**Regional works for Share-Net Jordan in 2021-2023**

**Introduction**

Share Net Jordan (SN-JO) established in 2016, as a knowledge platform on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights (SRH&RR) in Jordan. The vision of Share-Net Jordan is that “people have the right to access high-quality health services and should be able to make informed decisions on their sexual and reproductive health”. The mission is to strengthen linkages between research, policy and practice through sharing, generating, translating and promoting the use of knowledge for the development of better policies and practices in SRH&RR. SN-JO conducts vital work for Jordanians and non-Jordanians - including Syrian refugees - giving specific attention to the areas of child marriage, youth-friendly health services, sexuality education, gender-based violence and engagement with the private sector.

SN-JO is hosted by the Higher Population Council (HPC). The Higher Population Council is a specialized Jordanian semi-governmental agency and is considered as the national reference for all population and development-related information; analysis and population driven policy directives. With a three-pronged theory of change focusing at the enabling environment level of legislative frameworks/policies; the institutional level; and the community/individual level, HPC facilitates the integration and mainstreaming of population profiles/dynamics and population issues/challenges and opportunities into socioeconomic and political planning frameworks at national and local levels; monitors and evaluates their implementation; advocates and raise awareness on these issues; and enhances national capabilities in coordination with partners to achieve sustainable development, justice and equal opportunities for all. Focusing on the thematic areas of a human-rights based approach to development; youth empowerment; gender equality; and refugees/migrants’ access to rights, the HPC proposes population strategies/projections; carries out specialized population-issues relevant studies based on analysis of national statistical data to provide evidence-base policy making and enhances the cooperation and coordination with national, regional and international organizations concerned with population issues.

## Regional Approach

During one of the strategic meetings in 2020, SNI and its country hubs in Bangladesh, Burundi, Jordan and the Netherlands discussed the regional approach that the platform aims to implement in the next four years. A common vision was prepared, being as follows:

*Share-Net International envisions its regional approach as a gradual process towards an inspiring and organic network of organisations and practitioners working on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE) in the geographical regions of the existing country hubs which meets the needs and opportunities of each region, building on the Share-Net values.*

**The specific objectives are to:**

* facilitate regional learning and knowledge exchange to influence and improve SRHR policy and practice in line with SNI’s vision and unique selling point.
* increase the visibility and recognition of SNI and the country hub in the region.
* strengthen and expand the SNI network by increasing the membership base with SRHR actors and building strategic partnerships to exchange best practices and accumulate knowledge.
* connect and link members in different countries in the region to work on context-relevant SRHR topics.

The regional approach consists of three phases, as described in the table below. Share-Net Bangladesh (SN-BD), Share-Net Jordan (SN-JO) and Share-Net Netherlands (SN-NL) will finish phase one in the first half of 2021 and Share-Net Burundi (SN-BU) by the end of the year. After phase 1, the SNI board will decide whether the country hubs continue with phase 2. During the three phases, SNI will consider the existing networks and initiatives in the regions (e.g., MoFA funded partnerships, Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters South Asia Hub). SNI will explore a coordinating and facilitating role in the different countries and regions and build on the role of SN-NL in the finalization of the SRHR Partnerships (2016-2020) and the new SRHR Partnerships starting in 2021.

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| **Phase** | **Activity** | **Who** |
| **Phase one** | Develop a term of reference (ToR) for situational and feasibility analysis | SNI develops overall ToR which can be adapted by the hubs to make it country specific |
| Hire a consultant for a situational and feasibility analysis to examine what the role and added value/unique selling point of expanding Share-Net in the region can be. Things that need to be included in the analysis:   * Develop assessment questions * Consult current members and steering committees about ideas and their regional expertise * Competitors risk assessment * Cost-benefit analysis * Map potential organisations and networks to partner, become a member, etc. * Assessment to avoid overlapping of similar activities | Country Hubs |
| Rationale – Why is a regional approach relevant and needed? (taking into consideration the results of the situational and feasibility analysis)  Is it something we need? What is the added value we have?  Do we need to rephrase what the regional approach is?  Re-consider long term SNI strategy | Written by country hubs with support of SNI |
| Defining the region – Which countries do we want to focus on? Based on the outcomes of the situational and feasibility analysis | Country hubs with support of SNI |
| Development of the regional strategy with concrete steps on how to gradually build a regional network/platform | Country hubs with support of SNI |
| **Board decision** | The SNI board will decide whether the country hubs continue with phase 2. | SNI board |
| **Phase two** | Define knowledge agenda and network opportunities  Contact regional stakeholders to promote the platform and identify areas of collaboration  Define policy and knowledge priorities  Work this out in a knowledge agenda which answers the questions: what you are going to do, with whom, why and when | Country hubs in consultation with members |
| Consultation with new regional members – needs, strengths and wishes | Country hubs |
| **Phase three** | Start planning and budgeting for activities and staff | Country hubs with support from SNI |
| Hire extra people (if needed) | Country hubs |
| Start organising regional activities | Country hubs |

**Regional works for Share-Net Jordan in 2021-2022**

In 2021 Share-Net Jordan conducted a study entitled "Examining the role and added value/unique selling point of expanding Share-Net in the Arab region”. we started as a piloting took two countries Egypt and Lebanon to achieve the objective of regional approach and expand our work to strengthen regional and global partnerships through the work of the various networks we are engaged with. Key to this will also be tapping into the continuous policy advice and guidance from Share-Net International to help improve the quality of the products at all stages.

The specific objectives were to:

* Facilitate regional learning, exchange to influence, and improve policy and practice in SRHR in line with SNI’s vision.
* Increase the visibility and recognition of Share-Net International and the country hub in the region.
* Strengthen and expand the SNI network by involving more members and building strategic partnerships to exchange best practices and accumulate knowledge.
* Connect and link members in different countries in the region to work on context-relevant SRHR topics.

Based on the study findings that highlighted the benefits of investing in expanding SRHR knowledge management hubs regionally and identified potential partners and justification for the preferences.

In Egypt the study recommended that all stakeholders participating in consultation meetings and interviews recommended the Most stakeholders participating in consultation meetings and interviews recommended partners in Egypt based on their perception using the following criteria (Scope of SRHR / Knowledge generation, translation and use, Governance and Structure, Strategy & mission, Financial capability, Human Rights Based Approach HRBA, Safeguarding policies, External Relations including Networking & communication with the governmental, non-governmental, and private sector, and Sustainability) the following potential partners were recommended the following organization ( Cairo university , Public health department MENA Health Policy Forum (HPF), Population Council, American University – Cairo)

In Lebanon the study recommended that all stakeholders participating in consultation meetings and interviews recommended the AUB as good partner in Lebanon. The Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) at the American University of Beirut (AUB), founded in 1954, is one of the only multidisciplinary schools of public health in the region. It has strong research expertise on SRH. A regional multidisciplinary network on SRH for the Arab countries and Turkey. Stakeholders participating in consultation meetings and interviews recommended partners in Lebanon based on their perception using the following criteria (Scope of SRHR / Knowledge generation, translation and use, Governance and Structure, Strategy & mission, financial capability, Human Rights Based Approach HRBA, Safeguarding policies, External Relations including Networking & communication with the governmental, non-governmental, and private sector, and Sustainability). It has a strong institutional base that has long experience in running projects and being accountable for grant funded projects, multidisciplinary faculty, many existing activities in SRH, expertise in knowledge translation through the K2P center, and for sustainability the FHS has had a good record of attracting resources so in that sense it is sustainable.

Therefore, in 2022, the fund that has allocated for the Regional Activities for Share Net Jordan ( 15.000 EURO) is to be spent on:

• A regional stakeholder mapping.

• Opening membership for SRHR stakeholders from the region.

• Development of three papers on Lebanon, Egypt and Jordan on SRHR priorities, programs and challenges.

• Roundtable discussion will be conducted in Jordan for 30 persons.

• A regional CoP and regional coordination on a priority topic in the region.

• Continue adding regional resources to the SN-JO resource database on the website.

• A visit by HPC/SN-JO to Lebanon and Egypt to meet with potential partners and members and discuss SRHR priorities.

**Regional works for Share-Net Jordan in 2023**

**Expanding the scope of work of Share-Net Jordan at the Regional Level in Egypt**.

Share Net Jordan conducted, the first regional meeting in Egypt during the period February 22-23 , 2023 and hosted by the Information and Research Center at the American University in Cairo. The objective of the visit is to establish a collaborative work on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights with the key organizations in Egypt. The agenda of the meeting included presentations on research, awareness, service and training activities in the areas of reproductive and sexual health, presented by specialized experts representing civil, international and academic bodies in the Egyptian society, namely: Research Center/The American University in Cairo, Cairo University, International Islamic Center Azhar University, Path Finder International, International Department in the NPC Egypt, FHI 360, Population Council, Egyptian Association for Family Health, Higher Institute of Public Health- Alexandria, Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS).

An informative presentation was given by Prof. Dr. Issa Almasarweh, Secretary General of the Higher Population Council, regarding the demographic and RH situation in Jordan, with a particular emphasis on variables related to sexual and reproductive health. Following this, Mr. Ali Almetleq, Director of Studies, Policies, and Coordinator of Share-Net Jordan delivered a comprehensive overview of Share-Net Jordan's objectives and plans for expansion at the regional level. The information conveyed during these presentations provided the attendees with important context and insight that could be utilized to inform future discussions and actions aimed at promoting sexual and reproductive health in Jordan and Egypt.

The meeting highlighted the similarities in issues between Egypt and Jordan and explored opportunities for integration between the two countries. The participants discussed various topics, including the need to publish and exchange studies, the formation of advisory committees, the role of Islamic legal societies in knowledge production, and the expansion of Share-Net Jordan to Egypt. They also discussed the need to publish, circulate and share the studies’ results, which could be a first step towards cooperation through Share-Net Jordan’s platform.

SN-jo also met with Ms. Caroline Nassif from the NL Embassy in the Arab Republic of Egypt. Ms. Nassif mentioned that the sexual and reproductive health programs at the Embassy are currently suspended and have no funding, as the funding is currently directed to other African countries where there are issues of poverty and Sexual and Reproductive Health issues as well; highlighted the importance of youth involvement and their active role in this field; focused on the importance of knowledge platforms and the use of social media to reach the target groups; focused on the importance of involving active civil society organizations that work in the feminist field and work on some sexual and reproductive health issues, and indicated the importance of these organizations in raising awareness in the field of Sexual and Reproductive Health issues.

**Expanding the scope of work of Share-Net Jordan at the Regional Level in Lebanon**

The Secretary General of the Higher Population Council, Prof. Dr. Issa Almasarweh, and the Director of the Studies and Policies Unit in the Council, Ali Almetleq, made a working visit to the Lebanon during the period 4-7/4/2023, for the purpose of discussing with the parties working and concerned with sexual and reproductive health issues about expanding the scope of work of Share-Net Jordan at the regional level, by engaging institutions and experts from Lebanon into Share-Net Jordan and Share-Net International, increasing the membership base of actors in the field of sexual and reproductive health, connecting members in the region to work on priority sexual and reproductive health issues, and building strategic partnerships to exchange experiences and results knowledge and best practices.

The visit began with two meetings. The first was at the headquarter of the Economic and Social Commission of the United Nations for Western Asia (ESCWA) with Dr. Sarah Salman / Population Affairs Officer, where a study on international migration to and out of Jordan has been discussed. As for the second meeting, it was with the regional coordinator of the Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN) Fadi Al-Halabi, where a lengthy discussion took place about programs related to health, reproductive and sexual rights that target people with disabilities in Lebanon, and the opportunities and obstacles for their inclusion in these programs on an equal basis with the rest of the population without discrimination or exception. Aspects and opportunities for future cooperation in joint projects were also discussed.

On the third day, the Population and Health Research Center at the College of Health Sciences / American University of Beirut hosted an extensive and lengthy meeting attended by 26 academic experts and representatives of active civil and international organizations in the field of reproductive and sexual health in the Lebanese Republic.

Prof. Dr. Joselene Degong from health sciences faculty in The American University of Beirut, opened the meeting followed by a speech from the Acting Director of the Population and Health Research Center at the Faculty of Health Sciences at the American University of Beirut, Dr. Stephen McCall, then the Secretary-General of the Council, Dr. Issa Almasarweh , gave a presentation on the current demographic situation in Jordan and related reproductive and sexual health issues among citizens and refugees, indicating the functions and activities of the Council in the field of providing information and studies that help in decision-making and setting policies and plans related to population issues and components of reproductive and sexual health. Further, the Director of the Studies and Policies Unit at the Higher Population Council gave a detailed presentation on the knowledge platform for sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights in Jordan and the achievements of ShareNet Jordan since its establishment in 2016. He also addressed the goals of the initiative to expand the scope of work of the ShareNet Jordan platform at the regional level. The agenda of the meeting included presentations on research, awareness, service and training activities in the areas of reproductive and sexual health, presented by specialized experts representing civil, international and academic bodies in the Lebanese society, namely: Abad Association; Inclusion, Community Development and Care for All; Marsa Association; Lebanese Association for Family Health/International Planned Parenthood Federation; Lebanese Medical Association for Health; UNFPA/Lebanon Office; Working Group on Reproductive Health in the Arab Countries and Turkey/American University of Beirut; Women's Sexual Health Integration Program/College of Health Sciences at the American University of Beirut; the intersection between mental health and sexual and reproductive health / the Faculty of Medicine at the American University of Beirut, the meeting also included presentations about addressing topics of sexual and reproductive health by faculty members at health and population researches center and department of enhancing health and community health, knowledge program for practice in health sciences faculty at the American University of Beirut. At the end of the meeting, a lengthy discussion took place on the topics that were presented during the meeting and answered by the relevant participants.

**A regional meeting held by Share-Net Jordan on June 11, 2023, in which priorities, programs, and challenges related to SRH were addressed**.

Share-Net Jordan held a regional meeting in June 11th on priorities, programs and challenges related to reproductive and sexual health within the framework of expanding the scope of work of Share-Net Jordan at the regional level. The meeting aimed to assess and review issues, priorities, challenges and the current situation of sexual and reproductive health in Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon. Three working papers were presented during the meeting. Prof. Dr. Issa Al-Masarweh, HPC Secretary General, presented the first paper: ‘Reproductive and Sexual Health in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan: Issues and Needs.’ The paper addressed features of sexual and reproductive health through a comprehensive perspective for all population groups distributed over three life phases being: the stage of pre-marriage, the stage of marriage and starting a family, and the stage of old age. The intended purpose of the paper was to identify issues related to reproductive and sexual health and reproductive rights in Jordan and also show the needs in the field of services and research related to reproductive health. Another aspect the paper addressed was to point out shortages in the implementation of relevant policies, programs and legislation.

Prof. Dr. Hassan Zaki from the American University in Cairo (AUC) presented the second paper which dealt with the current situation and trends in reproductive and sexual health dimensions in Egypt. The paper also addressed the main strategies related to sexual and reproductive health issues, in addition to the main stakeholders working in this field. Moreover, the key initiatives and activities related to sexual and reproductive health currently carried out in Egypt were also reviewed.

Prof. Dr. Jocelyn DeJong at the Faculty of Health Sciences, American University of Beirut (AUB) , presented the third paper which gave an overview of “a comprehensive outlook of the state of sexual and reproductive health in Lebanon” highlighting the priorities of sexual and reproductive health, and the progress achieved over the past few years. The paper also discussed the strategies and policies that address reproductive and sexual health rights, challenges and obstacles to accessing sexual and reproductive health services, the quality of these services, and potential opportunities for improvement.

Dr. Sawsan Majali, acting as moderator, concluded the workshop with a dialogue session to discuss sexual and reproductive health priorities at the regional level with the participation of relevant experts and representatives of partner agencies working in the field of reproductive health in Jordan.

The workshop concluded with the following recommendations and suggestions:

* The importance of exchanging experiences and lessons learned amongst countries of the region in raising the level of sexual and reproductive health of the population at all stages of the life cycle of individuals of both sexes.
* the importance of making available accurate and comprehensive data and information for the purposes of research and study.
* improving access to sexual and reproductive health information and services for adolescents.
* working on common issues in the field of sexual and reproductive health.
* forming committees of expert practitioners at the regional level to study these issues and develop practical measures to address them.
* and finally, focus on the importance of exchanging experiences on how to integrate the concepts of sexual and reproductive health in the school curricula at the appropriate educational stages.

Representatives of a number of international institutions and Jordanian institutions and ministries participated in this meeting, namely: Ministry of Health, Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Holy Sites, Ministry of Education, the National Centre for Curriculum Development/ Ministry of Education, the Jordanian National Committee for Women's Affairs, the National Centre for Epidemics and Communicable Diseases, the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Institute for Family Health Care, Jordanian Association for Family Planning and Protection, Information and Research Centre/ King Hussein Foundation, University of Jordan/ College of Nursing , Princess Salma College of Nursing, Al al-Bayt University, Save the Children’s Fund, Jordan News Agency-Petra, and the UN International Organization for Migration/ UNIOM.

In 2023-2024 Share Net Jordan will conduct a regional Co-Creation conference on comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) based on the recommendations of the regional meeting conducted in Jordan. The conference aims to achieve this by developing culturally appropriate knowledge products, identifying areas for change, and providing small grants for knowledge product implementation. Moreover, it seeks to foster regional learning and networking opportunities on comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in Jordan, Qatar, Egypt, Tunisia, and Lebanon.