



COVID-19 PANDEMIC FURTHER THREATENS WOMEN AND GIRLS ALREADY AT RISK IN HUMANITARIAN AND FRAGILE SETTINGS

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COVID-19 threatens to disrupt the delivery of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services in humanitarian and fragile settings. The Inter-Agency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Crisis (IAWG) urges governments, humanitarian actors and the private sector to work together to incorporate women's and girls' access to essential and rights-fulfilling SRH services during the COVID-19 public health response. A full advocacy statement is available at iawg.net/covid19/advocacy including a detailed set of policy recommendations extensively reviewed & validated by IAWG technical experts, policy specialists and operational agencies working on the front-lines of the COVID-19 response.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1

ENSURE SRH SERVICES ARE FUNDED WITHIN COVID APPEALS

- Fully fund the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19.
- Provide continued and flexible funding to ensure the provision of essential and life-saving SRH services throughout the global COVID-19 response in line with the [MISP](#).
- Invest in supply chain and logistics for life-saving SRH supplies.

2

ENSURE COORDINATION AMONG DEVELOPMENT & HUMANITARIAN SECTORS, GOVERNMENTS, DONORS, UN AGENCIES, & IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

- Increase investment in flexible and remote training, supervision, and monitoring to maintain service availability, quality and access, as well as to ensure the safety of healthcare workers and patients.
- Ensure clear, consistent, and evidence-based public health information and two-way risk communication in partnership with affected populations.
- Consistently collect and use sex-, age-, pregnancy status-, and disability-disaggregated data to inform response and recovery efforts.
- Proactively coordinate with partners across sectors to create synergies and reduce inefficiencies.

3

ENSURE ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL LIFE-SAVING SUPPLIES

- Support efforts to pool procurement of key SRH supplies required to ensure continuity of SRH care.
- Ensure reliable delivery of essential SRH supplies to avoid service disruptions.
- Support ongoing efforts to gather, aggregate, and share data on supply and demand, enabling coordinated planning of personal protective equipment (PPE) and SRH supplies.
- Support community, telemedicine, and home-based care through access to products such as pregnancy tests, condoms, oral contraceptives, and HIV tests.

4

BETTER LINK SRH & GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) SERVICES

- Take concrete action to ensure safe access to client-centered, confidential GBV services including ensuring human and financial resources.
- Train SRH providers to recognize signs of GBV and support disclosure since SRH services can be an entry point to mitigate, respond, and reduce GBV.
- Build awareness of SRH services among GBV survivors.
- Create robust and confidential referral systems to ensure survivors receive comprehensive care.
- Ensure access to safe abortion care and post-abortion care for survivors of sexual violence to the full extent of the law.

5

SUPPORT HEALTH WORKERS & WOMEN-FOCUSED CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS ON THE FRONTLINES

- Ensure equitable pay and safe working conditions for frontline health and social service responders, 70% of whom are women.
- Provide flexible and predictable funding for women-led civil society organizations working on the frontlines of the response.
- Include frontline responders in protection mechanisms to manage increased harassment or violence against health and humanitarian providers.

6

ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY TO WOMEN & GIRLS IN CRISIS SETTINGS

- Ensure continued availability of all SRH services in the [MISP](#) throughout the COVID-19 response. This includes contraception, intrapartum care for all births, emergency obstetric and newborn care, post-abortion care, safe abortion care (to the full extent of the law), clinical care for rape survivors, and prevention and treatment for HIV and other sexually-transmitted infections.
- Ensure inclusive and effective rights-based systems of accountability for women and girls in humanitarian settings that include community client feedback and action plans to address service gaps and rights violations at both the service delivery and response level.
- Ensure COVID-19 decision-making bodies are inclusive, gender-balanced, and include dedicated sexual and reproductive health and gender experts.

7

SUPPORT AND PROTECT MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS

- Utilize adaptive and responsive approaches to ensure equitable access to accurate and user-friendly COVID-19-related information and services, including approaches tailored for adolescents, people living with disabilities, sex workers and people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, and sex characteristics.
- Meaningfully engage organizations and networks representing diverse marginalized communities to disseminate and promote prevention and health-seeking behaviors.
- Provide support and training – including remote training – for healthcare workers on the provision of gender-sensitive and non-discriminatory SRH health services.

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