

CCIH Health of Women and Children Working Group

Working Group Charter October 2021

Who We Are

The Health of Women and Children Working Group (HWC WG) is one of the four thematic working groups of Christian Connections for International Health (CCIH), along with Integration of Faith and Health, Health Systems Strengthening, and Community Based Prevention and Care. We are a group of practitioners from around the globe who meet together at least twice per year, including at the annual conference, for discussions and seminars/ webinars as we learn together about what others in CCIH are doing in this domain and about advances in the field.

HWC WG Core Values

“Verily I say unto you, In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” - Matthew 25:40

The CCIH 2016-2021 Strategic Plan states: “Vulnerable women and children are a priority for God. Just as CCIH is a leading Christian voice on healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies, we seek improved health and wholeness for women and children.”

We believe a Christian approach to the health of women and children recognizes the dignity of every person as made in God’s image. We value the blessing of the gospel of Jesus Christ since it addresses our deepest needs to love God and to love others. We value engagement with society’s most vulnerable, since the people of God are meant to be a blessing to the ‘least of these’.

While the field of maternal and child health is broad, we believe there is a unique ‘Christian space’ to intervene, based on a Biblical mandate to protect the ‘poor, widow, and orphan,’ acting to provide both justice in terms of access to health services for women and children, and mercy to accompany those most vulnerable through compassionate action. For us, this mandate extends beyond the traditional community and facility-based healthcare settings and into the communities we serve, to address issues such as mental health and sexual and gender based violence.

Problem statement

Women and children remain among the most underserved and vulnerable groups in society. Despite commitments by most countries in the world to provide free primary health care to pregnant women and children under 5, access to basic services, and competent care where it is available, remains woefully inadequate. In addition, patriarchal structures in health care institutions, families, and even churches, means that women can be particularly subject to insensitive, ignorant, and abusive treatment

when seeking basic prenatal and delivery care. This, in turn, becomes a barrier to women accessing these services even where they are available.

HWC WG Vision

The Health of Women and Children working group envisions compassionate communities supporting women and children in their homes, and through accessible, respectful, provision of safe, professional, prenatal, delivery and postnatal care, to ensure their health and safety during pregnancy and delivery.

HWC WG Mission

- To highlight voices of faith-based organizations, religious leaders, and other community stakeholders from various cultural backgrounds on issues around the health of women and children
- To share advances in practice around health of women and children
- To position faith-based organizations to advocate for issues related to the health of women and children, influencing secular spaces and government policy.
- To link faith-based organizations working in maternal and child health.
- To promote networking within CCIH members and its partners who have a strong interest in maternal and child health

HWC WG Member Expectations

To participate in regular WG calls to:

- Network with other WG members - learn and share with one another.
- Brainstorm ideas for future events on specific topics (e.g. webinars, forums, conferences, etc.) that highlight keynote speakers and/or voices from the field and help recruit speakers for those topics and events.
- Share webinars and resources with other colleagues in your individual networks.
- Share resources that should be added to the CCIH website and shared with the CCIH network - both in WG calls and via email through the HWC WG.