ENSURING QUALITY ACCESS AND LEARNING FOR MOTHERS AND NEWBORNS IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED CONTEXTS (EQUAL)

EQUAL is a multi-country research consortium generating evidence on effective approaches for delivering life-saving maternal and newborn health (MNH) care in countries affected by conflict. We are a group of research partners united in our shared commitment to reduce maternal and neonatal deaths by ensuring quality health services are accessible to every woman and newborn, regardless of where they live. Our work focuses on the DRC, Nigeria, Somalia, and South Sudan – countries with the highest burden of maternal and neonatal deaths worldwide.

PROJECT OVERVIEW
Project Name: EQUAL
Funder: UK Aid from the UK Government
Length: July 2021 – April 2026
Locations in Somalia: Banaadir and Galgaduud regions

SOMALIA STUDY OVERVIEW
In Somalia, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and the Somali Research and Development Institute (SORDI) will lead the EQUAL consortium to conduct three priority research studies:

1. Policies and Practices Impacting MNH
   WHAT: A Political Economy Analysis to better understand the politics, financing, and practices affecting maternal and newborn health in Somalia.
   HOW: A literature review of relevant academic, policy, and operational documents from the health system alongside key informant interviews with diverse stakeholders.

2. Community-delivered MNH services
   WHAT: Implementation research in Galgaduud region to design, implement, evaluate, and iterate on an effective and client-demanded community-based maternal and newborn health program to reduce adverse MNH outcomes and improve uptake of evidence-based interventions. This applies a harm reduction approach to reduce the risk of deaths in areas with high rates of home deliveries.
   HOW: A prospective, cross-sectional study with baseline and endline surveys and an embedded process evaluation.

3. Midwifery Education and Services
   WHAT: A study to gain deeper understanding and actionable insights into issues influencing midwives’ ability to deliver quality MNH services in conflict-affected contexts. This includes assessing the quality of midwifery pre-service education in Banaadir and Galgaduud regions, generating evidence on factors affecting early career midwives’ workforce participation and retention, and documenting early career midwives’ experiences working in conflict-affected areas.
   HOW: Mixed methods study including a mapping and rapid assessment of the quality of midwifery pre-service education, a longitudinal cohort study enrolling midwifery students for annual follow-up post-graduation, focus group discussions, annual surveys, and key informant interviews.

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