Health and Nutrition covid-19 capability statement

The covid-19 pandemic has launched many countries and their governments into unchartered territory. Ministries of Health and development partners are grappling with a myriad of challenges, including immediate strategies for prevention and treatment, continued delivery of other health services alongside the covid-19 response, mitigating the social and economic effects, and ways to adapt health systems for future preparedness and resilience.

OPM's health and nutrition team is world-renowned for our practical and thoughtful analysis, advice and support. For up to 40 years, we have been partnering with national governments in their reform processes, giving us hard-won experience of how they can best be supported in their particular contexts. We deliver this support through our embedded teams and networks, applying cutting-edge insights from our research and evaluations. We are leveraging these trusted relationships and our deep contextual understanding to **provide support in three key areas:**

- **Immediate operational support** to governments,

- **rapid research and analysis** to inform response strategies,

- and **in-depth research and learning** to guide ongoing and future policy and programme decisions.

Immediate operational support

Building on existing partnerships and country presence, we are providing immediate practical help to governments with designing and implementing covid-19 mitigation and control strategies. We draw support from OPM's governance and state capability team to push thinking on best practices of technical assistance and provide expertise across all health system building blocks – including finance, data systems, supply chain management, human resources for health, community health systems, leadership, management and governance, and service delivery.

Globally, in partnership with the University of Oxford and the Covid-19 International Modelling Consortium, we are providing epidemiological modelling for a number of African and Asian governments. Our partnership brings together top academic modellers, global public health specialists, local epidemiologists, and expert project management systems to provide whole package solutions. The models provide invaluable information to policy makers on the trajectory and impacts of covid-19, including the effects of different mitigation strategies, anticipated demand for hospital and ICU beds, PPE and other commodities, and the cost of required equipment. The group is present in over 30 countries and the model is being used to shape intervention strategies around the world.

Other examples of immediate government support include work in **Nepal**, where our teams are helping with supply chain management and public communication strategies, revitalising the Health

Emergency Operations Centre, compiling provincial information for daily situation analyses, providing technical input and economic analysis for the health sector's covid-19 response plan and lockdown exit strategy, and supporting the Ministry of Finance and National Planning Commission in their budgeting and longer term response plan.

In **Pakistan**, our embedded teams at the Province level in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are supporting Health Departments on health system responses at facility and community levels.

As part of a voluntary initiative in **India,** OPM staff have developed behaviour change materials and trained master trainers who lead community sessions throughout South Goa.

In **Mozambique**, we are working with the government to deliver public health and prevention messages for urban hard to reach populations, including a strong focus on mitigating potential increases in Gender Based Violence. We draw successfully on OPM's expertise in connected sectors to help address the social determinants of health. In Mozambique, this includes supporting teachers and parents to ensure continuity of education, and working with female entrepreneurs to build their resilience to the economic impact of covid-19.

Rapid research and analysis

We are conducting a range of fast-response research and analysis activities to help governments and partners in their decision making. This includes literature reviews and rapid primary data collection to understand the impact of covid-19 on health systems, ways to continue providing health services alongside responding to covid-19, the socio-economic impacts of covid-19 and public health measures, and the potential effects of different control strategies. This analysis includes global literature reviews that combine lessons from previous pandemics and early evidence on covid-19 to map key issues and recommendations for response, recovery and reform in the health and nutrition systems and in relation to

community health workers, gender and governance, as well as in related sectors such as education and social protection.

At country level, this rapid analysis includes research in **Ethiopia** using high-frequency remote assessment of the impacts of covid-19 and control measures on the urban poor, including access to health care and awareness of prevention measures, as well as food security and livelihoods.

In **Thailand** we are undertaking analysis of the impact of covid-19 on health and other social sectors including nutrition, social protection and violence, abuse and exploitation, to support planning for post-covid recovery.

In **Kenya, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Bangladesh, and Pakistan** we have undertaken rapid assessment of preparedness and response activities to identify lessons for other countries and areas for support.

In **India**, we have instituted a system of real-time data collection using digital ethnography techniques to understand how the epidemic – and its response – is playing out through the health system and communities, to dynamically and responsively inform policy and programmatic responses.

In-depth operational research and learning

OPM is at the cutting edge of longer-term learning and operational research on resilient and shock responsive health systems. This includes operational research and technical assistance in **Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Sierra Leone,** and **Pakistan** on ways that health, nutrition and other social services can maintain routine service delivery whilst adapting to changing needs arising from shocks, including covid-19. In **Ethiopia**, we are also undertaking research on ways that emergency health and nutrition funding can be delivered through government systems rather than donor channels.

Globally, we are leading monitoring and learning for strategies to integrate sexual and reproductive health into the covid-19 response and ensure continued delivery of family planning services. Over time, there will be increasing focus on how health systems can learn from covid-19 to improve future preparedness and resilience. Experience from previous pandemics shows that this thinking needs to start immediately to take advantage of opportunities for reform. OPM is already engaging in this process. For example, in **Pakistan** we are convening public-private dialogues and other peer learning mechanisms to support rapid cross-country learning on a range of topics, and have conducted an online public meeting on coping strategies with the government.

How we can help:

Despite widespread bans on international travel, through our global team, networks of associates and consultants, and OPM's international offices, we are in a strong position to offer both remote and on-the-ground support, simultaneously facilitating cross-country sharing, rigorous evidence generation, and learning.

We can provide rapid support through call-down services under existing framework agreements. The HEART consortium led by OPM includes partners from leading universities and international consultancies, and can be commissioned by DFID for rapid research, analysis, and technical assistance. HEART provides services in a range of sectors including education, social protection, WASH, public sector governance and financial management, as well as health and nutrition. During the Ebola crisis HEART sent clinical experts to Sierra Leone within 24 hours of a call. OPM also leads a similar call-down service for UNAIDS. We provide over three hundred rapid response call-down consulting and knowledge service assignments per year.

Key areas where we can offer support include:

- Using our country and partner networks to identify and synthesise information needs
- Assessing current preparedness and response capacity, key gaps and government support needs
- Epidemiological modelling to predict temporospatial disease spread within countries
- Monitoring and evaluating response strategies, including documenting and synthesising approaches in different countries to identify effective practice
- Developing, piloting, and learning from alternative approaches to service delivery
- Rapid reviews, research, and analysis on other aspects of response and resilience
- Tracking community impacts, perceptions, information sources, and response strategies
- Economic/financial assessments on costs, financial arrangements, and budget flexibility
- Developing communication materials on covid-19 prevention including for social media
- Delivering training for health workers on prevention
- Supporting development of contextually-appropriate guidelines
- Conducting, updating, synthesising, and communicating situation analyses

This is a partial list so please contact us for any areas where support is needed. If you have an emerging idea, we are happy to discuss it with you and together develop more concrete plans.