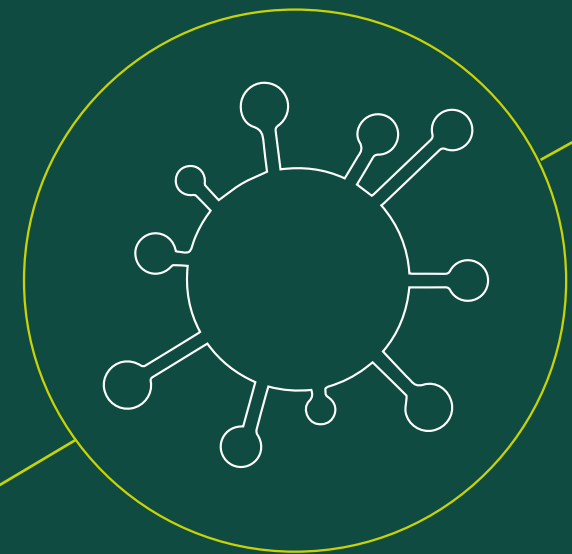
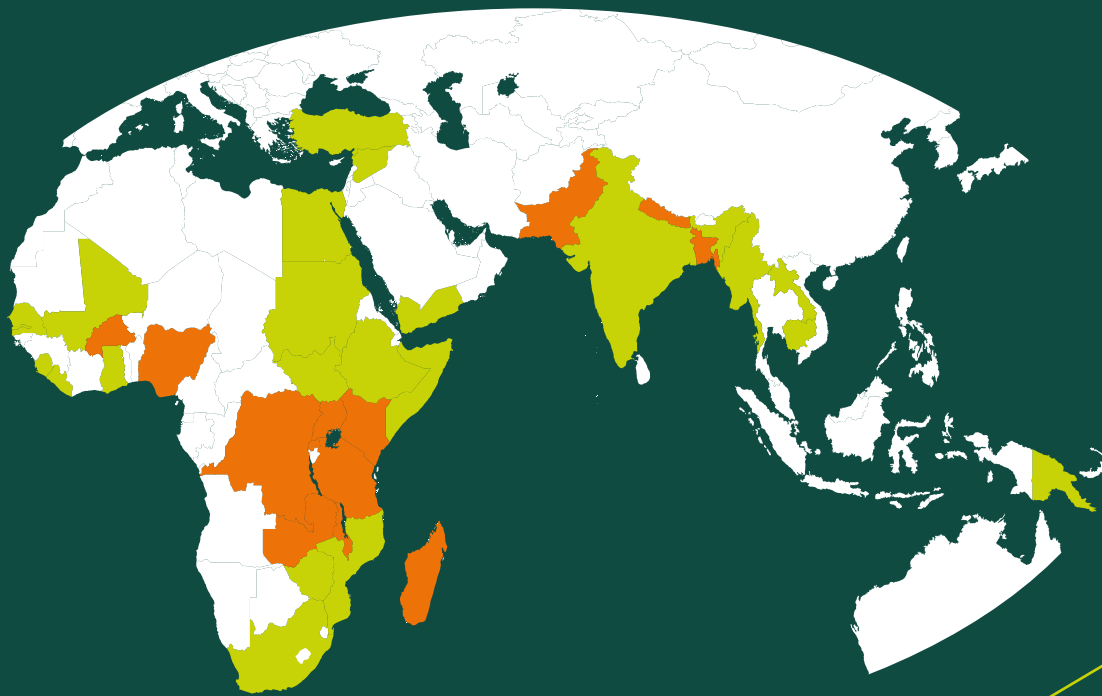


Supporting COVID-19 response and recovery

Find out how Options is supporting countries and communities to respond to COVID-19, to protect essential health services for women and girls, and to promote an inclusive pandemic response.



-  Current countries of operation
-  Recent countries of operation

Respond



Our long-standing partnerships with national and sub-national governments enables us to play a key role in pandemic preparation and response. As members of COVID-19 planning task forces and committees in several countries, we support governments to find practical solutions that adapt to the evolving situation.

Helping governments prepare, plan and respond to COVID-19

We provide financing advice on the costing of national vaccine roll-out plans and health funding priorities, procure and distribute personal protective equipment (PPE), support M&E departments to manage complex surveillance data, and promote evidence-based planning.

Making sure health facilities are ready and resourced

We train health workers in infection prevention and control, and help health facilities assess their readiness to respond to the pandemic through our [COVID-19 health facility readiness tool](#). In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burkina Faso and Ghana, this tool has guided health facilities to make decisions on how to improve service delivery and ensure continued access to essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Raising public awareness

We work with governments, partners and the media to develop public health messages that help raise community awareness.

Advising national vaccine planning, costing and roll-out

In Kenya, Options developed a multi-phase costing template and cost estimates to guide national and sub-national budgeting for the country's vaccine rollout. We currently support the government's financing sub-committee to identify budget gaps and mobilise resources. In Nepal, Options is supporting the government to design and implement national plans for COVID-19 vaccine cold storage.

Adapting health infrastructure to meet COVID-19 demands

In Nepal, Options supported the government to rapidly increase the capacity of hospitals in Pokhara and Bhaktapur to treat COVID-19 patients. Newly constructed decanting blocks (initially intended to strengthen hospitals against earthquakes) were converted into temporary COVID-19 treatment wards for patients. We also support Municipal COVID-19 Committees in Nepal to establish and operationalise isolation centres.

Protect



COVID-19 has shifted governments' attention towards the pandemic response, threatening to reverse years of progress in improving health outcomes for women and girls. Our teams are working with health service providers, civil society organisations and government at all levels to ensure that women and girls' access to vital services are protected.

Influencing policy and using evidence for action

We influence policy and mobilise domestic resources for essential services by making sure our advocacy is backed up by robust evidence. Our teams turn dense data into accessible and compelling formats so that decision-makers receive information in the right format at the right time.

Tailored technical assistance

Our country teams provide tailored technical assistance to governments to revise and disseminate national guidelines to protect and make reproductive, maternal, newborn and adolescent health (RMNCAH) services part of their essential health service packages.

Transparent and accountable pandemic responses

We work closely with civil society organisations and coalitions to build their capacity to monitor budget processes and use tracking tools to hold governments to account for providing a transparent pandemic response.

Re-opening health facilities during the pandemic

In Pakistan, Options used a quality improvement tool to identify gaps in the availability and quality of family planning services. Based on the findings, our team then supported the Population Welfare Department to roll out training in infection prevention and control, and to access PPE. These changes enabled the government to re-open 324 health facilities across 4 districts that had been closed as a result of the pandemic, to provide essential care.

Mobilising domestic resources for family planning

In Malawi, Options' budget advocacy efforts reversed a plan to reduce the national budget for family planning commodities. We produced an investment case to advocate for the uninterrupted provision of family planning services throughout the pandemic. This not only protected the existing budget, but resulted in a 14% budget increase in 2020/21.

Promote



People with disabilities, mental health conditions, and women and girls face an increased risk of gender-based violence during the pandemic. Options aims to ensure that no one is left behind in the COVID-19 response by promoting an inclusive pandemic response.

Including people with disabilities

We study and analyse the barriers people with disabilities face in relation to governments' COVID-19 responses and influence national policies to ensure that pandemic response measures are disability and mental health aware and inclusive. Our advice on COVID-19 response planning is informed by the unique needs of people with disabilities and mental health conditions.

We train media organisations in gender and social inclusion to ensure they report on disability and mental health aspects of the pandemic in a way that is non-discriminatory and as accessible as possible.

Ensuring access for adolescent girls

Maintaining referral pathways for sexual and reproductive health services is critical during lockdown for adolescent girls. We have intensified training of local implementing partners to use virtual approaches, such as WhatsApp group chats, online peer education sessions and hotlines, to support adolescent girls as they navigate their journey to safe abortion and family planning information and services.

Safeguarding advice and resources

We support development organisations to strengthen their safeguarding policies and practices against sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment, during COVID-19 and beyond.

Ensuring that governments' COVID-19 response is disability inclusive

In Ghana, Options works to ensure that people with disabilities, including mental health conditions, are included in the government's national emergency response. Our team has worked with partners to develop accessible COVID-19 public health information. 99% of people with mental health conditions who received the information said that they found it useful.

Protecting women from domestic violence

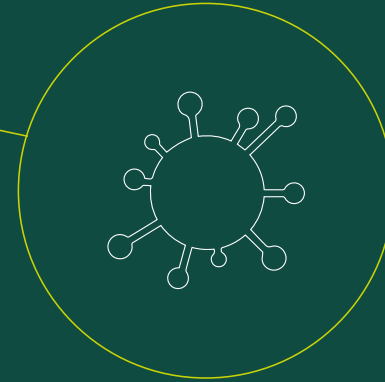
In Nepal, Options is taking multiple steps to protect women facing domestic violence during lockdown. Our advisors have appeared on radio and TV shows to raise awareness of the increased risk of violence during COVID-19, and have developed new protocols for shelter homes, rehabilitation centres and One Stop Crisis Centres to better respond to the domestic violence crisis.

Looking to the future



Experts agree that the world is likely see other pandemics in the coming decades, and that COVID-19 is not a once in a lifetime event. The frequency of major epidemics like SARS and Ebola is increasing, and ecological factors are making it easier for diseases to pass from animals to humans. We are developing solutions to help countries prepare for future health emergencies and epidemics:

- **Using drones to deliver essential medicines** to last mile communities in remote and hard-to-reach locations in Nepal where supply chains have been disrupted by COVID-19
- **Supporting COVID-19 vaccine roll out** by working with health workers, community leaders, and civil society to advocate for and address reasons for vaccine hesitancy, and track vaccine roll out progress
- **Engaging communities in disease prevention and response** by bringing together health providers and community representatives to anticipate and address current and future outbreaks and build more resilient health systems



About us

Options is an international development consultancy delivering innovative solutions to some of the world's most complex health challenges. We drive transformational improvements in the health and well-being of the most vulnerable. Our work supports the vision of a world where women and children can access high-quality health services they need, without financial burden.

With over 28 years' experience, Options has a proven track record in building partnerships throughout Africa and Asia and tailoring approaches to the local context.

Options is continuously looking forward, innovating, and co-creating new solutions with our partners and clients. Further investments and partnerships will enable us to transform the problems of today into the solutions of tomorrow.

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