

**46,062** confirmed

COVID-19 cases

297 Deaths

507 active cases

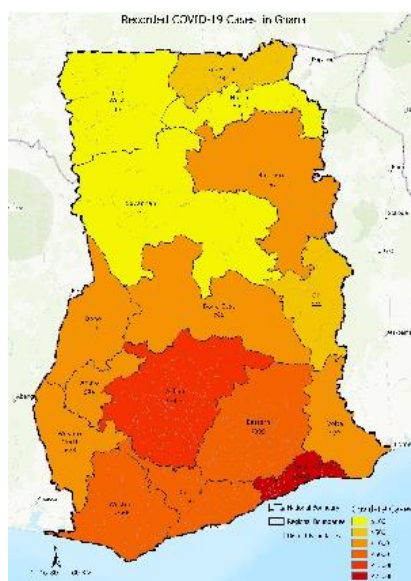
Approximately **8.2 million** children affected by COVID-19 school closures

**US\$ 5.8 million** funding required



## Situation Overview and Humanitarian Needs

As of 22<sup>nd</sup> September, Ghana remained the second most impacted country in the West and Central African region after Nigeria, ranking seventh in the number of cumulative cases in the WHO Africa region, following South Africa, Egypt, Morocco, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Algeria. The number of people confirmed to have contracted coronavirus in Ghana now stands at 46,062.

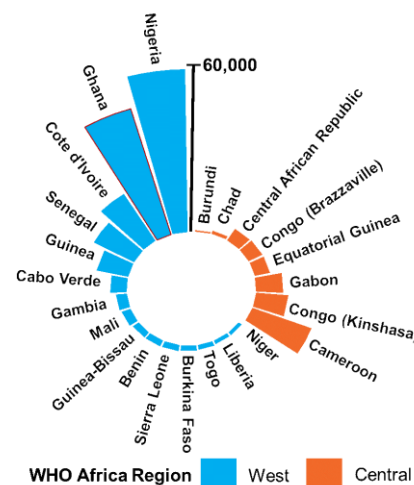


Map of Ghana identifying the concentration of confirmed cases of COVID-19 disease.

There are currently 507 active cases and 297 people who have died from COVID-19. Greater Accra, Eastern Ashanti and Central Regions account for approximately eighty (80%) percent of active cases.

In his address on 20<sup>th</sup> September, President Akufo-Addo reported that 531,674 Junior High School (3) students had just completed their Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) and Senior High School (3) students had completed the West Africa Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations (WASSCE).

The President also instructed mandatory face mask wearing to continue for another three months, until 14<sup>th</sup> December, and announced the resumption of training in all contact sports.



Graph illustrating the number of people who have contracted COVID-19 across the West and Central Africa Region – Sept. 2020

## UNICEF's COVID-19 response

In support of the Government of Ghana's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF has been working with the United Nations Country Team, Development Partners, INGOs, civil society organizations and the private sector, to protect children and their families from exposure to the virus, minimize mortality and support the continuity of social services across sectors.

### Health

UNICEF provided technical support to strengthen monitoring and clinical mentorship in the context of COVID-19 for 143 frontline health service providers (78 in the Northern region and 65 in the Upper East region).

UNICEF also assisted three regions (Upper East, Northern and Upper West) to assess and review their performance in quality of maternal and newborn care, including maternal and perinatal death surveillance and response. A three-day virtual Annual Newborn Stakeholders Conference was held with over 250 participants, with technical assistance from UNICEF. A rapid assessment was also conducted in five district hospitals in the North East region on their readiness to establish newborn care units.

The Ministry of Health and Ghana Health Service resumed the polio vaccination campaign - the first in Ghana following the COVID-19 outbreak. The first round was conducted in 174 districts in eight regions, targeting over 4.5 million children. UNICEF supported with funding and technical support in collaboration with other partners, including the World Health Organization, Rotary, CDC and GAVI. UNICEF deployed 30 staff and consultants to the field to support monitoring and quality assurance.



UNICEF staff from the polio vaccination team in hard-to-reach areas ©UNICEF-Sept2020



Team of polio vaccinators, including UNICEF staff, immunizing children during the campaign ©UNICEF-Sept2020



UNICEF staff member marking fingers of children who have been immunized in September. ©UNICEF/UN823733/BUTA

UNICEF also ensured the distribution of vaccine fridges, with support from GAVI.



UNICEF handing over a vaccine fridge to the Deputy Director of Public Health at the Manhyia Hospital, Ashanti Region on 11 Sept. 2020 ©UNICEF/UN120987/ACQUAH

## Nutrition

UNICEF, in collaboration with the Ghana Health Service (GHS), World Food Programme (WFP) and Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) released the first Food and Nutrition bulletin on the impact of COVID-19 on food and nutrition in Ghana. The bulletin assesses the food nutrition situation from April to June 2020 and compares the findings with the same period in 2019.

Children that attended Child Welfare Clinics for growth monitoring, promotion and Infant and Young Child feeding counselling reduced by 22% compared to 2019. Additionally, the number of children who have been born in health facilities and put to the breast within the first hour of life has reduced by up to 6 percent in the last year.

Households with limited access to food are employing several coping strategies including eating less preferred food, borrowing food or relying on help from relatives. They are also limiting or reducing the number and portion size of meals each day. The GHS, UNICEF, WFP and MoFA are cooperating to address the identified negative impacts, are supporting the continuity of essential health and nutrition services and advocating for social protection support for food insecure households.

In response to COVID-19 in the Greater Accra and Upper Eastern Regions, UNICEF continues to support the GHS to accelerate the implementation of essential health and nutrition interventions. Supplies were ordered, including Micronutrient Powders, Information and Communication Materials for improving infant and young child feeding, and anthropometric equipment and therapeutic foods for detection and treatment of severe acute malnutrition. In addition, training and roll-out plans were developed to prepare for implementation. A total of 410,262 children and 79,652 women will be reached with nutrition supplies in Greater Accra and Upper Eastern Regions.

## Water Sanitation & Hygiene

UNICEF provided 2,500 pieces of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), 4,000 bottles of sanitizers and 800 containers of liquid soap to the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources for

Environmental Health Officers to perform activities around risk communication and enhanced inspections.

The supplies are targeted for Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) for frontline staff and for use in public spaces where there is a high risk of contracting COVID-19, targeting about 500,000 people. Additional 540 Veronica buckets have been procured for health care facilities and public spaces.

Environmental health officers of the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources have been implementing activities such as: a) Premises inspections at markets, abattoirs, taxi/bus stations, restaurants and community spaces; b) Risk communication covering hand hygiene, mask wearing and other COVID-19 hygiene protocols; c) Provision of handwashing facilities; d) Engagement and sensitization of traders and drivers; and e) Sanitary Burials of suspected COVID-19 cases (336 to date).

Overall, groups reached include religious congregations, households, traders and shop owners, drivers and transport owners.

Forty-two (42) district health committee members have been trained on the construction and installation of Tippy Taps in communities to promote handwashing with soap.



Volunteer partners conducting community outreach activities in Bolgatanga Market, Upper East Region and demonstrating the use of tippy tap for handwashing - September 2020. ©RISEGhana/AlbertSore

UNICEF funding support has been allocated for continued risk communication in pre-identified areas of Greater Accra, Kumasi and Obuasi, and plans are underway to scale these activities up to Eastern, Central and Northern Regions.

## Education

As part of measures to reopen schools, the Ministry of Education has established a 10-Member Committee to develop guidelines and a roadmap. UNICEF was invited to sit on the Committee and represents Development Partners. Among other aspects, the Committee is tasked with making recommendations using the Global Framework for Reopening Schools developed by UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR, WFP, and the World Bank. UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Education to broaden the engagement of about 11,000 stakeholders (national level – 50; regional level - 480; District level – 10,400) in addition to Development Partners (DP) through the broad-based DP Group to directly participate in discussions on this topic to feed into the development of the recommendations.



Headmaster of Nyankpala Junior High School taking the temperature of a student before they enter the classroom.  
©UNICEF/827990/BUTA

In addition to the school re-opening initiatives, UNICEF is supporting the Ghana Education Service's Girls' Education Unit (GEU) and the Guidance and Counselling Unit (GCU) to initiate interventions to engage all 16 regional education directorates and key stakeholders - including adolescent girls, education officials, caregivers, and teachers - on pregnancy prevention, psychosocial support, re-entry and back-to-school campaign initiatives. Key messages for the Back-to-School/Re-Entry Campaign, as well as psychosocial support messages/activities, have been developed and are being printed to support the programme.

Three hundred and fifty (350) radio scripts in English, Mathematics, Integrated Science and Social Science have been completed for the expanded UNICEF-supported radio learning

programmes across the Kindergarten (KG) to Junior High School (JHS) levels. Experts from the Ghana Broadcasting Cooperation (GBC) have strengthened the capacity of 40 broadcasters to support the recording and presentation of the radio learning programme, which is expected to take place from mid-October 2020 and into 2021. Since this is Ghana's maiden intensive/comprehensive radio programme, lessons are being documented to inform future radio and distance learning initiatives.

In addition, the play-based scheme modules to deliver parenting and gender socialization activities piloted in the Garu and Tolon districts in the Northern and Upper East Regions of Ghana, has progressed in the areas of promoting general wellness, literacy, numeracy and gender equality. In ensuring that all children, including those with special educational needs, benefit from the learning opportunity delivered through the radio programme, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles have been mainstreamed.

A draft UDL guide for distance learning programmes has been developed to support script writers, reviewers and proof-readers throughout the implementation of an inclusive radio programme. Additionally, an initial draft UDL guide for parental support for learners will be available in the form of videos, jingles and other products to improve parental support for learners.

As part of the planned implementation of the COVID-19 Coordinated Education Response Plan for Ghana, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education (MoE) and GES to conduct a Rapid Risk Assessment (RRA) to better understand the situation at the basic education level, their complexities and volatile contexts, and establish the extent of vulnerabilities impacting learners' distance learning to improve planning and respond to various learners' needs. The RRA used a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches through structured questionnaires and interviews to collect primary and secondary data from 436 respondents who were purposively sampled, using critical case sampling in five regions and five districts from the northern, middle and southern belts of Ghana.

The final RRA report is currently under review by key stakeholders including the MoE, GES, and development partners. Key findings and

recommendations have been themed under: 1) Impact of COVID-19 on basic education; 2) Vulnerabilities and bottlenecks affecting learners' access to continuous teaching and learning; 3) Evidence-based plan for improved response, monitoring/ results-based management, communication and advocacy; and 4) Using evidence as resource mobilization tool to facilitate GES work on COVID-19 crises and post crises response.

In ensuring the education sector's resilience beyond COVID-19, UNICEF has supported the review of the Annual District Education Operational Plans (ADEOPs) to allow for the integration of Education in Emergency (EiE) preparedness and response planning to mitigate risk of learning disruptions and vulnerability of learners in the event of emergencies or crises in the future.

## Child Protection

In September, the Ghana Police Service, in collaboration with UNICEF, launched the country's first ever Child Protection Digital Forensic Laboratory. This lab is designed specifically to prevent and respond to online child sexual exploitation and abuse and other criminal acts against children bullying and sextortion. The Minister of Interior attended the launch and visited the lab.



Minister of Interior, UNICEF Representative and partners inspect the equipment of Ghana's first Child Protection Digital Forensic Laboratory, Criminal Investigation Department, Ghana Police Service - © UNICEF / UN829022 / ANNANKRA

The lab will help the Ghana Police Service to deal with increasing cases of online abuse as children are spending more time on internet. The lab will help with investigation through the acquisition, analysis, and presentation of electronic evidence

from digital devices and the internet in a way that makes its reliability and integrity stand the scrutiny of any judicial proceedings. This will help increase the conviction rates and prosecutions involving online cases.

Messages on Online Safety during COVID-19 for children have been developed in collaboration with the National Cyber Security Centre to boost social media engagement to promote the safety of children as they continue to use online options to access education. The messages are being shared through the social media accounts of the Ministry of Communications and National Cyber Security Centres.

During the reporting period, UNICEF supported Government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) across the country to engage a total of 119,105 people (Girls - 23,270, Boys - 29,638, Women - 30,882 Men - 35,315) on COVID-19 prevention and child protection issues. Since the start of the COVID-19, cumulatively, 657,460 people were reached in over 1,000 communities across the country.

Field facilitators engaged cross sections of communities through mass media channels such as community information centers, information vans, schools, home visits, and small group meetings such as Safe Space meetings with adolescent girls (while observing social distancing protocols and other COVID-19 preventive measures).



A young boy demonstrating how to wear nose mask © UNICEF – Sept 2020.

The community engagements have contributed to the increased awareness on the COVID-19 disease and the safety protocols in the target communities reached. Through these sessions, community members are provided with the correct information about the COVID-19 pandemic and its

prevention members and where to report suspect cases. The likely impact of the disease and its implications for the protection of children has been a key topic addressed during the engagements. Parents and caregivers were sensitized on the need to support their adolescent girls to prevent them from becoming victims of teenage pregnancy while a greater part of schools remain closed.

The Ghanaians Against Child Abuse (GACA) campaign continues to reach people with COVID-19 and child protection related helplines and better parenting messages. The movement engaged a total of 1,384,416 people through GACA social media handles with COVID-19 and child protection messages (up from 1,270,956 reported during the last reporting period). The number of followers has also increased to 33,674.

The period under review saw 12 recorded messages on COVID-19 and child protection from traditional and religious leaders being shown on four TV stations and eight FM stations at the national and regional levels. The messages are also posted on all the GACA social media handles. The messages were in English language and other major local languages/dialects.

Child protection and C4D teams engaged with community radio stations covering all 16 regions on child protection and COVID-19 awareness creation and prevention.

All the radio stations involved are engaging with young people to develop information jingles in relation to GACA five key themes: covering child marriage, teenage pregnancies, online safety, violence against children and children without Parental Control in the Context of COVID. The production of information jingles is ongoing and the competition to select the best for the programme is scheduled for September 25, 2020 on all the radio stations.

## Social Policy

UNICEF has almost completed the second data collection of the phone survey to measure the impact of COVID-19 on Households and children in collaboration with the Ghana Statistical Service and the World Bank.

## Communication

UNICEF participated in a nationally broadcast discussion on Ghana Television regarding 'Child Protection amid COVID-19'. The participants discussed the



and implementation of the Child and Family Welfare Policy in the context of the pandemic. The debate also included how parents balance protection of their children when many are obligated to return to workplaces. The discussion was also published on other channels and received over 800 views on Facebook.

During this reporting period, UNICEF hosted a chat on the issue of violence against children, stigma and overall mental wellbeing in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The discussion featured Her Excellency the Second Lady of the Republic of Ghana Madam Samira Bawumia, four young U-Report Champions from Accra and Tamale, the UNICEF Country Representative, and was facilitated by the sports broadcaster and UNICEF Influencer Gary al-Smith.



Screenshot of the participants of the Zoom chat on COVID-19 and impact on children and young people, featuring H.E. Second Lady of the Republic of Ghana, Madam Samira Bawumia. © UNICEF Ghana

The chat included topics such as the heightened risk of violence against children during the pandemic, psychosocial support available for children, prevention of stigma and discrimination and the safe reopening of schools.

In September, UNICEF also highlighted the importance of vaccination and the spread of the polio virus across its social channels, as a one-week vaccination campaign took place across eight regions in Ghana. Partners also shared polio related messages on their various platforms and played the jingles in communities, lorry parks and markets. So far, the key messages have reached over 1.5 million people via various channels.



Polio campaign communication and vaccination tools.  
©UNICEF/UN823733/BUTA

As the country saw the easing of some COVID-related restrictions by the government, UNICEF partners intensified community engagements using information vans and community information centres. Radio talk shows also targeted community members, mothers, caregivers, traders and shoppers at the markets, and passengers, drivers and vendors at the lorry parks. Discussions were held with leaders, social influencers and religious leaders. A total of 1,301,044 people is estimated to have been reached during this period.

From the 1,301,044 reached, the Agoo digital platform received 124,328 calls on COVID related topics from 11,000 people.

Observations indicate an increase in awareness of COVID-19, its prevention and management, but feedback from community engagement activities suggests a reduction in adherence to COVID protocols due to the perception that the disease has abated.

## Adaptations to ongoing UNICEF programmes

Since the first two cases of coronavirus were confirmed in Ghana in March 2020, UNICEF has responded to the pandemic across all social sectors, through technical assistance, the provision of supplies and support in the field. Existing programmes have also been adapted with a focus on the continuity of access to social services. In addition, UNICEF continues to coordinate UN Programme Criticality Assessments to review strategies and guide protocols.

In July and August, UNICEF conducted a Mid-Term Review of its 2018-2022 joint Country Programme of Cooperation, in close consultation with the Government of Ghana, the UN and partners. The programmes remain relevant and a few adjustments were made to best support the COVID-19 response and other emergencies, as well as innovative areas of interventions.

In September, UNICEF helped the Government prepare for the resumption of the polio immunization campaign in the context of COVID-19. The Team based in Tamale, in the north of Ghana, also coordinates with key actors to respond to the current floods. In addition, UNICEF has been helping the Ministry of Education in develop tools for distance learning and recommendations related to the upcoming re-opening of schools.



A UNICEF vehicle on its way to reach children with vaccines, in Tumu, Upper West Region, on 10 Sept. 2020.  
©UNICEF/UN733021/BUTA

## Funding Overview and Partnerships

UNICEF continues to coordinate closely with the UN Country Team in Ghana on joint planning and programme response. As part of the Global UNICEF Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC), UNICEF in Ghana appealed for US\$ 18.2 million to facilitate continued access to essential, quality and inclusive social services and the protection of children and families affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thanks to the support of development partners and private donors such as World Bank (PEF), DFID, USAID, the Government of Japan, Standard Chartered and Mastercard Foundation, to date UNICEF has received US\$ 9.7 million. Other development



Leticia smiles with her two children, Paul and Abigail, who have just received polio vaccines in North Dayi in the Volta region.

©UNICEF/UN124457/MILLS

cooperation agencies and partners such as Global Affairs Canada, Netherlands, KOICA and China International Development and Cooperation Agency have expressed solidarity to support the delivery of results for children across the country and additional funds are already in the pipeline.

A total of US\$ 5.8 million are still required to fill the continuing gaps in ensuring a comprehensive and effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic, for vulnerable children, young people and families in Ghana.

## External Media (Links)

Child Protection Amid COVID-19 – Ghana TV (Ghana Broadcast Cooperation) -

<https://www.facebook.com/gbcghana/videos/321553729075057/>

Handover of Vaccine Freezer to Manhyia Hospital

<https://newsghana.com.gh/manhyia-government-hospital-receives-vaccine-refrigerators/>

Launch of Digital Forensic Lab

<https://www.gna.org.gh/1.18664322>

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## Annex A - Summary of Programme Results - UNICEF in Ghana

Sector	UNICEF and IPs Response	
	2020 target	Total results*
<b>Risk Communication and Community Engagement</b>		
RCCE Indicator 1: Number of people reached on COVID-19 through messaging on prevention and access to services.	26,000,000	30,909,021
RCCE Indicator 2: Number of people engaged on COVID-19 through RCCE actions.	1,800,000	2,634,813
RCCE Indicator 3: Number of people sharing their concerns and asking questions/clarifications for available support services to address their needs through established feedback mechanisms.	200,000	178,863
<b>Water Sanitation &amp; Hygiene and Infection Prevention &amp; Control</b>		
IPC Indicator 1: Number of people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services.	200,000	344,922
IPC Indicator 2: Number of healthcare facilities staff and community health workers provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).	2,512	6,031
IPC Indicator 3: Number of healthcare facility staff and community health workers trained in Infection Prevention and Control (IPC).	8,800	9,300
<b>Health</b>		
Continuity of Health Care Indicator 1: Number of healthcare providers trained in detecting, referral and appropriate management of COVID-19 cases among children, pregnant and breastfeeding women.	10,000	1,500
Continuity of Health Care Indicator 2: Number of children & women receiving essential healthcare services, including immunization, prenatal, postnatal, HIV & GBV* care in UNICEF supported facilities.	403,420	546,802
<b>Nutrition</b>		
Continuity of Health Care Indicator 3: Number of primary caregivers of children aged 0-23 months who received IYCF counselling through facilities and community platforms.	300,000	112,765
<b>Education</b>		
Access to Continuous Education, Child Protection and GBV Services Indicator 1: Number of children supported with distance/home-based learning.	9,177,934	6,590,201
Access to Continuous Education, Child Protection and GBV Services Indicator 2: Number of schools implementing safe school protocols (COVID-19 prevention and control).	42,180	42,180
<b>Child Protection and Gender Based Violence</b>		
Access to Continuous Education, Child Protection and GBV Services Indicator 3: Number of children without parental or family care provided with appropriate alternative care arrangements.	200	382 (196 girls, 186 boys)
Access to Continuous Education, Child Protection and GBV Services Indicator 4: Number of children, parents and primary caregivers provided with community based mental health and psychosocial support.	260,000	657,460 (Girls-144,886 Boys-135,592 Women-194,428 Men-182,554)
Access to Continuous Education, CP & GBV Services Indicator 5: Number of UNICEF personnel & partners that have completed training on GBV risk mitigation & referrals for survivors, including for PSEA*.	100	95
<b>Social Protection</b>		
Social Protection Indicator 1: Number of households (affected by COVID-19) receiving humanitarian multi-sector cash grant for basic needs.	300,000	322,000

Qualitative Indicators	
<p>In the last reporting period, what are the top (up to 3) access issues/constraints due to COVID-19 and related response measures, as identified in feedback mechanisms from affected populations, for each of these service areas:</p>	<p>Responses:</p>
<p>(a) Health services access</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In the ongoing VDPV2 outbreak response, fear of contracting COVID-19 amongst care givers resulted in a reduce uptake of immunisation service for children. This was addressed through reassurance visits and strengthening of positive messages to increase service uptake.</li> <li>2. The health workers are currently engaged in multiple roles (COVID-19 and others) limiting their full commitment on providing essential services to clients.</li> <li>3. PPE's are in continuous demand, with the need for a strong supply chain to ensure uninterrupted service delivery at all levels.</li> </ol>
<p>(b) Nutrition services: (management of wasting/SAM; nutrition supplements, other services)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Less children attended Child Welfare Clinics (CWC) in Q2 of 2020 compared to Q2 2019.</li> <li>2. The number of children born in health facilities and put to the breast within the first hour of life has reduced in Q2 2020 compared to same period last year.</li> <li>3. The number of underweight children in Q2 of 2020 is less than in the same period in 2019.</li> </ol>
<p>(c) Access to food</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Households are using coping strategies, such as eating less preferred food, borrowing food or relying on help from relatives, limiting or reducing portion sizes of meals, and reducing the number of meals eaten per day.</li> <li>2. Prices of food commodities have increased.</li> </ol>
<p>(d) Water Sanitation and Hygiene</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Non-compliance with social distancing and other hygiene protocols may pose a higher risk as elections related activities increase.</li> <li>2. Logistics and materials storage capacity of lead Ministry are limiting the speed of the response.</li> </ol>
<p>(e) Education services including continuation of learning options</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engagement of key GES/MoE partners in monitoring ongoing final year SHS/JHS examination and schools' adherence to the COVID-19 protocols is contributing to delayed planning for some initiatives. This may continue as some students are resuming in October 2020.</li> <li>2. Inadequate capacity of parents and learners on digital literacy for improved protection when learning on-line.</li> <li>3. Limited coverage of learners on the radio platform due to limited scope-currently for KG-Prim 3.</li> </ol>
<p>(f) Child protection related services</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reports from district social welfare officers indicate that child neglect and maintenance cases are on the rise as a result of finance hardship. Fathers continue to falter in the payment of maintenance for their children.</li> <li>2. Smaller group consultations conducted by UNICEF and partners in programme communities have indicated that teenage pregnancy is on the rise. This may have a negative impact on the ability of adolescent girls to return to school.</li> </ol>