



## COVID-19 Adaptation Case Study

# Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief for Aid and Relief

Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief is testing increased access to antenatal ultrasound imaging for women in rural Ethiopia with the goal to improve the quality of obstetrical care.

CPAR was scheduled to complete their baseline assessment in July 2020 but faced challenges due to a communications shutdown in the country and health and safety issues related to COVID-19.



### COVID-19 Adaptations:

To manage these risks and complete the baseline assessment in a timely manner, CPAR developed a strategy for low-risk data collection in collaboration with their local partners:

- Original plan involved in-person/door-to-door surveys and focus group discussions, but this was found to be inappropriate in the context of the pandemic given the probability of transmission.
- CPAR decided to collect data from women at the local public market to minimize unnecessary risk.
- Details of the approach:
  - Provided masks to survey participants as incentive for participation;
  - Confirmed acceptability of verbal rather than written consent of survey respondents with the Zonal Health Authority in advance, allowed staff and participants to avoid physical contact;
  - Stationed staff on the perimeter of the market to avoid densely populated areas and allow for more private conversations;
  - Rented hotel room 3 days prior to staff arrival in city to lower risk of potential Covid-19 transmission from previous guests.

### Limitation & Mitigation:

- As most survey participants were from more urban Weredas, some concern that the sample may not be sufficiently representative of project participants (which include semi-urban and rural populations).
- Urban beneficiaries generally have greater autonomy with respect to decision-making about their own health.
- Used baseline data from a January 2020 sexual and reproductive health project that contained significant coverage of semi-urban and rural participants to provide context on decision-making authority and common barriers to antenatal care (i.e., distance, money, time).

### Outcomes:

- Able to complete baseline survey in safe and effective manner.
- Further developed relationship with Zonal Health Authority in navigating these challenges.
- Able to utilize secondary baseline data from another project.

