Gender-Responsive Programming and Strategy Shifting to Mitigate the Impact of COVID-19

Meeting Overview

On May 26, 2020, the Global First Ladies Alliance (GFLA), in partnership with the END Fund and global health and gender equality experts, convened Technical Advisors from First Ladies’ Offices for a discussion on Gender-Responsive Programming and Strategy Shifting. At the previous meeting (April 28, 2020), First Ladies’ Offices shared best practices on how to respond to COVID-19, highlighting First Ladies’ leadership in providing clear public health messages and distributing PPE and food to essential workers and marginalized groups, while working tirelessly to address the unique challenges facing informal settings, and ensuring the continuation of existing programs.

This meeting built upon identified challenges relating to strategy shifting and a shared interest in learning more about COVID-19’s impact on women and girls. The presentations focused on the many ways COVID-19 is a “crisis on a crisis” and the need to reduce transmission rates by strengthening health workers’ and health systems’ capacity and building pandemic responses into current processes. Participants also received an overview of UNICEF’s five programmatic actions to advance gender equality during the pandemic, including the Global Resilience Fund for Girls and Young Women, and advice on how to integrate gender-based violence interventions into humanitarian action. The discussion centered on the great need for resource mobilization to support vulnerable populations and how to leverage partner networks and plan for the expansion of programs and services once Shelter at Home Orders has been lifted. Due to time constraints, the discussion on monitoring and evaluation aspects was postponed.

Participating countries: Gabon, Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe

Presenters and Facilitators: Dr. Portia Manangazira, Director Epidemiology and Disease Control, Zimbabwe’s Ministry of Health and Child Welfare, Patty Alleman, Senior Advisor on Gender Equality, UNICEF, Dr. Gery Ryan, Professor, Health Systems Science, Kaiser Permanente Bernard J. Tyson School of Medicine, Warren Lancaster, Senior Vice President, Programs, the END Fund, Joy Ruwodo, Director, Public Affairs, Africa Region, the END Fund, Cora Neumann, Founder, Global First Ladies Alliance

Themes: Crisis on a Crisis, Continuation of Health Services, Generational Approach, Women’s Groups, Resource Mobilization, Anticipation of Challenges, Increased Coordination
**If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.**  
- African Proverb

**Program Overview**

This meeting was the second component in a four-month rapid response program aiming to provide First Ladies’ Offices in Africa additional expertise (e.g., Strategic Planning), partnerships (e.g., UNICEF), and tools (e.g., guides and presentations) to help mitigate the impact of COVID-19 as the pandemic continues to add pressure on health systems, and disrupts health services and community-based programs. Through this program, GFLA and the END Fund, in partnership with global health and gender equality experts, and media partners, provide technical assistance and help raise awareness of First Ladies’ leadership. Support is provided both collectively and through one-on-one meetings. All convenings are developed in collaboration with First Ladies’ Offices.

**Immediate PPE Needs**

GFLA can connect First Ladies’ Offices to reliable PPE partners, Virus Relief and Step Solutions. Please reach out to Caroline Torén, GFLA Director of Programs, at caroline@gfla.org, and see https://virusrelief.us/ and www.step-solutions.net/ for more information.

**Voice of America Media Opportunity**

Voice of America has offered to highlight First Ladies’ leadership and response to COVID-19 in their weekly program “Our Voices.” Voice of America has a weekly audience of 25M+ people, and “Our Voices” is produced and hosted by an all-female team and carried by Voice of America TV affiliate stations in every African country containing a sizable English-speaking audience. For more information about this media opportunity, please contact Caroline Torén, GFLA Director of Programs, at caroline@gfla.org, to be connected with Voice of America’s reporters on the ground. Learn more at https://www.voanews.com/watch/our-voices
**Access Challenge One By One: Target COVID-19**
GFLA and the END Fund are partnering with the Access Challenge One by One: Target COVID-19 Campaign - a coalition uniting governments, the private sector, philanthropists, and individuals to help put a stop to COVID-19 and bring Africa closer to securing health for all. Partners include the African Union, Africa-CDC, and the Kikwete Foundation. The goals are to spotlight great leadership, share accurate facts, counter myths and misinformation, strengthen capacity, and support testing. The first phase of information material available include Get The Facts Toolkit: Busting Myths around COVID-19. See https://www.onebyone2030.org/targetcovid19-africa and contact Caroline Torén, GFLA Director of Programs, at caroline@gfla.org, for more information.

**Feedback and Questions**
GFLA and the END Fund welcome everyone to learn more about our efforts and share your feedback. If you have any questions, want to request a meeting to discuss your specific needs, or explore partnership opportunities, please reach out to Caroline Torén, GFLA Director of Programs at caroline@gfla.org.

**Program Organizers**
For ten years, the Global First Ladies Alliance has worked with First Ladies from over 40 countries (see addendum B) across Africa, Latin America, the U.S., and the U.K. Together, we have set priorities, established strategic partnerships, and developed strategies to further the First Ladies’ agenda and create a positive impact in communities. In addition to its Africa-focused workshops, GFLA is also responding to COVID-19 in the United States through its support to local leaders through the U.S. COVID-19 High-level Strategy Task Force, and in Latin America through strategic support and technical assistance to First Ladies’ Offices. Learn more at: www.gfla.org

The END Fund is a philanthropic initiative solely dedicated to ending the suffering caused by the five most common Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD) - intestinal worms, schistosomiasis, blinding trachoma, river blindness, and lymphatic filariasis - which together account for 90% of the NTD burden in Africa. Learn more at: https://end.org

**Addendums:**
- Addendum A – Annotated Agenda
- Addendum B – NTD Programs: Predictions and Strategy Shifting - Comments by the END Fund
- Addendum C – Global First Ladies Alliance Collaboration with First Ladies’ Offices 2008-2020
- Addendum D – Resources May 26 Meeting
- Addendum E – Namibia’s Response COVID-19 March – May
Meeting Report

COVID-19 in Africa: Crisis on a Crisis

In less than half a year, COVID-19 has ripped across the world and transformed family, social, traditional, and cultural relations causing dramatic changes to life as people once knew it. In many African countries, limited communication infrastructure is preventing health authorities from providing the most vulnerable groups adequate information on how to cope with the pandemic, further jeopardizing their situation.

The socio-economic consequences of COVID-19 in affluent economies indicate the challenges ahead for low-income countries where resources were limited before the pandemic. In Africa, COVID-19 is a “crisis on a crisis,” where communities already experience the heavy burden of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs), and epidemic-prone cholera and typhoid. The diseases, coupled with widespread malnutrition (increasingly seen among adults), is expected to deepen health inequities further as the number of districts asking for food assistance grows. The deteriorating mental health situation and environmental challenges are also compromising communities’ capacity to respond to the pandemic. In March 2019, cyclone Idai hit Zimbabwe, and the country has yet to recover from the devastation it caused.

COVID-19 Response by May: Transmission Prevention and Continuation of Health Programs

Stopping the spread of the virus continues to be the immediate priority. This includes the promotion of containment measures, not only at the local and national levels, but across the continent, to halt movement across borders. In the past few weeks, Zimbabwe has experienced a massive return of Zimbabweans living abroad, up to 3000 per day.
Furthermore, countries must i) invest in health systems to detect cases early and avoid secondary cases from arising, ii) build pandemic responses that consider COVID-19, cholera and typhoid into existing systems, iii) expand training programs for health workers, and iv) monitor other health issues, in particular HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and NTDs, and maintain the operations of these programs.

Thanks to support from the AIDS Council and the Global Fund, Zimbabwe has been able to sustain its work in these areas. However, NTD programs remain a challenge as they rely heavily on mass drug administration campaigns, which have been disrupted by the need to implement physical distancing and an increasing fear among community members to contract COVID-19 in larger gatherings. With new measures and methods in place, Zimbabwe will soon restart Mass Drug Administration campaigns in two districts in partnership with the END Fund. Zimbabwe’s Ministry of Health is grateful for the support from the First Lady, H.E. Auxillia Mnangagwa, who is visiting high-risk groups, including the elderly, in remote areas to understand their needs better and ensure they receive services.

Health worker looking through a microscope outside of Bahir dar. Photo Credit: Mo Scarpelli/The END Fund
COVID-19: The Impact on Women and Girls & Gender-Responsive Programming

Women are at the forefront of all public health crises in their roles as community health workers, caregivers, nurses, and midwives, and are therefore more likely to be exposed to a virus, including COVID-19. Yet, women’s roles and work are often overlooked and underpaid.

The COVID-19 pandemic’s negative impact on economies globally, including the informal sector where women are over-represented, is also disrupting women’s opportunities to earn an income. In many countries, pay gaps, exploitation, and intimate partner violence are expected to increase further as transactional sex becomes a survival tool for and food insecurity puts more stress on households.

The loss of jobs and increase in violence occurs as women’s access to health services, such as maternal care, and the clinical management of rape cases, is being compromised by Shelter at Home orders and overwhelmed health facilities. To advance gender equality in the COVID-19 response, UNICEF promotes five programmatic and advocacy actions that recognize the pandemic’s public health, social, and economic consequences and needs across generations. These actions include:

1. **Care for caregivers:** Increase access to childcare, health services, and social protection programs, such as cash transfers, for frontline workers, and champion family-friendly policies, e.g., parental leave.

2. **Prepare for increases in gender-based violence:** i) Train first responders on how to handle disclosure of gender-based violence in a compassionate and non-judgmental way, ii) Prepare primary and secondary responders both with training and, supplies, and provide GBV referral pathways and iii) Map, inform, and advocate for emergency services to remain open, and increase communication and access to hotlines and other support mechanisms, including remote services. For more information about training first responders, see the United Nations Interagency GBV Pocket Guide and https://gbvguidelines.org/en/pocketguide/ (also available on the App Store).

3. **Maintain core health and education services and systems:** This can be done by providing alternative service delivery, including remote learning, and maintaining girls’ access to social support networks with peers and mentors. One of the lessons learned from the 2014 Ebola crisis is to closely monitor both access to remote learning options and drop-out rates by sex, age, and disability.

To engage more youth in the conversation around COVID-19 and ensure they have access to reliable information, UNICEF has launched the U-Report Information Chatbot where youth can ask questions and receive preprogrammed answers from experts on the matter. To date, the chatbot has facilitated the exchange of lifesaving information for millions of young people across 50 countries. See more information at www.unicef.org/innovation/ureportCOVID19
4. **Engage women and youth rights networks to support connectivity and information flow:** Women and girls’ voices are essential to understand the pandemic’s impact and play a major role in spreading information in their communities. But women’s groups are often the last paid and first cut. It is therefore critical to i) identify existing women’s networks and youth groups and strengthen their leadership and participation in decision-making processes, and ii) make sure they are adequately funded and informed via multiple and disability accessible platforms, such as the U-Report Chatbot.

The Global Resilience Fund for Girls and Young Women is a new grant opportunity through which young women’s groups can receive grants in the amount of $5,000 USD to sustain their efforts. The fund focuses specifically on marginalized girls, including girls with disabilities and girls who were living in crisis context before the COVID-19 outbreak. See more information at https://www.theglobalresiliencefund.org/

5. **Ensure gender data are available, analyzed, and actionable:** Look carefully at how programs are designed and who benefits by gathering data disaggregated by age, sex, and disability, and include gender equality indicators in monitoring and evaluation efforts. Furthermore, ensure all planning and response efforts are grounded on a robust gender analysis that consider gender roles, responsibilities, and dynamics.
COVID-19 & Strategy Shifting: Anticipating Future Challenges

First Ladies have adapted their strategies quickly to meet immediate needs caused by COVID-19 and reached households in the thousands, including in informal settlements, through their programs and delivery of food and medical supplies. But challenges remain with resource mobilization being the number one priority.

As countries and First Ladies’ Offices enhance their COVID-19 responses, it will be important to identify what short-term measures will have a long-term impact through a lens of innovation, generations, and sisterhood. First Ladies have an incredible opportunity to continue to take the power of their collective and pay it forward by empowering other women’s groups across generations and identify ways to support young people today that will make their lives more equitable tomorrow.

To make the most of existing resources, avoid duplication, and increase outcomes it was recommended to:

- Stay within current frameworks and support already identified target groups.
- Increase coordination with key stakeholders, e.g., through weekly calls.
- Review work plans more regularly.
- Prioritize existing partner networks, e.g., partners with which the First Lady’s Office has a Memorandum of Understanding, and partners with strong relationships with marginalized groups.
- Plan for the expansion of programs once Shelter at Home Orders have been lifted through increased communication with stakeholders in priority areas outside of the current service area, e.g., through First Ladies at the Governor level.
- Identify innovative ways to digitize information sharing and program delivery to engage more students and youth.
- Anticipate and plan for long-term economic consequences, e.g., by giving small entrepreneurs three months of paid leave and providing information about different demands in the community.
- Plan for additional challenges brought by the winter season, e.g. the flu and increased burning of coal and wood impacting families’ health, in partnership with Africa-CDC.

Due to time constraints, participants were not able to discuss monitoring and evaluation aspects and best practices from NTD programs in detail. GFLA and END Fund are looking into providing additional technical assistance in these areas at a future date. In the meantime, please see Addendum B - NTD Programs: Predictions and Strategy Shifting.
Summary of Priorities by Country
The summaries below are not complete accounts of the work of First Ladies but intended to serve as a source of inspiration and guidance. Technical Advisors are welcome to please send edits or add information by sending it to Caroline Torén, Director of Programs, at caroline@gfla.org.

**DRC**
The First Lady of the Democratic Republic of Congo focuses on raising the public’s awareness of safe hygiene habits (handwashing, wearing of masks, physical distancing), assisting vulnerable groups with food and medical supplies, and responding to gender-based violence. The Office of the First Lady is looking to develop a communication and social media strategy that targets communities without access to the Internet or mobile phones and strengthening its capacity in the area of gender-responsive programming. See more information about the First Lady’s work here:
- https://youtu.be/i0agxz0iyZU
- https://www.fondationdnt.org/#/
- https://www.facebook.com/DNTshisekedi

**Gabon**
The First Lady of Gabon focuses her efforts on raising awareness on preventive measures, including safe hygiene habits, protecting essential workers, and meeting the needs of vulnerable groups, including people living with HIV/AIDS and students. The Office of the First Lady partners with different non-profits, such as the Red Cross, to deliver food, vouchers, and PPE, e.g., masks and hand sanitizers. It is also looking to strengthen its capacity to respond to the increase in gender-based violence. See more information about the First Lady’s work here:
Gambia
The First Lady of Gambia focuses her efforts on securing and distributing PPE, including masks and hand sanitizers, feminine hygiene products, and food, especially to vulnerable groups, including women and children. The Office of the First Lady is looking to develop a communication and social media strategy that targets communities without access to the Internet or mobile phones. Alternative education models to ensure continued learning is another key priority. See more information about the First Lady’s work here:

Kenya
The First Lady of Kenya focuses her efforts on raising public awareness of safe hygiene habits (handwashing, wearing of masks, physical distancing) and assisting vulnerable populations, in particular the elderly, women and girls, and girls with disabilities, with medical supplies and food. The Office of the First Lady supports government-led food programs that provide nutritionally adequate food at the household level. To reach marginalized groups effectively, the Office has identified institutions and grassroots organizations based on the First Lady’s strategic framework that have strong relationships with these groups.

To date, the First Lady has reached over 10000 households. The Office of the First Lady also works with Amref Health Africa to train community health volunteers and accelerate awareness of preventive measures and access to health services. A key component of this work is to identify members at risk early and refer them to isolation centers for further testing and specialized care. The Office is also expanding its outreach and communication efforts to respond to an increasing fear among pregnant mothers of contracting COVID-19 in healthcare facilities to ensure they continue their health check-ups and deliver safely. See more information about the First Lady’s work here:
- https://www.beyondzero.or.ke/

Mozambique
The First Lady of Mozambique focuses her efforts on raising awareness of preventive measures, including safe hygiene habits, across media outlets and social media platforms. As part of this work, the First Lady highlights and shares the messages by the President and health authorities. Furthermore, the Office of the First Lady works with partners to distribute food and medical supplies, provide PPE to frontline workers, increase access to hospital and laboratory material, and respond to gender-based violence. The OAPLAD-led Free to Shine Campaign which aims to prevent and address HIV/AIDS continues to be a priority, and the First Lady’s Office is making sure campaign messages are broadcasted widely. See more information about the First Lady’s work here:
- https://www.portaldogoverno.gov.mz/por/Presidencia-da-Republica
Namibia

The First Lady of Namibia focuses her efforts on raising public awareness of safe hygiene habits (handwashing, wearing of masks, physical distancing) and making sure messages are science-based, relevant, user-friendly, and tailored to different demographics. The First Lady is also distributing food, toiletries, clothes, and medical supplies to marginalized groups, including sex workers, youth living with AIDS, and single parent, and appreciation packets to frontline workers. To date, the Office has reached an estimated 8000 households and more than 12 community-based organizations in 3 of the 14 regions.

Gender-based violence, support to youth, including sexual and reproductive rights and services and access to HIV/AIDS and pediatrics services, and women’s entrepreneurship continue to be main priorities. The Office of the First Lady raises awareness of gender-based violence and resources for survivors across platforms and works with the Gender Based Violence Investigation Unit, government hospitals, shelters, development partners, and others to ensure a continuum of care. To support women entrepreneurs, especially those who have lost their income due to the pandemic, the Office engages entrepreneurs in the production of PPE. Furthermore, the Office has increased its support of correctional facilities, children’s homes, teenagers, and healthcare workers by providing resources and case management services. Both the private sector and faith-based community have been engaged in the production and delivery of PPE and food, and the Office has been positively surprised by its extensive support and generosity.

UNFPA has set up a Sexual and Gender Based Violence Rapid Response Task Force, which the Office of the First Lady is part of. Additionally, it is working with private mental health hospitals, hotels, and B&B, to provide more services as shelters are filling up faster due to physical distancing rules. See more information about the First Lady’s work here:

- www.op.gov.na/documents/84084/444278/Bridge+Builder/105f09d1-c0c8-4bd8-b73a-56764fd63e9
Rwanda
The First Lady of Rwanda focuses her efforts on raising awareness of preventative measures, including safe hygiene habits and physical distancing, and responding to the needs of vulnerable populations in line with the national strategy. The Office of the First Lady works with partners and stakeholders to mobilize resources and identify effective ways to identify and respond to long-term challenges, including monitoring ongoing projects and helping people who are in a more vulnerable position due to the lockdown. Additionally, the Office of the First Lady is in the process of restructuring programs to ensure continued progress also during COVID-19.
See more information about the First Lady’s work here:
  - http://www.imbutofoundation.org

Zimbabwe
The First Lady of Zimbabwe has actively worked to support “hard-to-reach” areas since the first case of COVID-19 was detected in March. Her efforts focus on ensuring supplies, including food, hand sanitizers, soap, and other PPE supplies, reach vulnerable communities, in particular the elderly, homeless, and marginalized youth. Food insecurity has increased in informal settlements due to the Shelter at Home orders and lost job opportunities, and the First Lady is responding to new needs by expanding food programs. Furthermore, the First Lady is raising public awareness of safe hygiene habits (handwashing, masks, physical distancing, coughing) and infection prevention and control across platforms and media outlets, including producing an educational video. To respond to the increasing rate of gender-based violence, she is engaging women in the community in conversations around the issue. Additionally, she is working to sustain and expand programs aiming to prevent and respond to HIV/AIDS, RMNCH, NCDs and NTDs and increasing access to WASH. The First Lady is an ambassador for health and is working closely with the HIV/AIDS Council, as well as the Merck Foundation on the development of educational material. The Office of the First Lady is looking to increase information sharing by leveraging social media more and developing outreach strategies tailored to rural populations where people lack access to the Internet but have cellphones and can receive text messages. It is also in the process of strengthening the coordination of all partners supporting the First Lady’s priorities and efforts.
See more information about the First Lady’s work here:
  - https://aohzim.org/

Possible Focus Areas for Future Meetings:
- Resource Mobilization and Partnerships
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- NTDs
- Informal Settlements
- Mental Health

Participating and Supporting Partners: Columbia University, Nuclear Threat Initiative, Harvard Global Health Institute, Center for Global Development, Voice of America, OAFLAD, One by One: Target COVID-19, UNICEF
Effective Strategy Shifting to Mitigate the Impact of COVID-19

Virtual Meeting

May 26, 2020
16h00-18h00 PM
Eastern Africa Time
Format: Zoom
Annotated Agenda

15h45-16h00: Registration and Log-in
Due to Zoom’s increased security measures, please allow extra time to log in and be admitted to the meeting.

16h00-16h10: COVID-19 in Africa: Unknowns, Predictions, and Challenges Ahead
Opening remarks by Dr. Portia Manangazira, Director Epidemiology and Disease Control, Zimbabwe’s Ministry of Health and Child Welfare, on the status of COVID-19 in Africa by May 26, intersections between COVID-19 and pre-existing vulnerabilities, and challenges ahead.

16h10-16h25: COVID-19’s Impact on Women and Girls
Presentation by Patty Alleman, Senior Advisor on Gender Equality, UNICEF, on the need for gender-sensitive response and recovery plans, and how to respond effectively to increasing rates of sexual and gender-based violence during COVID-19.

16h25-17h40: Workshop on Strategy Shifting & Updates from First Ladies’ Offices
In this workshop, Dr. Gery Ryan, Professor, Health Systems Science, Kaiser Permanente Bernard J. Tyson School of Medicine, and Warren Lancaster, Senior Vice President, Programs, the END Fund, will facilitate a conversation on how to integrate immediate response efforts into First Ladies’ long-term frameworks and strategic goals.

17h40-17h45: Closing Remarks
Closing remarks by Cora Neumann, Founder, Global First Ladies Alliance and Joy Ruwodo, Director, Public Affairs, Africa Region, the END Fund
NTD Programs: Predictions and Strategy Shifting - Comments by the END Fund

Mass Drug Administration Campaigns will have to be organized differently to account for the risks posed by COVID-19, the need for physical distancing, and school closures.

- Many PCT Mass Drug Administration Campaigns rely on a platform of fixed point’ distribution where people congregate to receive the medicine. Physical distancing orders and an increasing fear among groups for contracting COVID-19 in larger gatherings compromise the safety and effectiveness of this distribution method.
- Mass Drug Administration Campaigns delivered in schools had been halted due to school closures. The campaigns recently resumed in Zimbabwe with new COVID-conscious precautions — door to door, with masks, and incorporating COVID prevention education as part of this NTD treatment program. This is a strong sign of hope and forward momentum after this long pause.
- Organizations will have to continue to establish standardized and comprehensive measures for protection to ensure everyone’s safety, both administrators, community leaders, and recipients.

The current focus on WASH - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene - is positively impacting the process to eliminate and control NTDs, but it is unclear how long this will be a priority and what the consequences will be when the world’s attention shifts.

- It is critical that organizations take necessary steps to maintain the momentum and focus on WASH, including the importance of public and personal safe hygiene habits, such as frequent handwashing. As part of this work, programs aiming to eliminate and control NTDs are looking into how to build upon new handwashing stations and tippy taps that have been put in place since the COVID-19 outbreak.

COVID-19’s impact on other health priorities and the economy is expected to affect available resources, including staff capacity, for NTD programs.

- Many NTD treatment campaigns rely on community drug distributors who are given a stipend to do the work. Due to the pandemic’s negative impact on economies globally, there may be less resources and willingness to finance this work in the months and years to come.
- The need for community-health workers is likely to increase as the pandemic puts additional pressure on already fragile health systems. However, the surge in demand may also create an opportunity to strengthen linkages between informal and formal health systems, such as is the case in the example cited of MDA resumption in Zimbabwe. This is a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Health and Higher Life Foundation which works in collaboration with the END Fund.
ADDENDUM C

List of Participating First Ladies and First Ladies' Offices: 2008 - 2020

- Angola
- Benin
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi
- Cape Verde
- Chad
- Colombia
- Comoros
- Congo Brazzaville
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- El Salvador
- Ethiopia
- Gabon
- Gambia
- Ghana
- Haiti
- Honduras
- Kenya
- Lesotho
- Malawi
- Mali
- Mozambique
- Namibia
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Japan
- Rwanda
- Senegal
- Sierra Leone
- South Sudan
- Queen of Swaziland
- Tanzania
- Uganda
- United Kingdom
- United States
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe
Resources
May 26, 2020

Personal Protective Equipment & Medical Supplies
- PPE: GFLA can connect First Ladies’ Offices to reliable PPE partners, Virus Relief and Step Solutions
- Medical Supplies: Established in 1987, Project C.U.R.E is today the world’s largest distributor of medical donations to developing countries. Recently, Project C.U.R.E received 22,500 new hospital beds. The beds are first come, first served and are available immediately for shipment. The supplies are donations and shipment is paid by recipients.

Respond to Misinformation

Gender-Based Violence
- UN Women has launched a Shadow Pandemic public awareness campaign, focusing on the global increase in domestic violence amid the COVID-19 health crisis urging people to take action. Watch the 60-second public service announcement, narrated by Academy Award-winning actor Kate Winslet.
- For information on how to train first responders to handle disclosure of gender-based violence in a compassionate and non-judgmental way see the United Nations Interagency GBV Pocket Guide (also available on the App Store).
- Impact of COVID-19 on violence against women and girl and service provision: UN Women rapid assessment and findings.

Evaluation
- Pocket tool for managing evaluation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Engage Youth in Disease Response
- The U-Report Information Chatbot is a chatbot where youth can ask questions and receive preprogrammed answers from experts on the matter. To date, the chatbot has facilitated the exchange of lifesaving information for millions of young people across 50 countries.

Recommendations to ensure continued learning
- Center for Global Development: Equity-focused approaches to learning loss during COVID-19
- UNICEF and UNESCO: Report and recommendations on how to monitor education participation
- UNICEF: Early warning systems for children at risk of dropping out of school
- Center for Global Development: Evidence Kit for Policymakers - Planning for School Reopening and Recovery Post COVID-19
First Lady of the Republic of Namibia, Mrs Monica Geingos
Covid-19 Interventions during March – May 2020

Compiled by Dr Veronica Rose Theron, Technical Advisor & Gender Based Violence

1. COVID-19 Interventions
   - FLON visited informal settlements to illustrate handwashing and sanitizing to vulnerable communities and distributed food parcels.
   - FLON did a radio talk on her interventions during COVID-19, the talk was aired on 5 different radio stations.
   - ONE provided lunch and care packs to the specialized police unit - Gender Based Violence Investigation Unit staff (x25), National Institute for Pathology staff, COVID-19 Call centre staff as well as the frontline health care professionals attached to the Robert Mugabe Clinic, dealing directly with public coming for testing and results.
   - ONE in partnership with Co-Feed Namibia established a citizen driven food initiative with a platform for citizens and businesses to provide essential food stuff, cleaning supplies and basic toiletries to needy households and communities, specifically those affected by COVID-19. So far Co-Feed reached over 8000 households and more than 12 community-based organizations in 3 of the 14 regions (Khomas, Erongo and Hardap Regions).
   - ONE in collaboration with UNFPA established a Sexual and Gender Based Violence rapid response task force to coordinate referral and response services to ensure access to critical services for survivors of violence and their families.
   - ONE provided cloth masks made by ONE entrepreneurs that were included into the food parcels to needy households and organizations.
   - Developed education material with Merck Foundation on COVID-19 and distributed it on platforms.

2. Case Management and Statutory Services
   - Crisis intervention and referral of new rape cases and one homicide case, trauma counselling to the children of the mom who was murdered by her husband.
   - Case Conferences with the GBVI Unit staff, Regain trust, management of the Bel Esprit private mental hospital staff.
   - Psycho-social support to a rape victim during a legal abortion procedure and after care, referral to Bel Esprit Hospital for 2-week admission and treatment.

3. Technical and Material Support

3.1 #MeToo Namibia Movement
   - The support to the movement included: Counselling sessions with survivors of sexual assault referred by Slut Shame Walk and MeToo movement.
ADDENDUM F

3.1 #MeToo Namibia Movement
- Telecons with legal practitioners and Police Officers; hospitals and shelter placements; referrals to GBVI unit;
- Reviewed content for social media and radio talks;
- Development of social media cases for court preparation and witness for denial of bail hearing; High profile police officer as the accused.

3.2 Gender based Violence Investigation Unit
- One Economy Foundation through one of our stakeholders provided financial support to the GBVI Unit commander for maintenance and upkeep of the official vehicle.
- Material support (food for special diets for 2 special cases – 13yr old with cerebral palsy; 49-year-old registered nurse who lost her job due to a spinal operation).

3.3 Namibian Correctional Services
- Donated equipment to Female Correctional Facility in Windhoek to erect a playground for children who are staying with their mothers to strengthen families and create an enabling environment when other children come to visit their mothers. Provided care packs to female inmates whose relatives could not provide these much-needed essentials due to lockdown.

4. Statutory Work
- Testified in denial of bail hearings and counselled rape survivors.
- Mediation in custody and guardianship disputes;
  - Initial assessment of rape cases and referrals for statement taking and medical examinations
  - Psycho Social Support to homeless, sex workers, shelters, children’s homes, HIV groups, survivors of SGBV, sport groups, youth groups, church groups.

5. Thought Leadership
- The GBV pillar leader provided a vital information sharing session through the major radio stations and print media on the increase of SGBV during the lockdown.
- Provided a critical lens on child sexual abuse and the receipt of compensation by perpetrators on NBC News TV.
- Participated on the Facebook live discussions of Touch FM and the Namibian SUN – topics relayed to violence against children, sexual violence and domestic Violence
- Facilitated information sharing on various social media platforms educating and informing the public where to access psycho-social support and sharing tips on coping mechanisms on COVID-19; misperception re sexual violence; sex offenders and preferential predators; consent; emergency numbers etc.