional inequality of access to networks and information.

	Objective 1 **Bring people together**	Objective 2 **Evaluate**	Objective 3 **Share**	Objective 4 **Advocate**
Area A **Functional Needs**	●	●	●	●
Area B **Esteem Needs**	●		●	●
Area C **Emotional Needs**	●		●	●
Area D **Belonging Needs**	●		●	●

"the network should allow for all members of the network to participate and have their voices heard [...] from the senior specialist to the youngest service provider."

Frontline Chat Yemen participant

Breaking down hierarchies and inequality in any system is difficult. Through the network, IAWG might have the opportunity to help foster a community that starts to break through inequality barriers. This opportunity explores not only how the network can contribute to equalizing access, but also how to build a foundation for equity.

Functional Needs X Bring people together, Evaluate Share, advocate (A1, A2, A3, A4)

Functionally opportunity 3 shows the potential for the network to contribute to dismantling inequity barriers across all IAWG objectives. Exploring what network features can assist to break down circumstances of privilege may bring diverse and often left-behind frontline implementer groups together, evaluate in contexts rarely reached, share among greater communities, advocate for and support the self advocating of voices who are often marginalized by inequality.

Esteem Needs X Bring people together, Share, Advocate (B1, B3, B4)

An explicitly equitable space has the potential to attract respect from frontline implementers in the network. This in turn may motivate frontline implementers to come together and share through the network. Inequality due to privilege by gender, work experience, and language are deeply rooted barriers that keep many frontline implementers from joining or staying in network communities for long. This leaves an opportunity for IAWG and those with privilege to connect, support and advocate for others to create a more equal community.

Emotional Needs X Bring people togeather, share, advocate (C1, C3, C4)

Creating a network that is open and equitable for all opens opportunities to serve emotional needs. If the network can leverage this opportunity there is high potential to serve emotional needs as members have a greater opportunity to connect to frontline implementers they may have not otherwise connected to previously.

Belonging Needs X Bring people together, share, advocacy (D1, D3, D4)

This opportunity also shows great potential to facilitate relationship building and a supportive community. A network that supports and facilitates representation has potential to serve belonging needs. Frontline implementers reported 'lack of having a voice', which turns them away from many networks. Creating a space where voices are welcomed, appreciated and amplified serves a belonging many frontline implementers reported is missing in the field.

OPPORTUNITY 4.
Opportunity for frontline implementers to create an information validation system.

	Objective 1 **Bring people together**	Objective 2 **Evaluate**	Objective 3 **Share**	Objective 4 **Advocate**
Area A **Functional Needs**		●	●	
Area B **Esteem Needs**		●	●	
Area C **Emotional Needs**				
Area D **Belonging Needs**				

"Challenge will be in controlling quality and authentic information"

Frontline Chat Global participant

Reliable and credible information is critical in a context where misinformation spreads easily and frontline implementers are responsible for the lives of others. Frontline implementers often rely on established sources, such as the WHO and health ministries. These sources are highly trustworthy, yet they often miss more local solutions and implementers. The network has the ability to build on known trustworthy sources and explore ways to validate local solutions and adaptations that implementers share across the network.

Functional Needs x Evaluate, Share, Advocate (A2, A3, A4)

Exploring an information validation system could provide novel ways to evaluate information sharing in a large community of practice. Exploring potential ways the frontline implementer community could lean on one another to validate information, strategies, and methods across sub-fields of practice and contexts could be essential for an autonomous network. This opportunity would not only encourage sharing but participation in what is trustworthy.

Esteem Needs x Evaluate, Share (B2, B3)

This opportunity could explore the ability for members to take ownership in the information that is shared within it thus creating respect in the network's information as trustworthy and community-accepted.

OPPORTUNITY 5.
Opportunity to support a member-led network, which fosters organic learning and sharing directed by members.

	Objective 1 **Bring people together**	Objective 2 **Evaluate**	Objective 3 **Share**	Objective 4 **Advocate**
Area A **Functional Needs**	●	●	●	●
Area B **Esteem Needs**	●	●	●	●
Area C **Emotional Needs**				
Area D **Belonging Needs**	●		●	

"A small village from Yemen can help someone around the world"

Key informant interview

The ways of learning and sharing described by participants are often self-driven and organic in their formation and participation engagement. This opportunity explores how to leverage this phenomenon to jump-start and maintain the network. Implementers are the experts in knowing what they want to learn and share. Therefore, it is important to explore ways in which to make the network community based and led by the members. Members would decide the main topics and framing of discussions of relevance to their daily realities.

Functional Needs X Bring people together, Evaluate, Share, Advocate (A1, A2, A3, A4)

A member-led network that supports organic learning and sharing serves a number of functional needs across IAWG objectives. This opportunity lends itself to a community-built network where the ways of participating, evaluating, sharing, and advocating are decided and developed by the collective member population. Functionalities developed by members have the potential to better meet the functional preferences of members of the network.

Esteem Needs X Bring people together, Evaluate, Share, Advocate (B2, B3, B4)

Opportunity 5 has the potential to gain high respect among frontline implementers. With frontline implementers leading the network, ownership of the network and its contents is likely to be higher among implementers. Putting members in the driver's seat, especially those who are often marginalized in the field is likely to gain greater esteem within the community.

Belonging X Bring people together, share (D1, D3)

Opportunity 5 has the potential to serve belonging needs as this opportunity allows IAWG to explore how the frontline implementers can grow their own community. They make the community and grow it together.

OPPORTUNITY 6.
Opportunity for the network to collect and utilize data to amplify and lobby for the collective needs of frontline implementers and those whom they work with and for.

	Objective 1 **Bring people together**	Objective 2 **Evaluate**	Objective 3 **Share**	Objective 4 **Advocate**
Area A **Functional Needs**		●		●
Area B **Esteem Needs**		●		
Area C **Emotional Needs**		●	●	●
Area D **Belonging Needs**				

"Mphini yobwereza imawala... Meaning: A scar or tattoo is visible if it's marked again and again"

Frontline Chat Global participant

The ability to source data for advocacy regarding implementers' needs is an opportunity with multifaceted potential. IAWG and the frontline implementer community have the potential to evaluate novel areas of interest, leading to new findings for ways to improve humanitarian SRH work. New perspectives can be gained by expanding what areas of interest are explored. Often initiatives focus on functional or resource-based needs. Spaces might be created to explore how more abstract needs like emotion and belonging affect implementers and how to support these needs to help them in their work. Putting this data in the hands of frontline implementers opens opportunities for them to advocate for themselves and community members.

Functional Needs X Evaluate, advocate (A2, A4)

This opportunity leads to the exploration of how the network could integrate systems that collect data from its members across need areas. This system of data collection allows for not only IAWG to conduct evaluations and advocate for the needs of frontline implementers, but also provide them with collected data and support their advocacy efforts.

Esteem Needs X Evaluation (A2)

If frontline implementers could rely on accurate data that can be verified by rigorous methods they would gain respect among other implementers, decision makers and funders who influence their work.

Emotional Needs X Evaluate, share (C2, C3)

Professional development often focuses on function. This opportunity explores the potential to collect data on other needs such as the emotional state, its effects and needs of frontline implementers. This opportunity could also explore how to use this data for the advocacy of often neglected emotional needs.

4. NEXT STEPS.

At the time of writing the report IAWG was waiting for feedback about donor interest and potential funding for 2021. In the meantime, SCOPE will present the findings and seek feedback from IAWG members, research participants and other interested frontline participants. Based on reactions and feedback to the frontline research, SCOPE will recommend additional future directions for the network. SCOPE hopes to work with IAWG as they develop plans to launch and support a frontline implementer community of practice.

In December, SCOPE will present the findings of the design research to an interested group of IAWG steering committee members, members of the COVID-19 task force, SWGs, including those who helped recruit participants from among their colleagues and contacts. This will be a small consultation to hear reactions from IAWG members and their initial thinking on how to apply the findings to IAWG's work.

In early 2021 SCOPE will present the findings to a broader group of IAWG members and invite frontline implementers to hear and respond to the research results. This session will combine a presentation with an opportunity to gather additional insights from study participants and other frontline implementers.

If funding is secured, Scope proposes to move forward with co-creation of the frontline implementers network in partnership with the IAWG. Further developing and then iteratively testing the opportunities outlined in this report.

The next phase would help to define and set the boundaries around 'who would do what, where and when', what are the systems requirements, role of IAWG secretariat vs. SWG vs. users in the process of keeping the network formation moving and reliable.

Experience with the Frontline Chat on WhatsApp
Although mainly intended as the method for design research, the recruitment frontline implementers and facilitation of the WhatsApp-based Frontline Chat provided an opportunity for a mini-trial, eliciting lessons for future creation of the network and other efforts to connect with frontline implementers.

Recruitment: tapping into networks
For the recruitment, we used a variety of strategies in order to have enough participants. The timeline was short and we found it difficult to get recommendations and sufficient positive responses. We started with the list of participants from the Frontline Implementer Webinar Series in May and June.

From a list of approximately 165 that were invited, 26 registered to participate in the survey. Some later mentioned that they knew and respected the IAWG member who invited them.

The other groups were recruited through recommendations from IAWG members. A total of 69 participants were recommended and received invitations to participate. However, we used a snowballing technique in recruitment, whereby IAWG members and already registered participants were requested to extend the invite to people they thought may be interested in participating. Hence, the number of invited people can only be estimated. From these numbers, 40 signed up for one of the three groups in Bangladesh, Yemen and Niger/Tchad. Recommended participants varied from national level staff to frontline healthcare workers. We encountered difficulties getting sufficient recommendations for Colombia and Niger/Tchad. We reached out directly to several contacts in the IAWG and our own professional networks but some were not able to respond and/or said that staff were too busy to participate.

Facilitation: what it took
Facilitation required both preparation and implementation of the daily conversation. The guides did not require significant resources to develop, with some additional time for translation. Facilitation of the live chats required limited time each day to post the question for the day and prompts and probes to keep the conversation going, and reading and summarizing the previous day's conversation. In total it took approximately 1 hour each day. Facilitators indicated specific hours each day that they would be online, but could often do other work while monitoring what was happening in the chat and participants were not limited to respond in that time period.

Group dynamics: high variability

There was high variability across the four different groups in terms of size, interaction and depth of engagement. The table provides some information about each group drawn from observations as well as a closing survey about the experience. From the 82 who registered for the chat, 25 completed the closing survey. Note that none of the Niger/Tchad participants completed the survey.

Group (number of participants)	Level of exchange	What participants liked	What they wanted to see improved	Possible explanations for dynamics
Global Registered participants: 26 Active* participants: 17	High level of exchange; interaction between participants not just with facilitator; sharing of deeply personal stories/ experiences	Interested to meet diverse people around the globe who have similar experiences	Longer engagements for all to tell their story and personal elements such as sharing photos	Group of people who self selected to participate in the webinars; possibly already more globally connected
Bangladesh Registered: 12 Active: 5	Good participation; less interaction between the different members; conversation remained in professional sphere	Getting different perspectives from other people in the same field	Wanted more interaction between them rather than via the facilitator	May have been some language problems in communicating
Yemen Registered: 21 (+ 1 not registered) Active: 17	High level of exchange; interactions between participants, not just the facilitator; sharing poems and prayers	Making connections and presenting ideas and information	Several would like the possibility to expand and meet face to face	Group recruited and facilitated by the same known person
Niger/Tchad Registered: 7 Active: 2	Limited	N/A	N/A	Very small group that was hard to identify

** Active participant defined as someone who chatted/sent a msg more than twice during the 4-day period*

In most of the groups, the participation declined, with less and less participants posting responses as the four-day period continued.

"The safe space allowed us to be vulnerable to share our issues and stories."

Frontline Chat Global participant

Reflections and potential implications:
The experience in facilitating the WhatsApp groups is reflected in the needs areas as well as the opportunity areas, but a few key lessons include the following:

- The majority of participants across all four groups described enjoying the discussion, said they connected with someone who they will reach out to on their own, and agreed to participate in any follow-up interviews.
- Recruitment was challenging and indicates the important work to map a network of frontline implementers and identify trusted influencers to help invite new members and introduce the network.
- Network members will also be able to help grow the network, bringing in their colleagues and connections. Of those who completed the closing survey, X% provided the name of at least one other person who might be invited to join the conversation.
- For true equal participation, the platform will need to account for different languages, perhaps with an embedded translation service and/or with different language speakers willing to facilitate.
- Participants showed an eagerness to share and connect with colleagues, to discuss both the personal and professional aspects of their lives in a safe space.

ANNEX.

Annex 1: Frontline implementers Support Network. Design Research Scope of work .

Duration approx. 2 months (Oct - Nov 2020)

Scope will support the IAWG in initial steps to create and build a Frontline Implementer Support Network that will focus on (1) facilitating exchange and professional learning and (2) supporting SRH adaptations in humanitarian crises.

OBJECTIVES:

- Identify how frontline implementers currently communicate, what they would like to communicate about, and their visions for how a network would support them
- Understand and map IAWG (including SWGs) experience with and aspirations for engaging with frontline implementers
- Identify a set of potential ideas for the network for co-creation and testing in the next phase

ACTIVITIES:

- Conduct design research to explore frontline implementers experiences, needs and visions
- Convene WhatsApp groups of 15-20 frontline implementers in 5 selected countries to share and exchange
- Conduct 6-10 key informant interviews with frontline implementers
- Engage with IAWG steering committee and SWGs
- Analyze data to characterize frontline implementers' personas and current and future needs, experiences and preferences
- Ideate potential ideas for the network
- Organize a session to brainstorm ideas based on findings including Scope Design Team, IAWG members and frontline implementers, if feasible
- Package a selected set of ideas that emerge from the brainstorm
- Write report with key findings

DELIVERABLES:

- Approach for conducting a series of interactions with frontline implementers using WhatsApp
- Data, including WhatsApp transcripts and interview notes, from the design research
- Report that outlines frontline implementers' personas, current and future needs and experience, and a set of potential ideas for co-creation and testing
- Verbal report/presentation to the IAWG steering committee

Annex 2: Design Strategy.

Design research plan.

Annex 3: Frontline Chat & Interview Tools.

Frontline Chat & Interview Tools.

Annex 4: Whatsapp Groups Participants Registration Lists.

Whatsapp Groups Participants Registration Lists.

Annex 5:

a) Synthesis Step 1. Affinity Mapping
b) Synthesis Step 2. Needs Mapping
c) Synthesis Step 3. Opportunity Mapping

IAWG

Inter-Agency Working Group on
Reproductive Health in Crises

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