



COMPASS INITIATIVE SERIES: ADAPTATIONS

Adaptations used to ensure contraceptive access during the COVID-19 pandemic

COVID-19 Adaptations for RH Supplies

June 28, 2023

Please use the Zoom Q&A function to pose any questions during the panel. We will address select questions at the end of the discussion.



Moderator & inSupply Panelist



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Senior Technical Officer Reproductive
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Agenda

- Background
- Framework and adaptation categories
- Introduction of the panelists
- Panel discussion
- Q&A
- Looking ahead and key lessons learned

Background

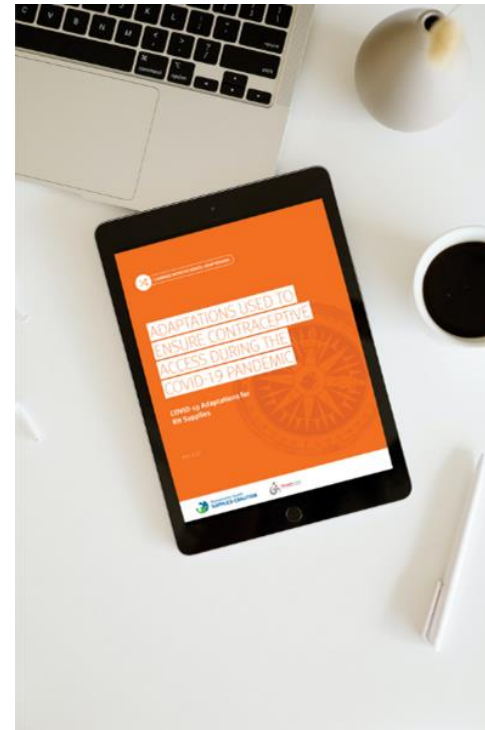
RHSC engaged [inSupply Health](#) to conduct an assessment of adaptation strategies used to ensure access to RH supplies in the pandemic. This assessment included the development of a strategic framework of adaptation strategies planned and/or used to ensure access to RH supplies during the pandemic, with country-specific examples.

Background

The Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (RHSC) and John Snow, Inc. (JSI) published a [Roadmap Study](#) in April 2021 to promote more resilient supply chains and marketplaces for reproductive health products during and after the pandemic. The study highlighted the domino effect of COVID-19 disruptions and the interdependence of supply chain operations. Its recommendations included documenting, supporting, and scaling up successful pandemic adaptation initiatives to ensure access to supplies.

A new report – [Adaptations Used to Ensure Contraceptive Access During The Covid-19 Pandemic](#) – investigates Covid's profound impact on RH supply chains and explores adaptations that stakeholders in sub-Saharan Africa have made in order to maintain access to RH commodities. Produced by inSupply Health, the report was issued under the auspices of RHSC's [Compass initiative](#) which supports greater resilience in supply chains and marketplaces following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Six accompanying briefs document these adaptation strategies at a glance.



Approach

The assessment included the development of a strategic framework of adaptation strategies planned and/or used to ensure access to RH supplies during the pandemic, with country-specific examples.

Approach: Scope & Methodology

**85 Literature
Reviews**



**26
KIIs**



**4
Sectors**



30 SSA Countries

Literature Review

- Between October 2022 and January 2023, 85 documents from 30 countries across SSA were analyzed, including peer-reviewed publications, program resources and reports, interactive maps, and webinar recordings.
- Literature review primarily focused on RH supply chains and RH programming adaptations made during the pandemic to provide services and carry out program activities.
- Initial findings revealed that most of these adaptations were developed to address service delivery constraints, with some that were difficult to separate from supply chain-specific adaptations.

Key Informant Interviews

- From November 2022 to January 2023, inSupply conducted 26 key informant interviews (KIIs) in 19 countries in SSA.
- KIIs explored the challenges faced by the respondents, the adaptations undertaken, and whether these adaptations were continued or discarded.
- 4 key sectors were featured: Global manufacturers; NGOs; Implementation partners; and Social Marketing Organizations
- Interviews examined the challenges encountered, the adaptations undertaken, whether they were discarded and why, whether they were implemented and sustained, and the reasons why they sustained.

Figure 1: Scope & Methodology

Framework and adaptation categories

Strategic Adaptation Framework

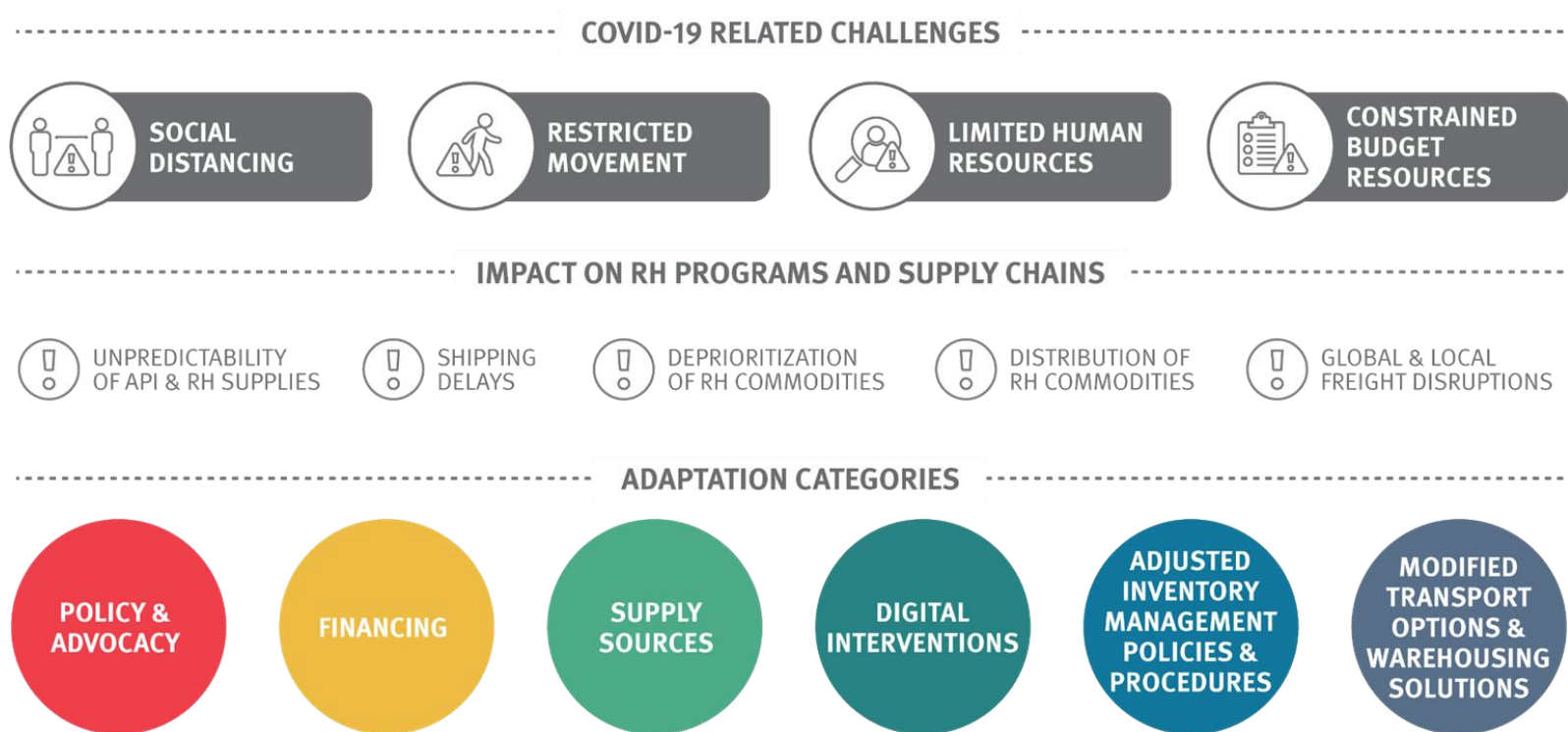


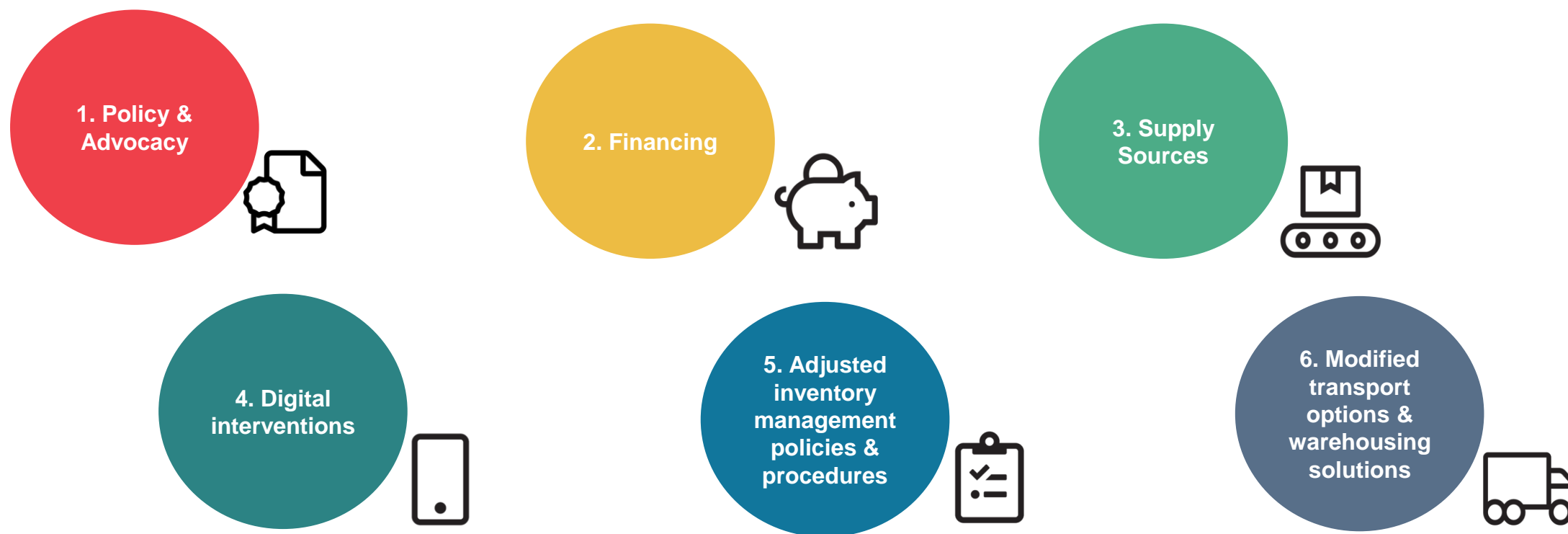
Figure 2 Strategic framework of adaptations

The strategic framework identifies actions that were taken to respond to challenges and minimize disruption of access to RH products and services. There are three levels of the framework:

- The **COVID-19-related challenges** to the delivery of health products and services across the globe e.g. social distancing, restricted movement/travel, limited human resources, and constrained budgets.
- The **impact on RH programs and supply chains** on areas such as human resources and PPE for service provision and supervision, in-country commodity distribution, and global supply and logistics
- The **strategic adaptations** implemented in different countries by NGOs, multilateral partners, governments, SMOs, and IPs.

Strategic Adaptations

Several themes emerged during the analysis, leading us to define six categories of supply chain adaptation strategies that were planned and/or applied to ensure access to RH supplies in the pandemic:



Policy & Advocacy

1. Policy & Advocacy



At the outset of the pandemic, nations around the world employed COVID-19 containment measures, which significantly hampered the capacity of public and private institutions to deliver required products and services, exacerbated by fears of the spreading virus.

In response, stakeholders and reproductive health (RH) experts employed advocacy and legislative measures to solve supply chain challenges.



Financing

2. Financing

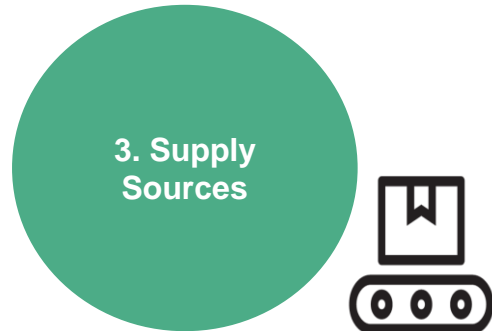


Certain changes made to the supply chain to reduce the chance of disruptions had financial consequences.

This category's adaptations included several worldwide, in-country, and partner finance approaches to improve access to reproductive health (RH) supplies.



Supply Sources



During the pandemic, refocusing resources and priorities highlighted supply chain flaws, emphasizing vulnerabilities in RH commodity and industrial component suppliers.

Actors in the RH supply chain adapted to reduce sourcing risks for manufacturing inputs and RH products.

Digital Interventions

4. Digital interventions



Disruptions in global supply chains resulted in local logistical delays and supply shortages. Restrictions on movement disrupted regular supply planning activities.

Digital intervention adaptations made use of various technologies, including new or adapted digital and mobile applications (apps), platforms, and systems, to address challenges in reproductive health (RH) supply chains.



Adjusted inventory management policies & procedures

5. Adjusted inventory management policies & procedures



Supply chains in countries across SSA saw delays in processing at shipping points, lack of logistics personnel, increased shipping costs, and movement restrictions, all leading to longer supply lead times and a higher risk of stockouts.

Adaptations were applied to in-country logistics, supply chain standard operating procedures and other supply chain management policies, to overcome logistics challenges.



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Modified transport options & warehousing solutions

6. Modified transport options & warehousing solutions



Congested ports prioritized pandemic-related shipments, incurring significant delays. Attempts to alleviate supply bottlenecks occasionally necessitated the need for more storage capacity.

RH supply chain actors responded by changing transportation options and using new warehousing solutions to ensure the continuous availability of services and products.



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Panelists

The following four key stakeholders will share their unique perspectives on the challenges faced by RH supply chains, the adaptations implemented, the lessons learned from their respective organizations and countries, and recommendations for the future

Panelists



**DR. ALBERT
NDWIGA**

FP Program Manager
Ministry of Health, Kenya



**CELESTIN
COMPAORE**

Regional Project Director
DMPA-SC
JHPIEGO,
Burkina Faso



WILLIS OGUTU

Supply Partnerships Manager,
Sustainability
Bayer, SSA



**TIMOTHY
WAMBUGU**

National Sales Manager
Population Services,
Kenya

Strategic Adaptation Framework

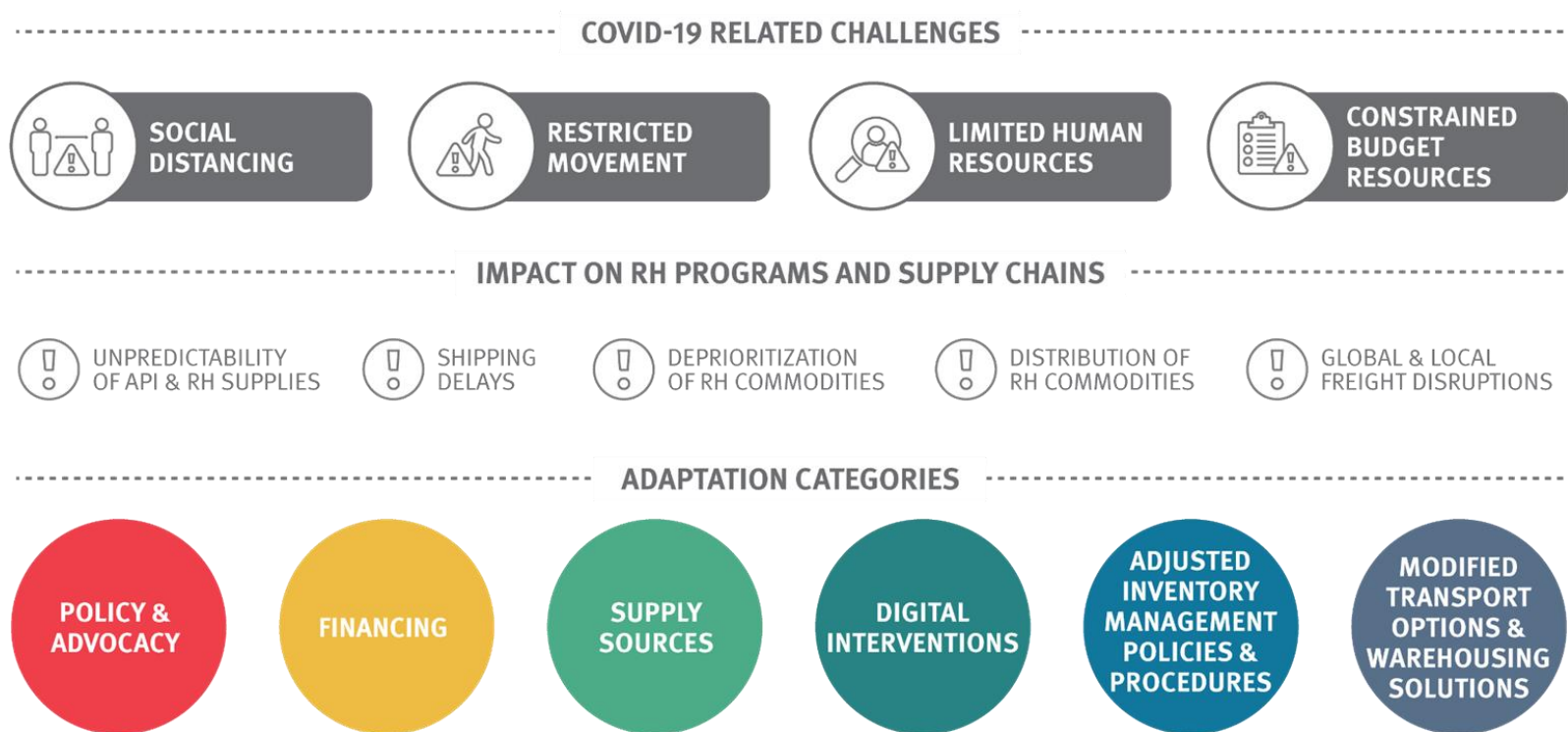


Figure 2 Strategic framework of adaptations

The strategic framework identifies actions that were taken to respond to challenges and minimize disruption of access to products and services. There are three levels of the framework:

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- The **strategic adaptations** implemented in different countries by NGOs, multilateral partners, governments, SMOs, and IPs.

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Looking Ahead



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Key Learnings & Observations

1. Policy & Advocacy



- ❑ **Early engagements** and activities to prioritize RH services and access were critical to facilitate the movement of essential personnel for RH supplies and maintain client access to RH products and services.
- ❑ Comprehensive policies to assure continuity in access to RH products and services should be **designed and enacted in advance of emergency** situations, to include considerations for supply chains.

2. Financing



- ❑ Emergencies necessarily have an unexpected financial impact. Pooling resources and exploring new partnerships may **unlock access to funds** and resources.
- ❑ **Co-financing mitigated** the diversion of resources away from RH programming during emergencies and served as an effective long-term strategy to support governments to increase their overall budgets for RH commodities.

3. Supply Sources



- ❑ The absence of local RH manufacturers likely disadvantaged SSA as 100% of RH supplies are imported from outside the continent. The **localization of suppliers and decision-making** supports resilient supply chains.
- ❑ RH product **self-reliance on the continent** is imperative. There's an opportunity to facilitate discussions between key stakeholders to ensure RH supply self-reliance is prioritized at the onset of self-reliance conversations.



Key Learnings & Observations

4. Digital interventions



- ❑ Digital interventions enabled data visibility and use and unlocked responsiveness, resilience, and agility. **Timely and complete data visibility** across multiple stakeholders enables products to be redistributed within countries and regions, informs changes in inventory and ordering procedures and supports the identification of alternative supply sources, ultimately maximizing product availability.

5. Adjusted inventory management policies & procedures



- ❑ The adaptations to logistics management procedures adopted at the global and country level – including adjusting inventory levels and reorder periods and redistribution of products – illustrated that a more **agile approach to logistics management** could help to counter global supply disruptions.

6. Modified transport options & warehousing solutions



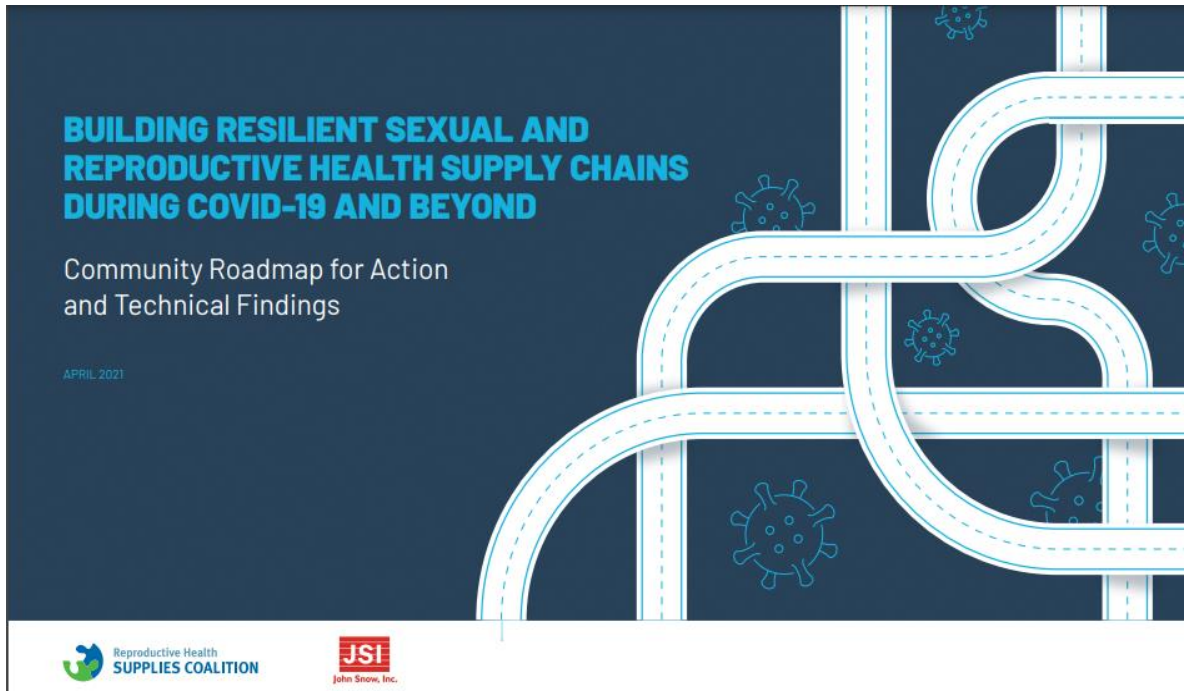
- ❑ Actors throughout the supply chain were able to take practical decisions about moving and **storing inventory and orders** to ensure supply and reach clients.
- ❑ Provision of quality RH services and supplies through **community based distribution** and **mobile outreach programs**, including when integrated with other healthcare services, as appropriate is a cost effective strategy in emergency situations.



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Looking Ahead

Further Reading...



Community Roadmap for Action



High Impact Practice in FP

Please read the report and the briefs on RHSC's website.

Thank you!



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