

R4S

Research for  
Scalable Solutions

# SERVING SARA DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:

## Lessons Learned in Family Planning Adaptations

May 2021

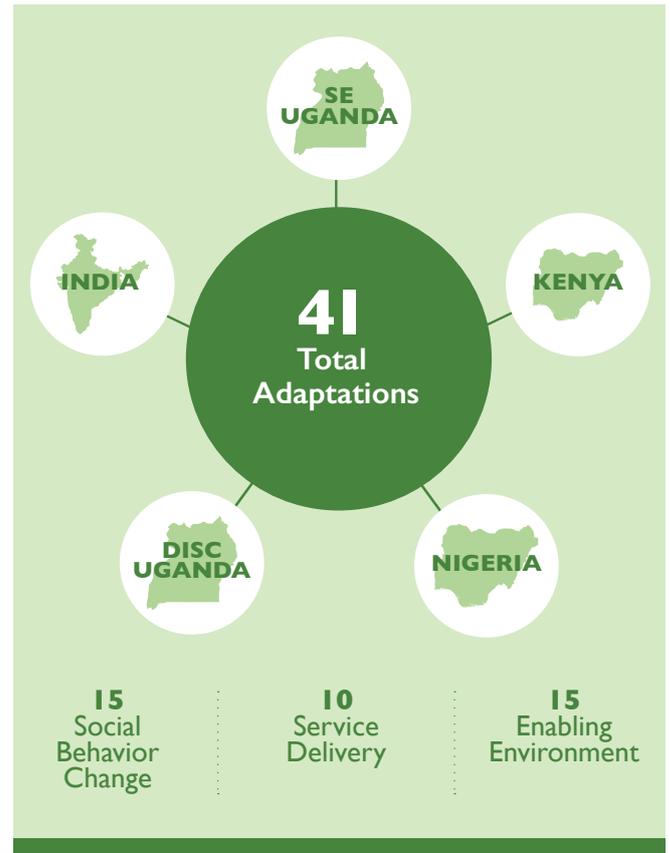


## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As COVID-19 spread around the world, PSI rapidly adapted implementation approaches to maintain programs and ensure the continuity of services while keeping our clients, communities and staff safe. To document and share lessons learned with the implementation community, from May to November 2020, Research for Scalable Solutions (R4S) had supported the systematic documentation of program adaptations implemented within five of PSI's family planning (FP) programs in Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda and India. This series of briefs highlights the impact of PSI's adaptations across High Impact Practice in FP areas, with some local variations, including: social behavior change, service delivery, and enabling environment, for safely maintaining continuity of FP programs during the pandemic.

This adaptation tracking included different types of FP programs in an effort to capture the diversity of PSI's COVID-19 response. The five projects were selected based on their unique FP target populations, project life stages, and implementation approaches to capture the breadth of PSI's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. To better understand how our COVID-19 response impacted FP programs that aim to reach underserved populations, R4S supported the monitoring of Adolescents 360 (A360) in Nigeria and Delivering Equitable and Sustainable Increases in FP (DESIP) in Kenya. To document how the adaptations affected our FP private sector engagements, we tracked our Social Enterprise work in India and Uganda. Lastly, we monitored the Delivering Innovations in Self-Care (DISC) project in Uganda to capture how newly implemented FP programs have shifted their activities and to document how self-care has evolved as a result of the pandemic.

Across the five programs, we have seen how digital interventions have been critical throughout the pandemic for maintaining (or even increasing) demand for FP, ensuring quality FP services remain available and accessible, and facilitating crucial engagements with both public and private sector actors.



Based on the efficiency and potential increase in client reach, the brief series also highlights adaptations that will be integrated into routine FP programs beyond COVID-19. As the pandemic evolves and continues to impact our FP programs, each FP program team will remain engaged in an ongoing cycle of learning and adapting. These learnings will influence the way we implement our programs after the COVID-19 pandemic, and also how we respond during future crises.

With the goal of maintaining quality and resilient FP programs, we hope these briefs will serve as a starting point for COVID-19 response peer-to-peer learning within and beyond PSI.

**DR. MILLY KAGGWA**  
Senior Clinical Advisor—SRH COVID-19  
Response Lead

**DR. EVA LATHROP**  
Global Medical Director

**R4S** Research for Scalable Solutions

## METHODOLOGY

From May–November 2020, COVID-19 FP service delivery challenges and the resulting programmatic adaptations were captured qualitatively using a structured data collection tool. These narrative descriptions were supplemented by key process and outcome indicators routinely collected by the programs and selected by the project teams to illustrate the implementation and impact of the adaptations. Changes in the policy environment and epidemic context for each project country were also documented throughout the data collection period. Data were collected monthly through an Excel tracking sheet populated by program staff. Data validation was completed through monthly calls with the program team. Adaptations were classified across programs largely according to the FP High Impact Practice Areas (service delivery, demand creation and enabling environment), however these categories may vary across briefs due to local adaptations.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A heartfelt thank you to program staff for their enthusiasm and dedication to the 6 months of data collection amidst countless COVID-19 operational challenges. This brief series could not have been executed without their determination and resilience.

### Adolescents360 (A360):

Joy Ede (Society for Family Health in Nigeria),  
Fifi Oluwatoyin Ogbondeminu (Society for Family Health in Nigeria), Judy Mwangi, Allison Walker-Elders, James Brown and Alexis Coppola

### Delivering Equitable and Sustainable Increases in FP (DESIP):

Bill Okaka and Beatrice Syomiti

### Delivering Innovations in Self-Care (DISC):

Alexandrina Nakanwagi, Joyce Achan, and Peter Buyungo

### Social Enterprise in Uganda:

Kenneth Kiiiza Mulogo, Andrea Novella, and Betty Abera

### Social Enterprise in India:

Vidhi Kalra, Andrea Novella, and Betty Abera

PSI-HQ: A thank you to Kristen Little for her leadership, Eden Demise for compiling the data across the program, and to Lola Flomen and Olivia Ferguson for compiling the briefs.

*This brief is made possible by the support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Research for Scalable Solutions (R4S) is a global project funded by USAID and led by FHI 360 in partnership with Evidence for Sustainable Human Development Systems in Africa (EVIHDAF), Makerere University School of Public Health in Uganda (MakSPH), Population Services International (PSI), and Save the Children (STC). The contents of this brief are the sole responsibility of FHI 360 and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.*

**For more information about the COVID-19 Brief Series**

 **Kristen Little** ([klittle@psi.org](mailto:klittle@psi.org))