Nowhere to Turn: Youth, SRH and GBV during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Adolescents and Young Adults

• 1.2 billion youth aged 15-24 years in 2019 (16% of global population) projected to increase 62% by 2050

• Good health, education, and youth employment are essential for reaping the positive impacts of the demographic dividend on global economic growth

• During adolescence gender norms and stereotypes firmly take hold, with adolescent girls facing intense pressure to conform to gendered expectations

• Gender-based discrimination can be particularly exaggerated, with girls facing a greater likelihood of experiencing a range of challenges.

• Mental well-being is also key for this transition period of life
Access to contraception, abortion, post-abortion care, and wider SRH services is essential for adolescents and young adults (AYA).

Reduction in fertility among youth (15-24 years) from 244 births per 1000 women (1990-1995) to 178 births per 1000 women (2015-2020) – a decrease of 27%.

Increase in contraceptive use among unmarried (3.8% to 7.4%) and married (15% to 31%) youth (15-19 years) from 1990 to 2019.

Only a modest reduction in the unmet need for family planning (FP).
AYA Vulnerabilities Worsen During Crisis

Crisis exacerbates existing inequalities

**Increased vulnerability**
- Increased GBV reported
- More likely to fall victim to sexual exploitation
- Social harms and gender inequalities heightened
- Safety and social support challenges
- Loss of voice and agency

**Economic shocks**
- Loss of livelihoods
- Increased mental strain within households
- Increased care burden by women and girls
# SDGs and COVID-19 (1)

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<tr>
<th>SDG Goal</th>
<th>Impact of COVID-19</th>
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<tr>
<td>SDG 1: No Poverty</td>
<td>• Globally 193 Million women and girls aged living on less than $1.90 a day  &lt;br&gt;• Livelihoods disrupted due to COVID-19 restrictions threaten to trap and push more women and girls into extreme poverty &lt;br&gt;• Youth in low-income households forced into income-generating activities to support family survival &lt;br&gt;• Increased cases of young women and girls engaging in transactional sex to survive</td>
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<td>SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being</td>
<td>• Access to SRH services disrupted (810 daily deaths preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth before COVID-19) &lt;br&gt;• Supply chain disruptions of essential medicines and services &lt;br&gt;• Reported increase in physical and sexual violence, teenage pregnancies, and unsafe abortions. &lt;br&gt;• Increased reporting of depression and other mental health issues</td>
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## SDGs and COVID-19 (2)

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<th>SDG Goal</th>
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<td>SDG 4: Quality Education</td>
<td>• Nearly 743 Million girls locked out of school due to restrictions</td>
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<td>• Widened inequality gap for learners from poor, vulnerable, and marginalized households</td>
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<td>SDG 5: Gender Equality</td>
<td>• 243M reported GBV cases (40% of all cases) in 2019</td>
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<td>• Data already indicating that reported cases of GBV have doubled in some countries</td>
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<td>• 12M girls marry before age 18 every year and COVID-19 is likely to increase child marriages</td>
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What Next?

- Collect, track and use gender disaggregated data to inform response
- Increase and ringfence SRH and GBV funds
- Proper enforcement and adherence to SRHR and GBV laws and policies even during crisis
- Deliberate inclusion of SRHR and GBV policy actions in COVID-19 response plans

Improve Delivery of SRH and other Services for Youth

- Adapt to remote approaches
- Digitization of services
  - Tele-medicine
  - Tele-counselling
  - Social media use
  - Digitize sex education

- Expand social support
- Address harmful social norms
- Improve accountability
Thank you

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