

LOCAL GOVERNMENT GENDER AND SRHR CHECKLIST FOR COVID-19 AND OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES



Covid-19 awareness in Mbabane, Eswatini.

Photo: Thandokuhle Dlamini

I. POLICY FRAMEWORK

National, regional and international commitments

- ✓ Is the council aware of, and complying with, international commitments and standards, including guidelines issued by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as well as local frameworks and policies?

Policy formulation process

- ✓ Has the council consulted local communities and stakeholders in all their diversity (sex, age, disability education, sexual orientation, migrant status etc.) on response and prevention mechanisms during the public health emergency?

- ✓ Does the council have a disaster/emergency management policy?
- ✓ If yes to above, does the council's disaster/emergency management policy address the specific needs of their communities based on consultations?
- ✓ Are outbreak statistics disaggregated by sex, age and disability so that councils and health experts can understand the differences in the effects and impact on different population groups so that preventative measures can be targeted?

Gender policy

- ✓ Does council have a draft or approved Gender policy?
- ✓ Does the policy have a section on emergency/disaster management?

Budget

- ✓ Is there a specific budget for emergency/disaster relief?
- ✓ What percentage of budget is devoted to municipal services and programs prioritised for women?

II. GOVERNANCE

Representation, participation including public participation

- ✓ Are women leaders and female healthcare workers represented on the disaster/emergency management bodies?
- ✓ Do women represent at least 50% of those on emergency/disaster management bodies?
- ✓ What measures are in place to strengthen the leadership and meaningful participation of women and girls in decision-making processes in addressing COVID-19 and other public health emergencies?
- ✓ Does the council ensure that at least 50% of those participating in public meetings and awareness raising initiatives are women, people living with disability, and youth?

III. WORKPLACE POLICY AND PRACTICE

Working conditions and environment

- ✓ Has the council provided personal protection equipment (PPE) including masks to council employees?
- ✓ Does the council provide safe transport for healthcare workers to reduce the vulnerability of frontline workers?
- ✓ Does the council offer work from home or flexi-time options for parents who may have to supervise children at home when schools are closed, or does the council provide childcare facilities for parents?

IV. LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- ✓ What measures has the council taken to provide self-employed women with support to restart their businesses e.g. through cash transfers, income support programs and expert advice?
- ✓ Does the council support women who will be most economically affected by the crisis, including the informal sector, cross border traders and domestic workers?

Procurement

- ✓ Does the council ensure that firms with at least 30% women ownership, and who employ at least 30% women, get tenders for PPE and other goods?

- ✓ How can the council engage women in the production of sanitisers, soap and masks as entrepreneurial projects?

Recognising and supporting care work

- ✓ What support is the council offering women who have an increased burden of care during emergencies - caring for the sick, children and the elderly?
- ✓ Do media campaigns emphasise male engagement in care and domestic work and combating GBV?
- ✓ Is the council supporting home-based care to the sick, providing the necessary supplies and offering relief accommodation to help with self-isolation in conditions where the home is inadequate?

V. INFRASTRUCTURE AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Land and housing (shelter)

- ✓ Does the council ensure that vulnerable women, including single-headed households are prioritised in being provided with safe shelter during public health emergencies?

Water and sanitation

- ✓ Has the council provided increased access to running water for improved hygiene, infection control and improved recovery of patients who are infected?
- ✓ Does the council use a variety of vehicles, including spaza shops and burial societies, to distribute infection control supplies (sanitisers, masks, sprays etc.) to community members and vulnerable populations such as women on the streets?

Social development

- ✓ Has the council put in place financial support mechanisms to assist vulnerable families, who may see early marriage or transactional sex as solutions to their financial difficulties?
- ✓ Has the council considered the most vulnerable groups in their support services, including female and child-headed households with no potential for other income?
- ✓ How has the council been supporting teenage mothers during lockdown - e.g. with food parcels, baby goods, post-natal care?
- ✓ Has the council put in place measures to ensure continuity of education through remote learning, including radio/ TV broadcasts, with targeted measures for the most vulnerable girls who are unlikely to have access to digital tools and resources?
- ✓ Does the council ensure that all social and recreational facilities are sanitised and safe to use in compliance with national regulations?

VI. SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH, AND HIV AND AIDS

Safety of healthcare workers

- ✓ Does the council provide priority support to healthcare workers and caregivers by ensuring access to adapted protective equipment, and access to testing when necessary and psycho-social support?
- ✓ How has the council mitigated the limited public transport for skilled personnel to attend to women in labour?

Access to menstrual products, family planning and other healthcare commodities

- ✓ Does the council ensure access to menstrual hygiene products, contraceptives, and ensure that other primary healthcare commodities are well stocked and available at healthcare facilities?

- ✓ Does the council provide menstrual hygiene products to quarantined and vulnerable population groups?
- ✓ Has the council distributed condoms during the emergency?
- ✓ Has the council distributed sanitary pads as part of essential parcels to girls in the community? Through schools?

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

- ✓ Has the council made available additional water sources for hand washing during the emergency?
- ✓ What proportion of the community has access to sanitation?
- ✓ Has the council conducted cleaning of public toilets to reduce the spread of COVID-19?
- ✓ Has the council conducted hand-washing campaigns to prevent COVID-19?
- ✓ Has the council distributed hand sanitisers, gloves or masks to the community?
- ✓ How many of these were given to women and girls?



Participants demonstrate hand-washing during public awareness on Covid-19 and GBV in Mokhotlong, Lesotho

Photo: Ntolo Lekau

SRHR services and education

- ✓ Are SRHR services included in the list of essential services during emergencies?
- ✓ Does the council have a dedicated facility to provide SRHR services during lockdowns? How many people receive SRHR services through the council? Are SRHR services included in the list of essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- ✓ How many people have accessed SRHR services since lockdown?



Comprehensive sexual education



- ✓ Has the council set aside a budget for SRHR services during the emergency?
- ✓ Is the council providing online comprehensive sexuality education for youth during the emergency?
- ✓ How is the council raising awareness on use of drugs and substance abuse during the emergency?
- ✓ Does the council use different platforms (SMS, WhatsApp) to disseminate information about SRH during public health emergencies?
- ✓ How has the council collaborated with the health facilities to raise awareness on reproductive cancers?
- ✓ How is the council mobilising women's organisations at community level to ensure public health education message on risk and prevention strategies are reaching all women?
- ✓ How has the council tried to ensure that young people receive comprehensive sexuality education during lockdown including through online means.
- ✓ Are parents, guardians and teachers helping to ensure comprehensive sexuality education and other SRH and HIV services to adolescents and youth?
- ✓ What interventions have the community, parents, teachers and health centres provided to youth on SRHR during COVID-19?

Maternal health

- ✓ How has the council mitigated the limited public transport for skilled personnel to attend to women in labour?
- ✓ Are maternity services including pre- and post-antenatal care services available at all healthcare facilities and, where they exist, are waiting homes fully operational?
- ✓ What is the maternal mortality ratio during the COVID-19 period?
- ✓ Does the council have separate antenatal facilities for COVID-19 positive women?
- ✓ Are measures being taken to ensure the safety of pregnant women including infection control in maternity settings and waiting mothers' homes?
- ✓ Is postnatal care affected by the pandemic? If so, how is this being mitigated?
- ✓ Have cervical and breast cancer screening been affected by the pandemic? If so, what is being done to mitigate this?



Teenage pregnancies and child marriages



- ✓ How has the council worked with schools and parents to prevent teenage marriages during lockdown?
- ✓ How has the council raised awareness on child marriages during the pandemic?
- ✓ Are there systems in place for the provision of economic and social support for teenage mothers?
- ✓ Is there a special COVID-19 centre or health facility in the council?
- ✓ How many ambulances are available to attend to COVID-19 patients? Is there a COVID-19 council call centre or information desk?
- ✓ How has the council been supporting teenage mothers during lockdown - e.g. with food parcels, baby goods, post-natal care.

Safe abortion services

- ✓ Does the local health facilities provide for safe abortion during the COVID-19 period?
- ✓ Number of people receiving information and services for safe legal abortion and post-abortion care.
- ✓ Number of safe abortions done during the COVID-19 period.



STIs, HIV and AIDS



- ✓ Does the council ensure that cervical cancer screening, STI treatments and HIV and AIDS services are available?
- ✓ Is HPPV vaccine included in essential health services by the local health facilities?
- ✓ Do women and girls receive the HPPV vaccine?
- ✓ Does the council have a follow up mechanism to ensure that HIV positive community members collect their treatment?
- ✓ Has treatment for STIs continued?
- ✓ Has HIV testing continued?

Drug and substance abuse

- ✓ Has information and counselling on drug and substance abuse continued?
- ✓ How has the council raised awareness on use of drugs and substance abuse during the COVID-19 period?

Key populations

- ✓ Does the council have a non-discrimination policy that advocates for equal treatment of all patients including LGBTI groups, sex workers, and other key populations?
- ✓ Has the council collaborated with other stakeholders to assist key populations economically during the COVID-19 pandemic?

VII. ENDING VIOLENCE, EMPOWERING WOMEN

Prevention and public awareness

- ✓ Has the council ensured that communication to communities around Covid-19 includes information on GBV, such as services available and where survivors can go for support?
- ✓ Has the council worked with schools and parents to prevent teenage marriages during lockdown?



Response and coordination

- ✓ Have healthcare workers been trained to properly identify GBV and IPV risks and cases - including how to handle disclosure in a compassionate, non-judgmental way and have referral pathways, and communicate any changes to referral systems?
- ✓ What measures are in place to increase women and girls' awareness of their legal rights pertaining to GBV?
- ✓ How can councils support/create hotlines for reporting and accessing information on support available to them?
- ✓ How can councils provide support to shelters and places of safety?
- ✓ What measure are in place to ensure that legal prohibitions on early marriage are enforced?
- ✓ Are police and other security actors, including courts for interdicts, operational, if not are there other measure in place to access to justice in times of emergency/disaster?

VIII. CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



- ✓ Does the council ensure that PPE equipment is reusable or recyclable?
- ✓ Does the council support recycling projects such as the making of reusable sanitary ware?
- ✓ How are waste management and recycling projects managed and benefiting local economic development?

- ✓ What type of water recycling projects does the council have to mitigate the increased use of water for handwashing?
- ✓ Can councils use more climate friendly ways of communicating i.e. online rather than print?

IX. COMMUNICATIONS AND VISIBILITY

- ✓ Has the council consulted with local communities in all their diversity (sex, age, disability, education, sexual orientation, migrant status etc.) to ensure communication addresses their specific needs?
- ✓ Is all information and communication available in languages that are understood by the majority of the population, and which consider local norms and practices including targeting male engagement in care and domestic work and combating GBV?
- ✓ Does the council use traditional and social media to disseminate public health education messages on risk and prevention strategies, does it consider the different needs and access that vulnerable women and girls have?



Links with civil society

- ✓ How are/can councils (councillors) working with local NGOs/CBOs on awareness raising and other response initiatives?
- ✓ How can councils support local NGO and CBO initiatives?

X. GENDER AND CORONA (DISASTER) MANAGEMENT TASK TEAM

- ✓ Has the council established a disaster management task team?
- ✓ Is the gender focal person a member of the task team?
- ✓ Are women equally represented on the task team, including at decision-making level?

Sources

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