



Quality Assurance in COVID-19 Crisis Response: Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls

How does the COVID 19 crisis impact on Gender Equality?

The widespread impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are further exacerbated for women and girls. It is crucial to pay attention to the gender dimensions of this pandemic in order to avoid setbacks on the advances towards gender equality.

Risk of infection. Although men, the elderly and persons with compromised immune systems seem to be at a greater risk for fatality from COVID-19, women and girls face a particular risk of infection due to the types of work they do. For example, women make up over 70% of the global health and social workforces which increase the likelihood of contracting COVID-19.

Economic downturns particularly affect women and girls. Many are employed in the sectors hardest hit by the pandemic—including retail, tourism, and smallholder farming—as well as in the informal economy and as migrant workers.

Women's economic opportunities are diminished specifically because of disproportionate unpaid care burdens which are increasing as livelihood opportunities are decreasing.

Girls' education is at higher risk due to school closures. Girls are disproportionately affected by a lack of access to learning materials, risk of drop-out and increased educational inequality that can lead to reduced economic opportunities at later stages in life. They are also under an increased burden of domestic workload and suffer a higher risk of nutritional deficiencies due to lack of school meals as well as domestic violence and higher chances of adolescent pregnancies.

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights are affected: In countries where health systems have lower capacities, the pandemic is expected to severely impact maternal and new-born healthcare and might consequently increase maternal mortality rates. Access to sexual and reproductive health can be at risk due to COVID-19-related restraints in supply chains of contraceptive supplies, menstrual health and hygiene items, and other SRHR related medicines

Gender-based violence—of all types—is significantly on the rise and putting lives at risk. Women seem to be significantly more exposed to domestic violence while quarantined with their abusers but also men, girls and boys might be affected by increased levels of violence. Financial stress and unemployment further contribute to an increased risk

What measures can we take to ensure adequate consideration of gender into response efforts?

- Raise gender issues in donor coordination groups and in dialogues with partners.
- Ensure that ADA partners track, share, and analyse disaggregated data about reported cases, tested and treated people, morbidity and mortality rates.
- Ensure the use of Gender Analysis (GA) and consultation of gender specialists to identify context specific impact, threats and opportunities GA is crucial to prevent and address negative impacts, to apply a do no harm approach and to better understand gender specific interests and needs.
- Encourage the conduction of regular GBV assessments and the integration of GBV and protection programming in programs/projects, if feasible.
- Consult and promote the [IASC Standards](#) having been developed as an interim guidance including minimum standards for integrating gender equality into preparedness and response planning processes to be able to ask the right questions.
- Ensure for the adequate consideration of gender minimum standards to be funding criteria. These minimum standards can be found in ADA's policy on [Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls \(page 12\)](#).
- Request from partners to share their standards and procedures to prevent/end Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment.
- Promote the participation of women in decision-making processes on COVID 19 response. If more women are at the table, matched by greater representation of other groups, policy makers and health leaders can be better equipped for a more impactful response

Some key resources:

[How COVID-19 impacts women and girls](#)

[UNDP: COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker](#)

[UN Women Response to COVID-19 Crisis](#)

[IASC Interim Guidance GENDER ALERT FOR COVID-19 OUTBREAK: March 2020](#)

[World Bank Gender Dimensions of the Covid 19 pandemic](#)

[CARE International: Gender Implications of COVID 19 Outbreaks in Development and Humanitarian Settings](#)

[CARE International: Gender Analysen zu COVID \(nach Regionen und Ländern\)](#)

OECD 2020, Women at the core of the fight against COVID-19crisis

IAWG on Reproductive Health in Crisis: Programmatic Guidance for Sexual and Reproductive Health in Humanitarian and Fragile Settings During COVID 19 Pandemic

UNESCO 2020, Education: From disruption to recovery.

JICA: Guidance Note. Establishing Gender-Responsive Approaches to COVID-19 Response and Recovery