



Executive Summary

Eleven of the twelve BMGF FP grantees in the DRC responded to an FP CAPE survey to track the impact of COVID-19 on their activities, as of May 12, 2020. Research projects that can be completed remotely are continuing with minimal interruption. Grantees have transitioned as many events as possible to online platforms, which has allowed many activities to continue but has also created adaptive challenges. However, there have been some event cancellations and delays.

Grantees are rising to the challenge of the pandemic by leveraging their existing skills and activities to support family planning (FP) work in the COVID-19 context. Examples include providing training (via online platforms) and personal protective equipment so healthcare workers can provide FP services safely, working with government health committees on communication guidelines for COVID-19 preparedness for maternal, newborn, child, and sexual and reproductive health (including FP), and incorporating COVID-19 messaging in FP services and messaging. While FP service provision continues, grantees noted changes such as decreased personnel at health facilities, restricted movements of FP community-based distribution (CBD) workers, and reduced follow-up visits for FP.

DRC's COVID-19 status

- ▶ # of positive cases: 1731
- ▶ # of deaths: 61 (all in Kinshasa)
- ▶ # of provinces affected: 7/26
- ▶ March 19: Closure of schools and universities and suspension of religious services until further notice
- ▶ Prohibition of gatherings of more than 20 people

Updates are provided for the following categories:

Improved enabling environment (advocacy and capacity building)

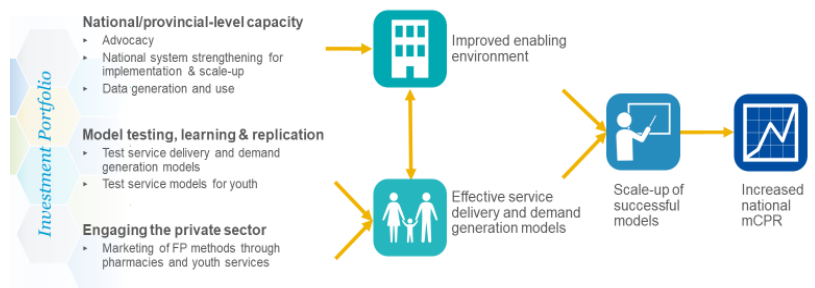
Improved enabling environment (data generation and use)

Effective service delivery models

Effective demand generation models

Theory of Change: BMGF DRC investment portfolio

FP CAPE's research questions are based on a Theory of Change which defines and monitors causal linkages, starting with portfolio investments and moving to increased national mCPR.



Updates by TOC area

Improved Enabling Environment (Advocacy and Capacity Building)

Stopped activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Several of AFP's activities have been put on hold, including: support for the government release of 80% of allocated funds for the purchase of contraceptives, the financing of FP activities by mining companies, press organizations providing free time slots for FP messaging, media reporting on government financing for FP, organization of the annual CTMP provincial meeting, the final evaluation of the 2014-2020 national FP strategic plan, and support for the development of the next FP strategic plan 2021-2025.
Continuing activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AFP is continuing to track commitments made by government at the 4th National conference on the repositioning of family planning, advocating for the government to carry out measures from the revised reproductive health law, supporting drafting of policy documents on financial support for FP by the government and the private sector, and for radio stations to provide free air time for FP messaging in Lualaba province. - VillageReach's activities and development of documents and monitoring materials continue as normal.
Adaptations and new activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VillageReach is supporting the new government committee, the COVID-19 Multisectoral Committee (CMR), to set up online platforms to train health providers on COVID-19 and to combat rumors about COVID-19. - AFP is supporting PNSR and CTMP initiatives on the communication of community risk engagement for sexual and reproductive health, maternal and neonatal health, and family planning during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All grantees cited difficulties adapting to using internet platforms instead of holding in person meetings and teleworking. These adaptations have led to delays in work progress.

Improved Enabling Environment (Data Collection and Use)

Stopped activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The FP CAPE Annual meeting of FP partners scheduled March 9-10 was postponed. - The March FP2020 meeting in Nairobi was canceled. - The Track20 Country Consensus Workshop has been postponed.
Continuing activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Track20 and GEAS continue to process and analyze routine data. - Track20 continues to provide feedback on routine FP data to the provinces and health facilities. - Tulane and ExpandNet continued work on articles for publication in Global Health Policy and Planning and BMC Women's Health.
Adaptations and new activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - With the cancelation of the FP2020 meeting in Nairobi, Track20 organized a series of webinar trainings on new data tools and approaches for estimating FP2020 base indicators. - Track20 is implementing a multi-country survey on the impact of COVID-19 on FP activities. - GEAS is looking at how to measure very young adolescents' level of knowledge and perceptions on COVID-19 and the impact of COVID-19 on their health for future rounds of data collection. - GEAS is using WhatsApp to clarify data with data collectors in the field.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All grantees cited difficulties adapting to using internet platforms instead of holding in person meetings and teleworking. - GEAS cited additional challenges in tracking down missing youth in round 3 of the research.

Effective Service Delivery Models

Stopped activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AcQual III, DKT, Jhpiego, EngenderHealth, and Momentum have all postponed or canceled most in person trainings and meetings with the government, health providers at <i>formation sanitaire</i> (FOSA), as well as site supervisions at the provincial and health zone levels. - AcQual III canceled Lelo PF campaigns in the community. - Momentum has delayed their final quantitative and qualitative surveys of the project, which could affect the quality of the data. - Momentum has delayed the development of an institutionalization plan. - EngenderHealth postponed quality assurance activities at sites for February and March. - EngenderHealth has stopped mobile FP clinics in March for the hardest-to-reach provinces.
Continuing activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AcQual III, EngenderHealth, and Jhpiego continue to provide support for routine health services at health facilities (FOSA), including providing facilities and schools with contraceptives (albeit with some disruptions), essential medicines (Jhpiego), and other FP consumables supplies. - AcQual III, EngenderHealth, and Jhpiego continue to collect and analyze routine FP data, and provide support for door-to-door routine services (through CBDs), with the exception of a few health zones (notably Gombe in Kinshasa). - Jhpiego provided training on post-abortion care in four hospitals and continued its analysis of project endline data. - DKT's trainings and sales of socially marketed products continue but have been adapted based on pandemic regulations.
Adaptations and new activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grantees are using online services (i.e., WhatsApp, Zoom and Skype) to carry out their activities. - EngenderHealth is using WhatsApp and phone calls for monitoring and data collection. - Jhpiego is mentoring providers through phone calls, while also decreasing their site visits. <p>COVID-19 specific adaptations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Momentum is adapting their data collection methods to minimize risk of exposure to COVID-19. - EngenderHealth, DKT, and AcQual III are adapting their FP messaging to incorporate information about COVID-19. - Grantees that work with clinics, including DKT, EngenderHealth, Jhpiego and AcQual III, are providing masks and cleaning products to providers and CBDs, as well as helping to create spaces for hand washing. - Grantees are also providing support to the government in the implementation of the directives related to sexual and reproductive health, maternal and neonatal health, and family planning, in the COVID-19 context.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AcQual III's CBDs mobility has been impacted although most door-to-door services have continued, with the exception of a few health zones. - AcQual III has experienced disruptions in contraceptive supply to their implementing partners (e.g. SANRU, ABEF-ND and FARDC) and to provincial schools. - Jhpiego has seen a decrease in scheduled follow-up appointments and decreased number of health providers at facilities. - Monitoring field activities is generally more difficult for grantees due to decreased site supervision visits. - Grantees have seen increases in prices and scarcity of personal protective equipment including masks.

Effective Demand Generation Models

Stopped activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AcQual III canceled Lelo PF campaigns in the community. - DKT and Bien Grandir have postponed or canceled most in person trainings and meetings for youth ambassadors and for school and youth clubs. - Bien Grandir cancelled all adolescent club activities including weekly discussions on SRH of adolescents, visits to health facilities, and support for the Course on Life Education curriculum in schools.
Continuing activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bien Grandir is advocating to the ministries of health and education for the institutionalization of the Bien Grandir approach. - Other demand generation activities are continuing but have moved to other platforms (WhatsApp, radio) while reporting and staff meetings continue virtually. - DKT continues with education activities adapted to COVID-19 regulations.
Adaptations and new activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bien Grandir's meetings with interviewers for data cleaning are now virtual (WhatsApp groups). - Bien Grandir has been supporting the Ministry of Education in recording and broadcasting programs on Life Education. - In lieu of mass information sessions for street children, EngenderHealth/REEJER is looking to educate youth through radio messaging.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grantees are trying to integrate social distancing and mass gathering regulations, which has been difficult particularly with AcQual III's Lelo PF and Bien Grandir's club meetings. - Additional efforts are needed to prove to political administrative units that the Bien Grandir Project activities are essential during the pandemic. - Bien Grandir has seen increased vulnerability of adolescents to gender and sexual violence towards them during the quarantine period. - Developing new communication strategies on social norms for radio and WhatsApp groups has been a challenge for Bien Grandir.

This is the first of a series of planned updates on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the BGMF family planning portfolio in Nigeria. Briefs will be distributed approximately once a month depending on the availability and volume of new information. We would like to thank all the BMGF FP grantees for their rapid and thoughtful responses to the FP CAPE survey.