

Learning from adaptations used to ensure access in the pandemic



In early 2021, John Snow, Inc. (JSI) and Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (RHSC) issued a new [Roadmap](#) to promote more resilient supply chains and markets for reproductive health (RH) products in the face of COVID-19. The Roadmap contains a series of broad, far-reaching recommendations in the areas of market dynamics, financing, supply chain strategies, policies and stewardship, and data visibility and access.

As the Roadmap authors described in their report, the first few months of the pandemic were marked by reactive crisis management on myriad fronts. During this reactive period, as national lockdowns were enacted, RH access was curtailed in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), and supply chains were severely disrupted. Fortunately, the situation rebounded within a short period in many settings, as adaptations were rapidly put in place that enabled the functioning of supply chains, markets, and service delivery in ways that limited risk of virus transmission.

The resiliency exhibited has been critical, because even the highest levels of disaster preparedness could not have overcome the many constraints that were introduced by the pandemic and by nations' response strategies. In the RH service delivery arena, adaptations to service delivery and last mile distribution could well have included: expansion or establishment of telemedicine options, higher levels of direct-to-consumer distribution, increased use of private pharmacies, and multi-month dispensing of short-term methods. Moreover, supply chain adaptations have included:

changes to operational procedures within manufacturing sites and flexibly responding to the severe and lasting impacts on overseas shipping.

The Coalition recognizes the existence of a vast scope of adaptations enacted in the last two years in support of access to RH supplies. We see value in highlighting particularly successful or promising adaptations, as well as lessons learned in the process by our members.

In the coming months, the scope of this priority area for the Coalition will be to highlight promising adaptations that have been enacted, noting trends and lessons learned in the process of adapting to ever-evolving conditions and constraints. The adaptations may have been enacted to support supply chain operations, healthy markets, and/or the delivery of RH supplies and services. To document or showcase these promising adaptations, we might use vehicles such as: webinars, interview videos, blog posts, or peer-reviewed articles.

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What comes next?

The Coalition will provide the resources and, where necessary, technical assistance required to explore questions such as these. The range of potential activities is broad and includes landscape assessments, country-level or regional studies, and the promotion of promising strategies.

OUR MEANS OF ACTION FOR ACTIVITIES MIGHT INCLUDE:

- Collaborating with one or more of the Coalition's Implementing Mechanisms, many of which can serve as key thought partners on a recommendation or activity
- Issuing subawards to member organizations
- Hosting webinars, discussions, and blogs

We welcome your creativity and engagement, helping our community better understand the current challenges and opportunities that lie ahead of us.