

UNICEF Recommended Actions for Responding to Adolescents Priorities During the COVID-19 Crisis

The purpose of this document is to provide country offices with a tool/checklist that they can use when assessing, planning and implementing their interventions that address adolescent priorities and needs in the COVID-19 crisis. This document aligns with and follows [the PD Guidance Note on Programming Approaches and Priorities to COVID-19](#)'s structure, objectives and recommended actions. It consolidates UNICEF's adolescent-specific responses to the COVID-19 crisis from across the guidance that was developed by sectors. While this document reflects the recommended actions by sectors, it also benefited from additional contextualization to the adolescent age group and their specific challenges, priorities and needs.

This document will remain a living document to reflect the latest available guidance. We recommend to also consult the inter-agency Guidance developed by the [Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action on COVID-19](#) and the [EMOPS COVID-19 Info Platform](#). Please send any comments, input and additional resources that you may have to this document to [ADAP-HQ](#).

Priority: Controlling the spread and mortality of COVID-19

Strengthening risk communication and community engagement (RCCE)

OBJECTIVES:

1. Ensure that adolescents receive essential information and messages to prevent and respond to COVID-19.
2. Support adolescents and youth to participate in risk communication and community engagement, while prioritizing and ensuring their safety (including their participation in awareness and information sharing, combating misinformation, addressing stigma, strengthening social cohesion,

RESPONSE:

Engage [adolescents and youth in the COVID-19 response](#), including migrant, refugee and displaced adolescents; [build the capacity](#) of adolescents and youth as peer educators within their gender peer groups, families, care services, and communities through online and offline platforms; and partner with adolescent and youth organizations, networks, influencers and volunteer programmes to:

- Understand what adolescents' (and communities) needs are, and how they can inform, co-design and support action, preparedness and response; and work with adolescent's caregivers to best support them and the adolescents in their care;
 - Conduct a rapid vulnerability assessment, gender and intersectional analysis to understand how gender roles may change or be exacerbated in the crisis and what programme response implications this might have, including how best to amplify the needs, voices and solutions of vulnerable and marginalized adolescents (girls, those with disabilities, refugees, etc.), e.g. through [U-Report](#).
- Design and provide accurate, accessible, gender and age-appropriate information in a language adolescent can easily understand on 1) the risks of the virus, 2) how they can protect themselves, their families and communities and 3) how they can take safe and meaningful action, e.g. by designing and launching campaigns on reducing [stigma](#), promoting handwashing, combatting misinformation

<p>addressing MHPSS, accessing available protection services and monitoring).</p>	<p>and supporting social cohesion (online and offline) targeted to in-house, schools, health facilities and public spaces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect with appropriate mass, local, and digital communication channels and platforms that are used by adolescents (radio, TV, social media, U-Report, Internet of Good Things, etc.) to mobilize them to help and provide space for adolescents to participate in the COVID-19 response. In addition, solicit their support in integrating messages about available COVID-19 information and protection services and how adolescents can access them into their platforms. • Support integration of community engagement (together with national and local authorities and Risk Communication and Community Engagement partners) in the efforts to track and address misinformation and mitigate and address social tensions, especially in fragile and conflict-affected settings; • Support digital literacy initiatives that build the skills and capacity of adolescents to recognize fake information/news and enable them to spread correct information on Covid-19; • Provide promotive and preventive mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) communication and engagement opportunities for adolescent to strengthen their own mental health and help them support peers and their broader community; including raising community awareness on key issues; <p>IMPORTANT: Keep in mind the need to design and tailor interventions and messaging according to the needs of the target population (gender, age, culture, geographical location, school/workplace, migration/displacement status, language, etc.) while ensuring accessibility and engagement of adolescents who may be more marginalized (girls, refugees, migrants, those with disabilities, living in conflict-affected and fragile settings). Ensure that COVID-19 RCCE with, for and by adolescents protect those at heightened risk of violence, incl. GBV, by adopting a conflict and gender-sensitive lens that protects against unequal gender norms and stereotypes in communications and outreach.</p>
<p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADAP: Adolescent and Youth COVID-19 knowledge hub; Practical Tips on Engaging Adolescents and Youth in the COVID-19 Response • C4D: RCCE – COVID-19 outbreak response and preparedness: brief guide for Regional & Country Offices; COVID-19: How to include marginalized and vulnerable people in RCCE; Key tips and discussion points for community engagement for volunteers, community workers and networks; A guide to preventing and addressing social stigma • CERP: UNICEF Conflict Sensitivity & Peacebuilding Guidance • CP/GBV: UNICEF GBViE Core Community Awareness Messages: COVID-19 Response • Disability: Disability inclusive COVID-19 response knowledge hub • DOC: DOC Toolkit to spread awareness and take action; Voices of Youth • External: COVID-19 guidance based on humanitarian standards (SPHERE) 	

- Gender: [UNICEF Tip Sheet: Consulting with Women and Girls](#); [Five Actions for Gender Equality in the Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) Response: Technical Note](#)
- Innovation Office: [U-Report webpage](#); [U-Report Information Chatbot](#); [U-Report COVID-19 article](#); [Internet of Good Things COVID-19 page](#)
- Advocacy: [UNICEF COVID-19 Global Advocacy Framework](#)
- Migration: [Quick Tips on COVID-19 and Migrant, Refugee and Internally Displaced Children \(Children on the Move\)](#)
- WASH: [UNICEF Hygiene Programing Guidance Note: Understanding Hygiene promotion in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak](#)

Provision and delivery of essential health and WASH supplies for prevention and treatment of COVID-19

OBJECTIVE:

Ensure adolescents can access critical medical and WASH supplies to promote the health of adolescents and improve infection prevention control

RESPONSE:

- Support national efforts to respond to and prepare for COVID-19 by providing and ensuring access to critical health and WASH supplies for adolescents, including migrants and displaced persons, in the spheres where they are (in-house, informal/camp settings, schools, health facilities, community centers, workplaces, etc.);
- Ensure that adolescents have access to COVID-19 testing and preventive supplies and strengthen infection prevention control in healthcare facilities to protect users from transmission (especially important to adolescents as they may be asymptomatic carriers of the virus);
- Consider sourcing supplies (personal protective equipment, disinfectants, and essential medical and WASH supplies) locally and engaging with partners and youth networks to identify manufacturing and distribution opportunities that ensure employability for economically vulnerable adolescents/youth;
- Train partners, youth networks, health workers and teachers in using and sourcing quality supplies;
- In conflict-affected and fragile settings, use a conflict sensitivity lens to ensure that sourcing and distribution of supplies do not exacerbate conflict dynamics, mistrust and social tensions;
- Advocate for and work with Governments and private sector companies to reduce costs of or provide free essential supplies as well as MHPSS products and services with the goal to ensure accessibility and affordability for all adolescents.

IMPORTANT: Engage [adolescents and youth in the COVID-19 response](#) for WASH, through online and offline platforms, using the guidance under the RCCE pillar above, and ensure that delivery of WASH supplies considers safety and accessibility for all adolescents and youth, including women and girls and those with disabilities.

Resources:

- Supply Division: [Key material on Supply and COVID-19](#)
- WASH: [Water, sanitation, hygiene and waste management for COVID-19](#); [UNICEF WASH Programme contribution to COVID-19 prevention and response](#); [UNICEF Hygiene Programing Guidance Note: Understanding Hygiene promotion in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak](#);

[WASH and Infection Prevention and Control Measures in Schools](#); [WASH and Infection Prevention and Control in Health Care Facilities](#); [WASH and Infection Prevention and Control \(IPC\) Measures in Households and Public spaces](#);

- Migration: [Knowledge Hub: COVID-19 and Children on the Move](#)
- External: [COVID-19 guidance based on humanitarian standards \(SPHERE\)](#)
- Child Protection: [GBV Pocket Guide for supporting GBV survivors \(non-protection specialists\)](#)
- Gender: [Five Actions for Gender Equality in the Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) Response: Technical Note](#)

Priority: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on adolescents

Supporting continued access to essential health care and WASH services for adolescents

OBJECTIVES:

Ensure that adolescents have access to health, nutrition and WASH services and information that address their needs and priorities.

RESPONSE:

- Consider conducting a rapid vulnerability assessment, gender and intersectional analysis to understand if/how adolescent girls and other at-risk groups are being reached and supported with accurate information and services, and if/how their healthcare and WASH needs are being addressed;
- Ensure access to COVID-19 testing and services as well as general adolescent (incl. maternal and child) health services, nutrition and other essential services such as WASH and MHH. Consider alternative modalities of service delivery (i.e. telemedicine, etc.);
- Ensure that adolescents adopt good and consistently applied WASH (incl. [hygiene](#) and waste management) practices in communities, [homes](#), [schools](#), marketplaces, [health care facilities](#), [camps](#) and urban areas to help prevent human-to-human transmission of the COVID-19 virus and to keep the population healthy;
- Strengthen availability and access to MHPSS preventive, promotive and treatment services and information for adolescents and their families/caregivers. Consider alternative modalities of service delivery (i.e. telemedicine, etc.) and monitoring the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and response efforts on adolescents' mental health;
- Identify and address barriers in law or practice that prevent safe access to health, WASH and/or MHPSS services for migrant and displaced children, to ensure that they are not denied access to care and penalized for accessing services – unaccompanied adolescents may be particularly affected by these barriers;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure adolescents who report incidents of sexual violence have access to clinical of management of rape (CMR) services from specialists with CMR capacity; • Train frontline workers providing health and WASH services on how to handle disclosure of violence, including GBV, against adolescents and how to safely link survivors with specialists for appropriate care; • Support and build capacity of community-based partners/networks and consolidate their role in relation to contributing to continuation of essential health and WASH services for adolescents such as nutrition, SRHR including CMR, HIV treatment, MHPSS, MNHC, MHH, etc.; • Ensure continuation of essential vaccine management and HIV treatment continuity for adolescents; <p>IMPORTANT: Adopt a conflict and gender sensitive approach to social service delivery and continuity of services to adolescents, mothers and newborns to minimize negative impacts on social tensions, gender and conflict dynamics and to maximize positive impacts on social cohesion.</p>
<p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health: UNICEF's health response to COVID-19; Rapid guidance on direct and indirect support to the CoVid-19 pandemic • MHPSS: Addressing Mental Health and Psychosocial Aspects of COVID-19 Outbreak (developed by the IASC's Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support); How teenagers can protect their mental health during coronavirus (COVID-19); MHPSS, GBV and child protection knowledge hub • Migration: Knowledge Hub: COVID-19 and Children on the Move • External: COVID-19 guidance based on humanitarian standards (SPHERE); UNAIDS publication on what people living with HIV need to know about HIV and COVID-19 • Gender: Five Actions for Gender Equality in the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Response: Technical Note • WASH: Water, sanitation, hygiene and waste management for COVID-19; UNICEF WASH Programme contribution to COVID-19 prevention and response; UNICEF Hygiene Programing Guidance Note: Understanding Hygiene promotion in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak; WASH and Infection Prevention and Control Measures in Schools; WASH and Infection Prevention and Control in Health Care Facilities; WASH and Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Measures in Households and Public spaces; Brief: COVID-19 and menstrual health and hygiene [link forthcoming] 	
<p>Supporting access to continuous education, child protection and social protection services</p>	
<p>EDUCATION</p>	

<p>OBJECTIVES:</p> <p>Ensure that adolescents have access to continued learning - including migrant, refugee, displaced and those with disabilities - and make schools safe, healthy, and inclusive environments.</p>	<p>RESPONSE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support continuity of learning and provide access to remote and alternative learning programs, including developing and promoting free and accessible digital/none-digital tools (educational TV, radio, online content, internet-based learning, hard-copy booklets, etc.); • Support governments with crisis response and contingency planning to ensure the continuity of learning opportunities for adolescents, including education sector risk assessments, contingency and response plans; being prepared for both school closures and openings by focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ working with governments, private sector and adolescents on addressing the digital and connectivity divide (lack of access or having a limited number of devices available to adolescents); ○ ensuring that learning opportunities encompass minority languages and is accessible to vulnerable adolescents (disabilities, migrant, refugees and displaced children, etc.); ○ covering the various aspects of learning (e.g. socio-emotional learning) across age groups and genders, including involving adolescents in peer-learning initiatives; ○ building strong monitoring systems that examine both access and quality; ○ providing psycho-social support for adolescents and the professionals who are supporting their learning; ○ developing policies and guidance to prevent school dropouts of adolescents who were near final exams and graduation, and to re-enroll those adolescents who did drop out during the school closures; • Engage adolescents in the planning and implementation of school re-openings and making the schools safe environments. For example, support adolescent school committees to advocate to local authorities for adequate facilities and procedures needed to make the school environments safe from transmission of COVID-19 e.g. WASH facilities, adequate spacing of students, disinfectants available for the home-school-home transition, etc.; • Advocate with the Ministry of Education to invest in MHPSS capacity in schools as both teachers and students returning to the system will have to cope with the anxiety and trauma endured due to the crisis and stressors of returning; • Consider conducting a rapid vulnerability, gender and intersectional analysis to identify and mitigate any negative impacts on access, learning and engagement that might occur; • Implement 'safe school' operations, including providing essential hygiene supplies and information on handwashing and other hygiene measures, and use key resources, including lists of open educational resources and special offers by online learning providers, such as the Age of Learning, that can help students affected by school closures continue learning where there is internet access and where there is not. All tools are curated and continuously updated in the Education Toolkit;
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support monitoring and evaluation of interventions by developing and implementing simple monitoring and evaluation systems to track students' learning. Consider involving adolescents and youth in M&E efforts. • Consider using and adapting the Adolescent Kit for Expression and Innovation through online platforms to build key competencies and new skills that help adolescents to cope with the stressful circumstances. • Advocate for conflict sensitive education and learning continuity approaches and consider integrating social cohesion messaging in curricula and learning materials – especially in conflict-affected and fragile settings. <p>IMPORTANT: Know that households can have with limited access to devices/internet this can cause unintended consequences/inequality such as boys' online learning being prioritised over that of girls. Remember that many vulnerable adolescents depend on school lunches and other services being provided at schools and as schools close, we need to support provision of alternative and safe options for hot meals to the most vulnerable adolescents.</p>
	<p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education: Education Toolkit (also includes guidance on contingency planning and preparedness, resource mobilization); Guidance for COVID-19 prevention and control in schools (UNICEF, WHO & IFRC); Rolling Briefing Note for Education and COVID-19 Response (contains links to many country examples and their lessons learnt); The Learning Passport; All Means All: how to support learning for the most vulnerable children in areas of school closures • ADAP: The Adolescent Kit for Expression and Innovation • External: COVID-19 guidance based on humanitarian standards (SPHERE) • Child Protection: GBV Pocket Guide for supporting GBV survivors (For non-GBV or protection specialists) • Gender: Five Actions for Gender Equality in the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Response: Technical Note • Migration: Quick Tips on COVID-19 and Migrant, Refugee and Internally Displaced Children (Children on the Move); Knowledge Hub: COVID-19 and Children on the Move
CHILD PROTECTION (including GBV and MHPSS)	

<p>OBJECTIVES:</p> <p>Ensure protection of adolescent girls and boys in COVID-19 prevention and control measures</p>	<p>RESPONSE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage children adolescents in regularly assessing and addressing their safety needs and how COVID-19 affects them differently to inform CP and GBV programming and advocacy e.g. by conducting vulnerability assessments through e.g. U-Report and other channels to ensure the voices of the most marginalized are included, particularly those with limited access to technology and migrant and displaced adolescents; • Promote information sharing with and by adolescents on available protection and care services (hotlines, referral pathways, GBV/PSEA case management, etc.) and how to access them; • Support appropriate national authorities and partners to enhance availability of essential life-saving services for adolescents experiencing GBV during COVID-19; • Train government, civil society, youth networks and community partners on prevention and response to GBV and how they can support and increase information sharing on (bi-directional) referrals, linking communities and facilities and other support services for adolescents (see GBV Pocket Guide); • Build capacity of teachers, families/caregivers and adolescents on how to provide and protect a safe online learning experience and to stay safe online in general; • Strengthen availability and access to MHPSS preventive, promotive and treatment services for adolescents and their families/caregivers; including training them to recognize signs and symptoms of stress, anxiety, depression and other mental health issues in adolescents, know how to talk about it with the adolescents/peers and where to seek help (incl. online if accessible); • Provide targeted interventions to prevent child-family separation, and support adolescents who are left alone, living in institutions, high-density urban setting, refugee and IDP camps, interim care centres/arrangements and/or foster families, and adolescent-headed households, with the aim to emotionally support adolescents and engage them in appropriate self-care (health, wellbeing and continued learning); • Advocate with Governments to ensure special attention and care for adolescents who are currently detained, ensuring that they have access to preventive methods, medical care, and learning opportunities, and continue advocating to end child immigration detention; • Adapt and develop parenting programs for positive parenting of adolescents and engage parents in the COVID-19 response – preferably through consultative approaches to assess parenting needs and priorities (with both the parents and the adolescents); • Adapt the global U-Report chatbot and poll on VAC and GBV to the regional and country contexts to promote awareness and reporting of cases of violence that can be linked up to the national child helplines.
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	<p>IMPORTANT: Guard against inadvertently reinforcing unequal gender norms and stereotypes that disadvantage one group of adolescents over another. Use language that is understood by all the adolescent in the intended target group for the intervention – taking into consideration the need to use age- and gender-appropriate language. Consider how adolescents’, particularly girls’, needs, voices and solutions can be heard and amplified to redress and prevent GBV and harmful practices in the COVID-19 response.</p>
<p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parenting: Tips for parenting during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and the Inter-Agency COVID-19 Parenting page • CP, GBV and MHPSS: Child protection, GBV and MHPSS knowledge hub; GBV case management for COVID (for GBV specialists and partners); GBV Pocket Guide for supporting GBV survivors (For non-GBV or protection specialists); Identifying & Mitigating Gender-based Violence Risks within the COVID-19 Response • Gender: Five Actions for Gender Equality in the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Response: Technical Note • Migration: Quick Tips on COVID-19 and Migrant, Refugee and Internally Displaced Children (Children on the Move); Knowledge Hub: COVID-19 and Children on the Move • External: COVID-19 guidance based on humanitarian standards (SPHERE); Child Helpline International webpage with a focus on COVID-19; Protection of Children in Alternative Care during COVID-19; Technical Note on COVID-19 and Children Deprived of their Liberty • Innovation Office: U-Report webpage; U-Report Information Chatbot; U-Report COVID-19 article; Internet of Good Things COVID-19 page; ESARO U-Report quiz/poll on VAC and GBV awareness in time of COVID-19 • ADAP: The Adolescent Kit for Expression and Innovation • Guidance on response in urban settings [to be added] • Additional resources on online safety [to be added] 	
<p>SOCIAL PROTECTION</p>	
<p>OBJECTIVES:</p> <p>All adolescents and their families directly impacted by COVID-19 (e.g. illness or death of care-provider) or by collateral effects (e.g. loss of household income) have financial access to goods and</p>	<p>RESPONSE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure access to services to cover basic needs for adolescents and their families/caregivers affected by a loss of income, e.g. through the provision emergency cash transfer, expansion of existing social protection provisions, and adjusting and/or scaling up cash transfer programmes where appropriate; • Advocate for the most vulnerable adolescents and households to be included and targeted in national/regional/global socio-economic impact mitigation and recovery measures adopted in the response to COVID-19, e.g. by supporting Governments to develop one-time cash grants for

<p>services essential for meeting their basic needs.</p>	<p>adolescents, who 1) are the most at-risk of dropping out of school, and 2) lost their livelihood and income generating activity due to COVID-19 lockdowns. Giving special attention to adolescent caregivers;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in rapid data collection, analysis and development of an evidence base to measure the outbreak's impact on adolescents and their families/caregivers and enable adaptive programming. Consider engaging adolescents in the data collection and monitoring processes; • Include and strengthen accountability to affected populations in COVID-19 preparedness and response by ensuring that they receive relevant and timely information, participate in decisions that affect their lives, and have access to trusted feedback mechanisms; • Consider conducting a rapid vulnerability, gender and intersectional analysis to understand how gender roles may change or be exacerbated in this crisis and the implications on programme responses - particularly in regard to preventing reinforcing unequal gender roles and stereotypes and overlooking vulnerable adolescents, particularly girls. <p>IMPORTANT: In fragile and conflict-affected settings, understand how social protection measures can have potential positive and negative impacts on conflict dynamics. Be conscious of the potential need to include an assessment of declines and stopped remittances to adolescents and their households (that they receive from family abroad).</p>
<p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid guidance for UNICEF Country Offices – including public financial management approaches as a systems' strengthening component of government responses to COVID-19 • UNICEF Guidance on Accountability to Affected Population in COVID-19 Response • Gender: Five Actions for Gender Equality in the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Response: Technical Note • Migration: Quick Tips on COVID-19 and Migrant, Refugee and Internally Displaced Children (Children on the Move); Knowledge Hub: COVID-19 and Children on the Move • External: COVID-19 guidance based on humanitarian standards (SPHERE) 	