

# OPM COVID-19 Response

## Capability Statement



Oxford Policy  
Management

# Contents

- P4** Immediate operational support to government
- P6** Supporting the continuity and resilience of service delivery in health, education and WASH
- P7** Using social protection programmes to respond to the crisis and protect the vulnerable
- P8** Rapid sectoral diagnostics to deliver long-term recovery
- P9** Learning from the immediate COVID-19 response to inform government reforms in preparing for future shocks
- P10** Advice to mitigate the secondary socio-economic and political consequences of COVID-19
- P12** Our locations

The COVID-19 pandemic has launched the world into uncharted territory. Governments and Development Partners are grappling with a myriad of challenges: the response capability of a country's health system, the nature of its economy, and the resilience of its public services. Focus is on the immediate response to the pandemic, rolling out measures to prevent the spread of the virus and treating patients and developing strategies for how to limit the social and economic impact on citizens. The need to react to these urgent issues leaves little time for governments to plan for the post COVID-19 recovery phase, or think about the reforms that will be needed to build the resilience of public services to withstand pandemics and shocks in the future.

The COVID-19 pandemic is having a seismic impact on public services and their ability to maintain service delivery whilst responding to the crisis; households and their ability to survive and rebuild, or protect their livelihoods; and governments' ability to provide the financial support required to sustain the economy through the crisis to recovery.

At Oxford Policy Management (OPM) we know that response and recovery will require sector wide coordination, and to be successful will need to be flexible to the different phases of the crisis. This means that the short, medium and long-term priorities are sufficiently balanced and funded - there is no "one-size-fits-all" solution. Response options and policy questions will differ by country.

OPM can provide practical support to the COVID-19 response in two ways:

1. Immediate response: through our existing projects, international offices, and networks. We have relevant expertise immediately available in country.
2. Response, recovery and reform planning: we can support planning in the medium-term that is imperative to deal with the aftermath of this crisis.

Despite the widespread ban on travel, our international offices, existing projects, and global network of experts' enables us to provide support in the following areas:

# Immediate operational support to government

We have teams currently embedded in governments and are committed to supporting the response to the crisis, proactively offering solutions. We are adjusting our project teams to include cross sectorial technical expertise to quickly support our embedded advisors.

- In **Lebanon**, the OPM team is supporting the government develop e-learning solutions to ensure continued education at home despite the closure of schools.
- In **Pakistan** we are working with the federal government to design the economic stimulus package; and with the provincial governments to rapidly re-design social protection measures to reach casual labourers and daily wage earners. Our embedded teams in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are working with the respective health departments on the health system response at the community and hospital level.
- In **Somaliland** our Public Financial Management (PFM) team is supporting the Ministry of Finance assess options available to ease the tax burden, modelling the potential revenue implications of these measures.
- In **Ethiopia** we are assessing the financial implications in health and social protection of the pandemic, assessing funding needs and financing arrangements that can be put in place for emergency preparedness and response measures.
- In **Mozambique** we have been accredited by the Ministry of Health to support the response in delivering public health and prevention messages. The programme will also be used to distribute public awareness and prevention messages alongside government and civil society in helping to address potential increases in Gender Based Violence.

- In **South Sudan**, we are supporting the development of a COVID-19 Task Force, similar to the former Ebola Task Force. The COVID-19 Task Force for the Nimule border area, a town which hosts the key border crossing with **Uganda**, has been established and is already using local radio to

ensure clear and accurate messages are broadcast, and also working with the local community to track individuals who crossed the border in contravention of government restrictions.



# Supporting the continuity and resilience of service delivery in health, education and WASH

We can help government and international partners conduct rapid assessments to understand the impact of COVID-19 on the health and education systems; water, sanitation, and hygiene supply chains; and, national budgets. These assessments will be critical as governments move from response to recovery.

- In **Ethiopia** we are supporting key reforms to the contingency budgeting processes and mapping external financing opportunities to support the government's COVID-19 response. This includes tracking donor funding to ensure a full understanding of where, how and when they will be used to maximise its value.
- In **Ghana** we are supporting the government to pivot its education sector plan to respond to the changing circumstances.
- In **India** we are documenting the health impacts of Covid-19 through informal phone interviews with community health workers, to enable government and international partners to identify the best ways to maintain core service delivery, whilst responding to the pandemic. This rapid study has highlighted how significant the secondary effects of COVID-19 are likely to be and the risks posed to community health workers.
- Our resilient waters programme is providing technical advice to ensure resilient urban service delivery **across six Southern Africa Development Community countries.**

# Using social protection programmes to respond to the crisis and protect the vulnerable

OPM has conducted assessments and diagnostic work on how social protection programmes and systems can be used to respond to a range of shocks across the world, and how particularly vulnerable groups can be protected. We can pinpoint where capacity constraints usually lie through capacity assessments and can provide technical assistance on whether existing social protection programmes can be used in responding to COVID-19. We have experience in assessing what adjustments are immediately workable, given programme specifics (reach, design, data bases and delivery systems) and can make policy response recommendations. We can also support the medium and long-term policy considerations where governments want to reach new groups of beneficiaries through their existing, or new, programmes as part of their recovery or reform planning. This includes design support, costing and impact simulations of new programmes.

- In **Ghana, Zambia, and Pakistan**, we are currently adjusting existing technical assistance projects to provide advice to government and development partners on how to use cash transfer programmes to respond to the COVID-19 crisis.
- In **Turkey**, we have trained regional European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) staff on how to support existing national social protection systems using humanitarian tools.
- In **South-East Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Sahel** we have conducted assessments of existing social protection systems in order to determine barriers and opportunities for using social protection programmes as a vehicle for responding to shocks. This has allowed us to understand how different institutional capacity levels, the maturity of systems, and the design of programmes impact on the potential for shock-responsiveness across these different contexts.



# Rapid sectoral diagnostics to deliver long-term recovery

Moving from response to recovery will require rapidly assessing available evidence and data to inform key policy intervention decisions to aid recovery and limit the socio-economic impact of COVID-19. OPM can undertake these assessments swiftly.

- We are undertaking a rapid literature review across six countries to provide an assessment of the key policy choices governments will likely be faced with in response to the impact of the pandemic on health, education, social protection, and disaster financing.
- We have produced a report for **Indian stakeholders** on the barriers and facilitators to effective performance by Community Health Workers (CHW) during the pandemic, based on early experience. We are conducting assessments that support decision-making e.g. impact on government revenue of immediate shocks and cost and impact of social protection intervention. And supporting the development of alternative ways of maintaining service delivery e.g. assessing the international evidence for distance learning models and learner progression during pandemics and crises.
- OPM, in partnership with the University of Oxford, is providing support to **several Asian and African countries** on COVID-19 modelling. Epidemiologists and mathematicians are working to predict the temporospatial distribution of COVID-19 in these countries. These mathematical models provide invaluable information to policy makers on the spread of epidemic within the country, number of susceptible, exposed, infected, recovered and deaths, but vitally, the impact of mitigation strategies such as hand washing and social isolation.

# Learning from the immediate COVID-19 response to inform government reforms in preparing for future shocks

Two types of learning are important:

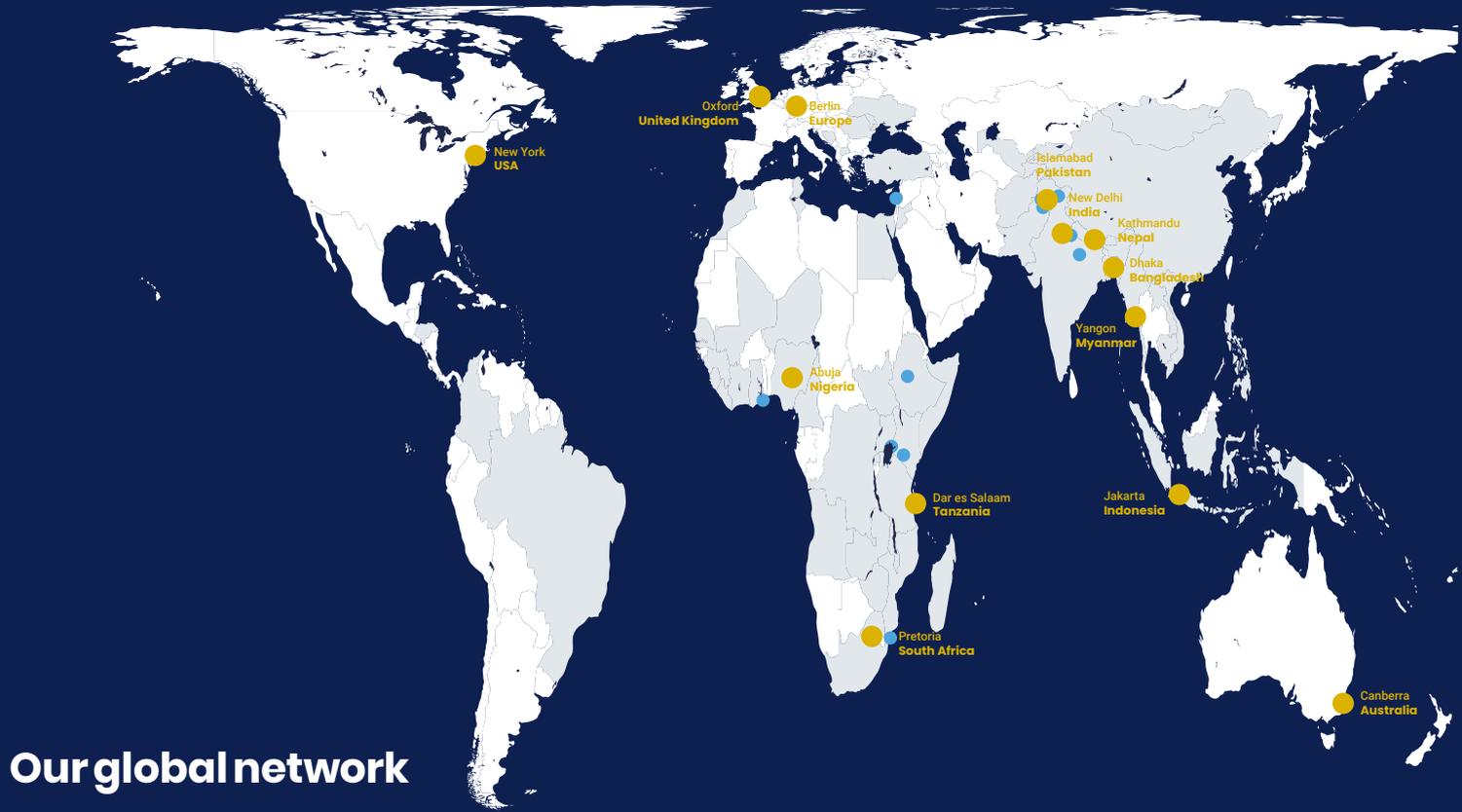
- 1) Drawing lessons from previous shocks, including from reforms implemented after the occurrence of the shock; and
  - 2) Learning in real-time to support decision-making and response efforts. Both provide valuable insights into how governments can better plan for the occurrence of future shocks and will support the reform efforts after the current crisis.
- Our DFID funded Maintains programme is conducting a literature review across health, education, social protection, nutrition, disaster risk financing, gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) and state capability to highlight lessons from previous shock-responses and making them available to policy makers.
  - OPM is convening public-private dialogues, as well as other peer learning mechanisms, to support rapid cross-country learning, covering a range of topics. We have conducted an online public meeting on coping strategies with the Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination in **Pakistan**. We are also learning from and supporting adaptive changes to health and nutrition service delivery. At a global level, we are working to advance learning from approaches to integrate SRH within COVID-19 response.

# Advice to mitigate the secondary socio-economic and political consequences of COVID-19

OPM expertise is multisectoral. We can provide holistic analysis of the impact of the crisis across the political, economic, and social spheres. By using our existing networks and research we can access data and analysis that can inform decision making, and support policy decisions. Our experience in assessing the vulnerability of distribution networks, energy access and clean energy programme roll-out, working with the private sector, and assessing impacts on global climate policy and climate funding are areas of expertise that will be important as countries transition to recover and reform. Our experience in economic modelling and policy design can help identify key intervention pathways to mitigate the impact on short, medium, and long-term consequences.

- OPM has developed an inclusive growth diagnostic for DFID to understand the impact of changes on economic activity within key sectors.
- In **Nigeria** and **Ghana** under the Facility for Oil Transparency and Reform (FOSTER) programme we are supporting modelling of the financial impacts of COVID-19 for the Ministry of Finance. We have supported supply chain assessments and assessed climate and energy policy across projects for the Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG) through the Energy and Economic Growth Programme (EEG) and Action on Climate Today (ACT).
- In **Northern Uganda** and the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** we are supporting DFID private sector programmes to work more effectively with agribusiness and other sectors to adopt business models that are resilient to shocks and deliver tangible benefits to low-income groups.
- OPM is recognised as thought leader in adaptive social protection. We delivered five background papers for the World Bank handbook on Adaptive Social Protection, covering the dual implications of resilience building measures and shock responsiveness programming.

Further information on OPM's teams, current and previous project experience, and global footprint can be found on our website. Information on framework contracts that OPM is a member of that will enable quick and uncomplicated draw down of our services is also available.



## Our global network

- Oxford Policy Management office locations
- Oxford Policy Management project office locations
- Countries we have worked