

In response to COVID-19 outbreak, UNFPA Pakistan has developed a comprehensive Strategic Response Framework, in line with national response plan, aligned with UNFPA’s global strategy and WHO’s Operational Planning Guidelines. UNFPA’s response strategy has two main pillars.

**Pillar 1- Health Systems Strengthening:** includes provision of protection/universal precaution, infection prevention, supply of essential equipment and commodities, training of managers and health care providers, provision of psycho social support to service providers and supporting continuity of coordination platforms.

**Pillar 2- Community Empowerment/ Gender centered interventions:** includes prevention of gender based violence, provision of protection services and psycho social support to vulnerable population including women, girls and elderly, and awareness raising in collaboration with government and UN agencies.

**Message from Lina Mousa, Country Representative, UNFPA**

*“Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in Pakistan, UNFPA is standing together with the Government of Pakistan in combating the pandemic. UNFPA is among the lead agencies working to protect health workers, women & girls and vulnerable populations. As the outbreak has unprecedentedly strained the health systems, we are working, with our full resources and strengths, to ensure that essential reproductive health services remain available for safe pregnancies and safe births for everyone. We are also working to prevent gender-based violence and ensure women, girls and survivors of gender-based violence receive services, information, counselling and care they need during challenging quarantine and mobility restrictions imposed by COVID-19. UNFPA is closely working with the government counterparts at both national and provincial level mainly Ministries of Health, Population and Planning maintaining close coordination with National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and also at provincial level including Departments of Health and Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs) to contribute to the national response.*

*We are grateful to our donors especially UK’s Department For International Development (DFID), Global Affairs Canada and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Australia for their strong commitment and generous contributions. In this response, we count on the expertise, outreach and support of our implementing partners including Population Council, Family Planning Association of Pakistan, Jphiego, PPHI, ROZAN , International Medical Corps (IMC), Punjab Commission on Status of Women (PCSW), Punjab Safe Cities Authority and Social Welfare Department, KP.”*

**Fast Facts**

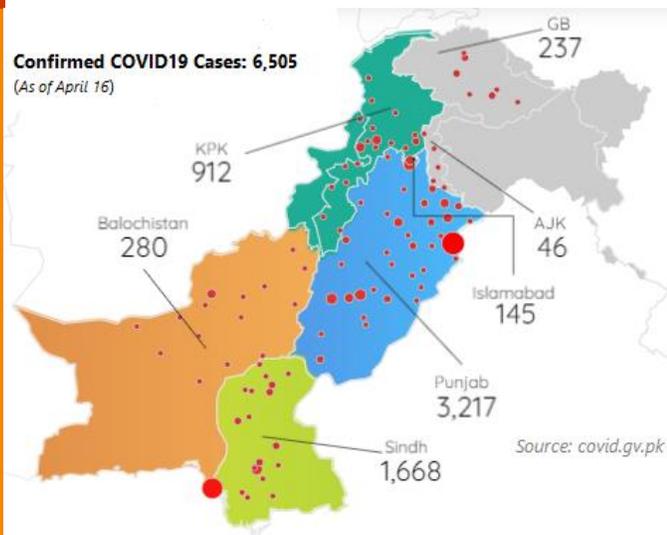
**2,000** is the number of health care workers including doctors, nurses and midwives working on SRH and MNCH who will receive training on Infection Prevention and Control by end of this week.

**156** are among trained HCWs master trainers who will continue to train HCWs working at public and private sector health facilities.

First batch of **personal protective equipment (PPEs)** for Islamabad, Balochistan and KP is ready for distribution in collaboration with NDMA.

**14,000** IEC materials on COVID-19 developed. **4** public service messages developed and on the roll on FM 101.

**Socio-Economic Assessment** of COVID-19 on Reproductive Health and Gender-Based Violence in Pakistan carried out.



## Risk Communication and Reproductive Health and Family Planning



- **4 Audio-visual messages** featuring Obstetrician and Gynecologist on safe motherhood, family planning and GBV have been developed. An awareness campaign using these audio messages has been **launched through FM101 radio** channel across its 19 stations from April 9. A total of **378 spots** will be run until May 20, 2020.
- Leading **social media influencers**, with large fan base, have been identified to support content dissemination on women's health and gender issues to further ensure campaign outreach.
- Upon the request of Ministry of Health, the global messages from WHO on **reproductive health are contextualized and developed locally by UNFPA** and has been endorsed by Ministry of Health. 10,000 flyers, 2,000 standees and 2,000 posters with messages on hygiene, pregnancy, breastfeeding and maternity care are being developed.

### Coordination/ Technical Support

- UNFPA is providing **technical support** to NDMA through senior technical experts on gender and sexual and reproductive health to strengthen the national COVID19 response with lens of women's health and rights.
- UNFPA is providing **technical support** to the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination (MoNHSRC) through recruitment and deployment of a senior public health expert, Epidemiologist and consultants for strategic communications and data analysis to strengthen the COVID19 response capacity.
- UNFPA carried out a **Socio-Economic Assessment of COVID-19 on Reproductive Health and Gender-Based Violence** in Pakistan to support the government to mitigate the impact caused by COVID 19 on the most vulnerable. This was done as part of UN's support to Pakistan's potential for inclusive socio-economic development while addressing gaps, surmounting challenges and fostering greater social justice.
- UNFPA is an active member of the Ministry of Health's **Risk Communications and Community Engagement Task Force**, along with other UN agencies
- UNFPA convened **Family Planning Donors Core Group** meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> April to discuss continuity of FP, SRH and GBV services and interventions, including protection of health workforce. UNFPA's Socioeconomic Impact assessment on Reproductive Health and Gender-Based Violence was presented during the meeting. Partners agreed to strengthen national and provincial level coordination and to prioritize provision of PPEs, technical assistance and addressing challenges of supply chain.
- With the technical assistance of UNFPA, Ministry of Health convened a special meeting of **Country Engagement Working Group of Family Planning (CEWG)** on 14th April. More than fifty representatives from the government, donors, CSOs and UN agencies attended the meeting and renewed commitment to continue FP & SRH services which are essential for women's health & dignity, with a focus on health care providers.
- UNFPA, in close collaboration with IRMNCH & Population Welfare Department, Government of Punjab, convened a **virtual meeting on FP and RH** on 8th of April. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss continuity of family planning and reproductive health services during the lockdown. Around 40 participants representing the government, UN agencies, international and national NGOs, CSOs, academia and researchers attended. It was agreed that IRMNCHNP Punjab will develop a comprehensive joint action plan, in consultation with development partners. Similar coordination meetings have been held in KP and Balochistan provinces.
- UNFPA is an **active member of the UN Coordination Team (UNCT)** in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province along with Department of Health (DoH) and Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA).
- In Sindh, UNFPA was also nominated as a **member in Technical Working Groups** on Reproductive Health & FP and GBV & psychosocial support.

## Prevention and Management of Gender Based Violence

- **Tele-psychosocial support services**, through partner ROZAN, and provincial counterparts including Department of Social Welfare, Special Education & Women Empowerment Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Women Development Department Punjab have been initiated to support women and girls survivors of violence.
- UNFPA has partnered with Punjab Safe Cities Authorities to **upgrade Women Safety App** as an innovative solution for challenges of mobility and gender-based violence during COVID19 lockdown and beyond. The app is equipped with essential features to help women in emergency situations to seek help and receive immediate response from teams at their precise location.

## Health Service Providers Protection: Procurement of Equipment/ Capacity Development

- Approximately **2,000 health care providers** will receive training by end of this week on Infection Prevention and Control/Universal Precautionary Measures. This number includes **360** doctors along with nurses and midwives working on sexual and reproductive health and maternal & child health in public and private health facilities. Among these are **156 Master Trainers** who will continue to train HCWs from across Pakistan.
- Provision of **psycho social support through community midwives** - Two teams including a physician and a LHV each will train Community Midwives in psycho social support and preventive health actions in Balochistan.
- Procurement of **personal protective items** recommended by WHO, including examination and surgical long cuff gloves, isolation and surgical gowns/protective clothing, surgical masks, protection coverall, surgical respirator FFP2/N95, reusable aprons and face shields, goggles, head and shoe covers and other hygiene supplies has been completed for ICT, KP and Balochistan. The procurement of the equipment for Sindh, Punjab and GB is underway.

## Voices from field – *Hale hope is born*

In Pishin and Ziarat districts of Balochistan, maternal mortality rates are higher compared to other provinces. Health facilities are scarce and childbirths are attended by Community Midwives (CMWs) at home. Khadija, a twenty five year old woman from a remote village of Ziarat, was expecting her first baby any time. The only health care worker that could attend the birth was a CMW who told Khadija that there can be a restriction on the transport and movement during COVID-19 lockdown which could pose a problem for her delivery attendance. There were no other health facilities available or functional during COVID-19 outbreak. The situation endangered lives of Khadija and her baby. CMW advised her to travel to Tehsil Head Quarter Hospital in Khanozai district where 25 dedicated health workers are continuing obstetric care services 24/7 to save lives of mothers and newborns. Khadija, with her husband's support, traveled several miles with a trust that her delivery will be attended by trained health workers. THQ Hospital Khanozai is among the health facilities where UNFPA, with DFAT support, is providing health staff, kits for safe delivery and newborns, and equipment for the labor room to ensure continuity of reproductive health services for local population including Afghan refugees.



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