

# THE GLOBAL FINANCING FACILITY **EMERGING FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS ON COVID-19**

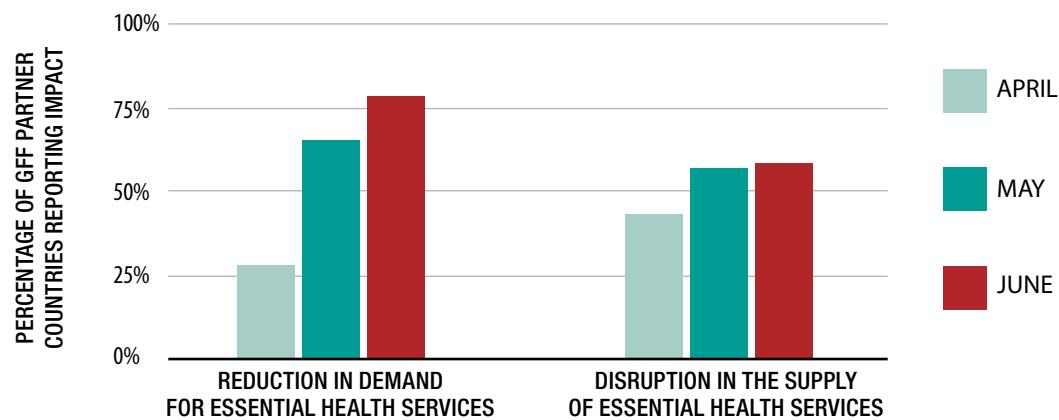


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## LOW- AND LOWER-MIDDLE INCOME COUNTRIES ARE INCREASINGLY REPORTING SIGNIFICANT DISRUPTIONS TO ESSENTIAL LIFE-SAVING HEALTH SERVICES.

Beginning in late March/early April 2020, the Global Financing Facility (GFF) began conducting monthly, rapid qualitative feedback surveys of its local staff based in its 36 partner countries to take stock of the evolving impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on essential health and nutrition services for women, children and adolescents.

**These rapid pulse surveys point to a steady progression in disruption of the supply of, and demand for, essential primary health and nutrition services** – key drivers in recent global reductions in maternal and child mortality, such as family planning, ante- and post-natal care, attended births, child vaccinations and other lifesaving care.



For example, in Liberia fears of contracting COVID-19 are preventing parents from taking their children to healthcare facilities. In Ghana, some pregnant and lactating mothers have elected to postpone antenatal services and routine immunizations for fear of contracting the virus. In Bangladesh, some hospitals are now only seeing COVID-19 patients and referring patients seeking other care to other hospitals.

- The pulse surveys are consistent with reports the GFF is receiving from partner governments on service delivery impact. Some examples:



**IN LIBERIA,**  
between January and April 2020 there was a nearly 40% drop in outpatient visits per capita.



**IN SIERRA LEONE,**  
the number of children under 5 weighed to monitor and provide counseling on malnutrition dropped by 40% in March 2020 from the prior year.



**IN GUINEA,**  
the government is reporting a 31% reduction in visits to health facilities in the capital city of Conakry.



**IN MOZAMBIQUE,**  
in the capital city of Maputo, child vaccination rates dropped by 21% in April, while in Nampula province, ante-natal visits dropped by 24%.

## ESSENTIAL SERVICES ARE FURTHER AFFECTED BY SUPPLY CHAIN DISRUPTIONS AND CHALLENGES FACED BY SERVICE PROVIDERS TO ACCESS FINANCE. THIS IS ALREADY RESULTING IN LOW-STOCKED CLINICS, LOW MEDICINE SUPPLIES AND INADEQUATE PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT.

- The GFF recently partnered with the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition to [develop a tool for policymakers](#) to understand how COVID-19 and mitigation measures are likely to affect access to family planning. Using this tool, the GFF can estimate that, without mitigation, **as many as 26 million women could lose access to contraception in the 36 GFF countries, leading to nearly 8 million unintended pregnancies.**

## THE GFF IS RESPONDING TO HELP ITS PARTNER COUNTRIES PROTECT AND PROMOTE ESSENTIAL HEALTH SERVICES AS THEY FIGHT THE PANDEMIC – AND TO AVERT A SECONDARY HEALTH CRISIS FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN THE WORLD'S POOREST AND MOST VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES.

- Building on our existing country partnerships, the GFF is helping ensure that safe and equitable delivery of essential health and nutrition services for women and children is a central part of COVID-19 response and recovery efforts, while also supporting country efforts to build more resilient health systems.
- The GFF took early steps to rally [the support of global health and development leaders and urge](#) immediate steps to protect essential services.
- Drawing on its robust country portfolio, technical expertise, and strong global and in-country partner networks, the GFF is providing support to partner countries in three ways:



**HELPING COUNTRIES PROTECT, PRIORITIZE AND PLAN FOR CONTINUATION OF ESSENTIAL HEALTH SERVICES** for women and children. This includes sharing real-time information and good practices across countries.



**STRENGTHENING FRONTLINE SERVICE DELIVERY** as part of World Bank projects and investments and by providing advice and flexible financing to countries to adapt their service delivery models, secure essential commodities, and protect their frontline health workers.



**ADDRESSING CONSTRAINTS IN DEMAND FOR SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND OTHER ESSENTIAL HEALTH SERVICES.** The pandemic is dampening demand for routine health care in the poorest and most vulnerable communities, whether because people fear getting infected in health facilities, because of lockdowns, or because they can't afford to pay.

## MORE AND BETTER INVESTMENTS TO BUILD RESILIENT HEALTH SYSTEMS ARE NECESSARY TO SAVE LIVES NOW, PREVENT REVERSALS IN RECENT PROGRESS, AND ENSURE THAT EVERYONE, EVERYWHERE CAN ACCESS SAFE, QUALITY AND AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE.

- As COVID-19 cases continue to climb around the world, along with the potential risk of a secondary health crisis, a weak health system in any country – which lacks the capacity to stop this pandemic and the next one – poses a health and economic risk to all countries.
- More resilient and equitable health systems are critical for ending preventable deaths of women, children and adolescents – the core mission of the GFF – and are also the backbone for more effective pandemic preparedness, response and recovery.
- The GFF is supporting its partner countries to achieve better health outcomes for women, children and adolescents by prioritizing investments in proven, high-impact health interventions together with targeted efforts to strengthen health systems, improve primary health care and promote sustainable domestic financing.