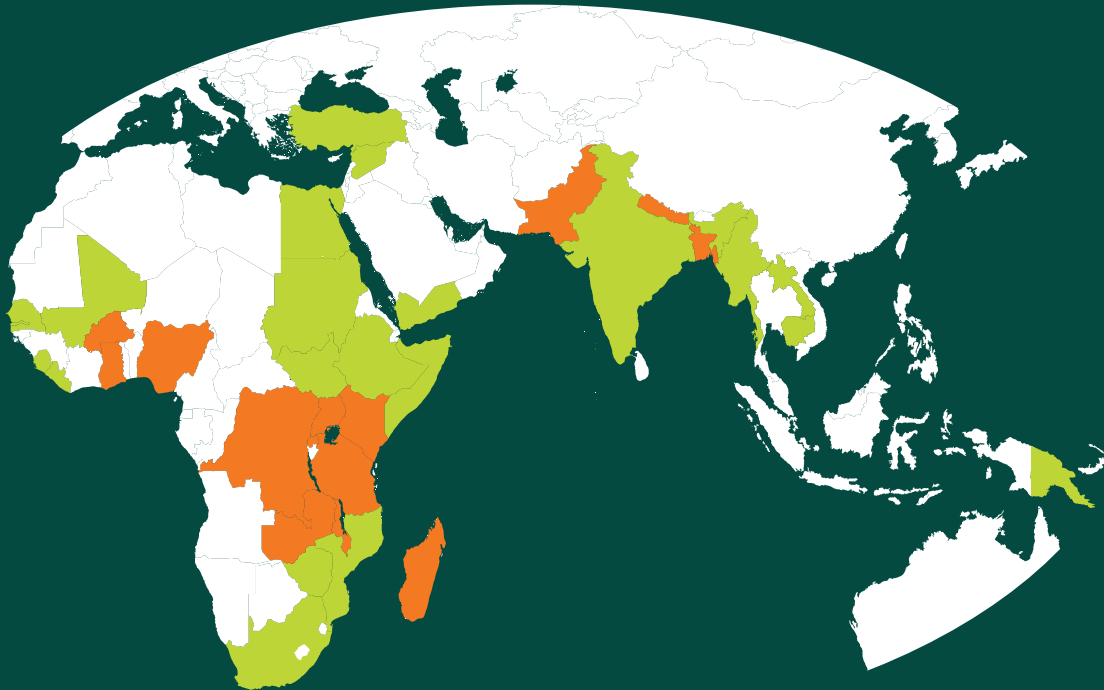


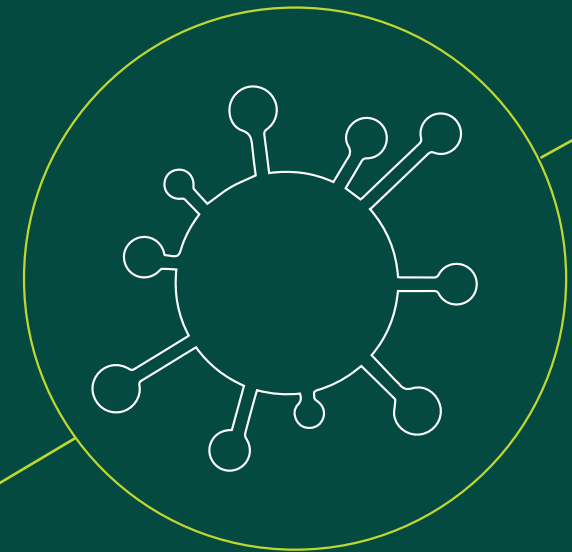
Options and COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed enormous pressure on leaders to mount and sustain an effective emergency response to protect their citizens - all while maintaining access to essential health services.

Find out how Options is supporting COVID-19 response and recovery.



- Current countries of operation
- Recent countries of operation



Supporting governments on pandemic response



Options has rapidly adapted our existing global portfolio to respond to the challenges of COVID-19. Throughout Africa and Asia, our teams are working with governments to:

- Support health emergency and operations committees with data analysis, surveillance, information and dissemination
- Rapidly assess the readiness of health facilities to respond to COVID-19
- Provide health workers with personal protective equipment and training on infection prevention and control
- Advise on funding priorities and financing mechanisms to ensure financial protection for the population, such as through user-fee waivers and expanding insurance coverage
- Assist health departments to set-up of emergency procurement systems
- Distribute accurate and up to date information to communities

We're currently developing plans to:



- Establish community alert and response mechanisms to identify and manage COVID-19 cases
- Produce data visuals to better inform communities on the status of the epidemic
- Study community perceptions about a future COVID-19 vaccine to promote vaccine acceptance

Assessing COVID-19 readiness, enabling health facilities to better manage cases

Options partnered with The Geneva Centre of Humanitarian Studies and other agencies to rapidly develop a COVID-19 readiness tool. The tool enables primary and secondary health facilities to assess their readiness to respond to COVID-19 and to keep their frontline workers safe. It has been deployed in Tanzania, DRC and Burkina Faso, with more countries to follow.

Adapting health infrastructure to meet COVID-19 demands

In Nepal, Options supported the government and hospitals in Pokhara and Bhaktapur to rapidly increase their capacity to treat COVID-19 patients by transforming their temporary hospital building spaces into COVID-19 wards. These facilities are essential hubs for emergency and humanitarian efforts, providing health services to district and provincial communities. Once the pandemic is being managed, these wards will return to their initial purpose of hosting patients while works to improve the earthquake resilience of the hospitals are carried out.

Maintaining essential services for women, and safeguarding gains



The indirect impacts from COVID-19 are likely to be severe, and gains in sexual and reproductive health and rights are at risk of backsliding. Our teams are supporting countries to:

- Develop and disseminate national guidelines to provide essential reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health (RMNCAH) services during the pandemic
- Analyse mortality data to pinpoint bottlenecks and improve health system performance to save lives
- Advocate with evidence, develop investment cases, and influence policy to ensure that RMNCAH services are declared essential during the COVID-19 response
- Address supply chain bottlenecks for medical abortion products through providing buffer supplies to vendors and subsidies for consumers in need
- Revise community counselling and referral protocols to enable women and girls to access sexual and reproductive health services

Putting contraceptives in the hands of women and girls

In Madagascar and Uganda, Options has supported national governments to launch self-administered contraceptive methods, such as Sayana Press. This can help maintain women and girls' access to contraception, despite the closure of facilities providing family planning services during lockdown.

Reaching women with essential maternal health services

In Nepal, Options supported the government to produce interim guidelines for the provision of antenatal, delivery and post-natal care during the pandemic. The guidelines include innovative approaches to remove access barriers for women, such as tele-health, health worker home visits and the use of misoprostol and safe home delivery kits.

Assessing and responding to disruptions in family planning services

In Malawi, Options assessed the level of disruption caused by the pandemic to family planning and reproductive health services. Findings indicate that resources have been shifted to prioritise the emergency response, with less attention focused on family planning. Options is using this data to support government planning, to ensure that family planning is kept high on the agenda.

Leaving no one behind



The pandemic is heightening inequalities as COVID-19 responses often fail to meet the needs of vulnerable communities, including people with disabilities, and women and girls who face an increased risk of gender-based violence. Our teams are supporting countries to:

- Develop guidance on managing COVID -19 risks in mental health facilities and rights-based care for people with disabilities
- Enable civil society organisations, particularly disabled people organisations and self-help groups, to provide psychosocial support
- Train grassroots networks to help communities and girls continue the fight to end female genital mutilation
- Establish virtual civil society-led forums to enable safe and effective community referral process for adolescent girls during lockdown
- Support development organizations to strengthen their safeguarding policies and practices against sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment – during COVID-19 and beyond – through a co-hosted global Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub

Making the COVID-19 response disability inclusive

In Ghana, Options is ensuring that people with disabilities, including mental health disabilities, are at the centre of the national emergency response. Options is working with partners to assess service delivery gaps from a disability and mental health perspective, develop accessible public health information, and support the media to ensure that its reporting is not stigmatising or discriminatory.

Protecting women from violence

In Nepal, Options is taking a multi-faceted approach 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 crisis.

Building back better to achieve universal health coverage



COVID-19 is shining the spotlight on public health security and the fact that strong health systems are a public good. Our teams' support will:

- Provide expertise in response and recovery, including surveillance, case management and national emergency preparedness
- Strengthen the use of lab and data to reduce the turnaround time from specimen collection to delivery of results
- Bring a 'health systems lens' to improve procurement, stewardship, accountability and health financing during the pandemic
- Strengthen social accountability mechanisms to use data that drives decision making, creating lasting change
- Support the mental health and well-being of health care workers

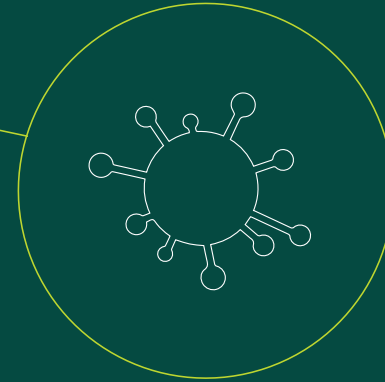


We're currently developing plans to:

- Bring technology to guide future modelling capabilities for government planning of health infrastructure
- Explore use of drones to deliver essential medicines and supplies in hard to reach areas in ways that are aligned with wider health systems and can equip governments to respond to future emergencies

Strengthening governance in the COVID-19 era

In Kenya, Options has supported three counties to hold virtual, government led technical working group meetings, which had not been operational since the pandemic started. These have been effective forums to review family planning commodity security and to disseminate national RMNCAH guidelines for COVID-19. The success of these meetings has encouraged neighbouring counties to take a similar approach and accelerated decision-making processes during COVID-19.



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 25 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 funding and partnerships will enable us to transform the problems of today into the solutions of tomorrow.

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