

IMPACT OF COVID-19 IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND PLAN TO MITIGATE IMPACTS ON WOMEN

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MATERNAL AND NEWBORN HEALTH

- Prior to COVID-19 pandemic, approx. 500 women died daily due to preventable pregnancy and childbirth related complications:
 - Postpartum hemorrhage*
 - Obstructed labor
 - (Pre)Eclampsia
 - Sepsis
 - Complications from unsafe abortions
 - Indirect causes (transportation, social support, etc)
- COVID-19 increased vulnerabilities, worsening inequalities for women and girls

** Leading cause of maternal mortality across sub-Saharan Africa*

MATERNAL AND NEWBORN HEALTH: COVID-19

- Burundi:
 - Significant decline of births with a skilled birth attendant.
- Liberia:
 - Number of pregnant women who attended prenatal care dropped by 18%.
- Malawi:
 - More pregnant women opting to deliver with a traditional birth attendant vs a skilled birth attendant in a health facility.
- Zimbabwe:
 - Number of C-section births decreased by 42% between January – April 2020.
 - Number of live births decreased by 21%.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON WOMEN IN AFRICA

- Lockdowns and curfews; profound impact on women's ability to access essential health services, increased unwanted pregnancies.
- Increased reports of domestic violence across all countries as security, health, and financial worries created tension in households. Women not able to flee abuse.
- Spikes in rape in Nigeria and South Africa. Child molestations and sex trafficking in Kenya.
- 60% of women in Ethiopia and Kenya reported mental and emotional stress.
- 775% increase in domestic violence calls to the national hotline in Kenya (UNFPA).
- Some communities resorted to negative coping mechanisms e.g. child, early, and forced marriage.
- No social and income safety nets for 90% women in sub-Saharan, mostly in the informal employment sector (market traders, domestic workers, street vendors, subsistence farmers, hospitality)

WAYS TO MITIGATE IMPACTS ON WOMEN

- Scale up of lessons learned from Ebola outbreak.
- Ensure health workers (who're mostly women) have necessary Personal Protect Equipment, sanitizers, and are compensated.
- Redirect resources to essential health services to lower tier health facilities and collaborate with traditional birth attendants.
- Community mental health services and alternative income generating activities
- Address acute community needs:
 - Food Access and Security
 - Health services and literacy