

Expert Clinics

October 2 | 11:15 a.m.

What the Village Knows: Women's Groups and Community Health

Central Hub

Women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are widely recognized for savings and empowerment. But what happens when groups become generators of community health knowledge and collective action? In rural Ethiopia's Kembata Zone, WEEMA International is embedding village health leaders within enduring women's SHGs, treating groups not as temporary program structures, but as community institutions capable of generating, interpreting, and acting on local health information. Drawing on early implementation experience and emerging data, this session explores women's groups as agents of community health data and action, asking what global health actors might learn from how communities understand and respond to health challenges.



Elizabeth McGovern

Co-founder and Executive Director, WEEMA International

Liz is the co-founder and Executive Director of WEEMA International, a nonprofit advancing community-led development in Ethiopia. WEEMA builds on women's self-help groups as the foundation for ending multidimensional poverty and strengthening community resilience. Liz is also a family physician and spent 16 years in Massachusetts community health centers, caring for underserved populations. She holds a B.S. from Haverford College and an M.D. from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, and is pursuing an M.P.H. at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.



Steve Ollis

Director, Data and Innovation, WEEMA International

Steve brings extensive experience in digital health, data systems and health information systems to his role as WEEMA's Director of Data and Innovation. He has over 30 years experience in Information Technology consulting and global public health, with a specialty in program management. Prior to joining WEEMA he served as a Senior Digital Health Advisor for JSI, supporting programs in over 25 countries. He received a B.S. in Finance from The American University and an MBA in Information Systems and Finance from the University of Maryland-College Park.

Bridging the Gap: A Growing Role for the Private Sector in Humanitarian Supply Chains

South Hub

An estimated 305 million people required humanitarian assistance in 2025, indicating rising need at time when funding is decreasing. Logistics and transportation choices about modalities, providers, and financial arrangements shape delivery timelines, geographic reach, operational risk, and, significantly, whether responses happen at all. Airlink will share findings from research it conducted with the Center for Humanitarian Logistics and Regional Development (CHORD) on how cross-sector partnerships can address both critical funding and operational gaps in humanitarian logistics. Speakers share the growing impact of donated transportation, what drives organizations to seek these partnerships, and the emerging shift from ad hoc corporate giving to strategic collaboration. Participants leave with data-driven insights and forward-looking recommendations for how to collaboratively build a more resilient humanitarian logistics environment.



Brigid McKeon

Associate Director of Partnerships and Innovation, Humanitarian Programs, Airlink

Brigid McKeon serves as the Associate Director of Partnerships and Innovation on Airlink's Humanitarian Programs team, where she manages strategic humanitarian partnerships and strengthens regional response networks by building logistics capacity for nonprofit organizations. She also leads Airlink's research on cross-sector engagement in humanitarian logistics, exploring how private-sector collaboration can address critical supply chain challenges and strengthen humanitarian responses. Drawing on more than six years of experience in building partnerships across the nonprofit, private, and public sectors, Brigid leads Airlink's global logistics preparedness workshop program, convening NGOs, airlines, logistics companies, and regional coordination bodies to strengthen humanitarian supply chains and improve disaster preparedness.