



Lessons learned from nimble adaptations to organisations' responses to the sexual and reproductive health (SRH) needs of adolescents in the context of the COVID-19 crisis.

Country: Uganda

UNFPA and Jumia

Guided by the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Plan of Action, UNFPA Uganda has a long and successful track record of working with the government of Uganda, cultural and religious institutions, civil society organizations, including youth organizations, and the private sector to improve the lives of women and young people. Jumia was established in May 2012 with the aim and vision to become the one-stop-shop for retail in Africa with the implementation of best practices both online and offline. Starting with three employees, Jumia presently has a staff strength of over three thousand young and entrepreneurial people. The company provides deliveries to all regions across Uganda. In partnership with Jumia, UNFPA has offered delivery of contraceptives that are more accessible and waived restrictions based on factors such as age, marital status, parental consent, and cost.

Were you delivering services to young people before the COVID-19 crisis?

Jumia was not focused on sexual reproductive health (SRH) product delivery to young people before COVID-19. However, UNFPA eventually partnered with Jumia to enable public access to SRH commodities through the Jumia platforms during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This type of digital solution is particularly vital in the context of COVID-19 to respond to challenges of access to SRH information and services. It builds on similar partnerships with the private sector to enable users to order SRH commodities online.

What new approaches did you use to respond to the barriers created by the COVID-19 pandemic to reach young people?

Clients had access to a wide range of SRH commodities through the partnership, including male and female condoms, contraceptive pills, HIV self-test kits, pregnancy test kits, and maternity kits (mama kits) conveniently and privately. With the support of UNFPA, Jumia also leveraged its extensive reach to disseminate information on sexual and reproductive health.

Before the partnership, Jumia only offered 55 SRH products on its platform. It has now expanded to 232 products. These include:

- Menstrual products: 82 products from over 8 brands, e.g., Always, Holic Pad, Johnson, Feathers
- Condoms: 15 unique brands, e.g., Lifeguard, O, Bareback, Durex, Erotica, Kiss, and more
- Maternity kits (Mama kits)
- HIV & Pregnancy Testing kits

More specifically, for a user to order a product, the user has to download the Jumia app or log onto the website. Then, they can place an order from the reproductive health category on the e-shop and pay using a card, mobile money, or via cash on delivery. Once this is done, the Jumia driver picks up the item and delivers it to the user.

To ensure sustained access to reproductive health commodities during the COVID-19 pandemic, all reproductive health items ordered through the reproductive health category on the Jumia e-shop were not subject to delivery fees until January 2021. Thereafter, users were still able to purchase reproductive health commodities using the personal health pharmacy from pharmacies listed in the shop app, whilst paying a nominal delivery fee. UNFPA also supported Jumia to expand their Jumia pharmacy reproductive health section to have more vendors.

Before the partnership, there were only two pharmacies listed on the platform. Increasing the number of pharmacies registered on Jumia to a total of 14 vendors, 11 on jumia.ug and 3 on food.jumia.ug. Additionally, 43 customer service employees were trained on sexual and reproductive health products and services to ensure the agents were equipped with information to dispel SRH myths and misconceptions. Finally, Marie Stopes International was contacted to facilitate the activity and provide their hotline number for agents to refer to for more complex SRH-related inquiries.

This activity aimed to enable Jumia as an organization to have a basic understanding of SRH, given that it is primarily an e-commerce organization. The training enabled Jumia agents to easily engage with clients while delivering and selling SRH commodities.

Why did you decide to use these approaches?

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the health and safety of women and young people. Like many other countries, Uganda continues to grapple with the disruptions in SRH services and restricted access to contraceptives caused by the pandemic.

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, UNFPA decided to work with partners, including Jumia, to ensure that young people can access SRH services and strengthen supply chains for contraceptives.

The UNFPA partnership with Jumia is part of efforts to change the narrative regarding accessing sexual and reproductive health and rights. In this regard, UNFPA is committed to finding innovative ways to reach even more women and young people who would otherwise be denied their right to access SRH services.

How are you working to find out if these approaches are having the desired impact?

Within the first 30 days of launching the initiative in November 2020, a dedicated Reproductive Health Shop was created, which consolidated all the vendors of SRH products. All online campaign traffic was directed to the dedicated shop on the Jumia platform, making it easier for customers to find all their desired products in one place. The most consumed products were condoms, menstrual pads, and mama kits.

38,500 people were reached with SRH information through online promotion via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Google. Out of these people reached through the online campaign, 2200 ordered SRH products. Additionally, 43 staff members at Jumia were trained on SRH.

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