

INTRODUCTION

- Well organized, resilient and prepared primary health care units (PHCU) can maintain essential maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH) services during public health emergencies.
- COVID-19 and its prevention have presented unprecedented burden to the already constrained health care system in Ethiopia.
- To augment the MOH responses and to maintain provision of routine essential MNCH services, L10K's COVID-19 project has provided support for Addis Ababa City Administration Health Bureau (AACAHB) and 10 high-volume PHC facilities in Addis Ababa.
- This study documented learnings from the L10K's support to ensure health system resilience in maintaining routine essential MNCH service provision while responding to the COVID 19 pandemic.

METHODS

- This facility-based study was conducted between July 2020 and February 2021 using qualitative key informant interviews with providers and managers; program monitoring data; a pre-and-post facility assessment; and service statistics from the national DHIS2 HMIS system.
- Using the primary health care resiliency framework, the study assessed the resilience of the health system and communities in five domains: awareness, diversity, self-regulation, integration, and adaptability using index measures.

FINDINGS

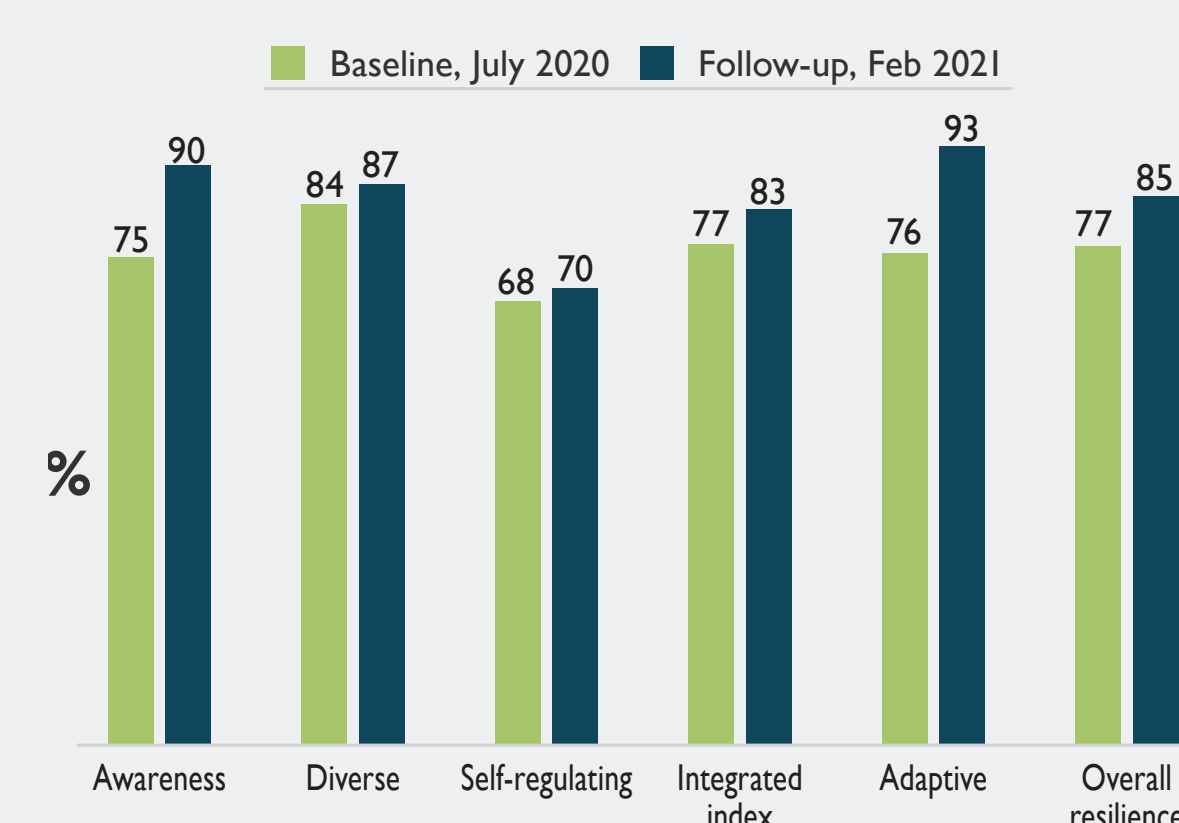
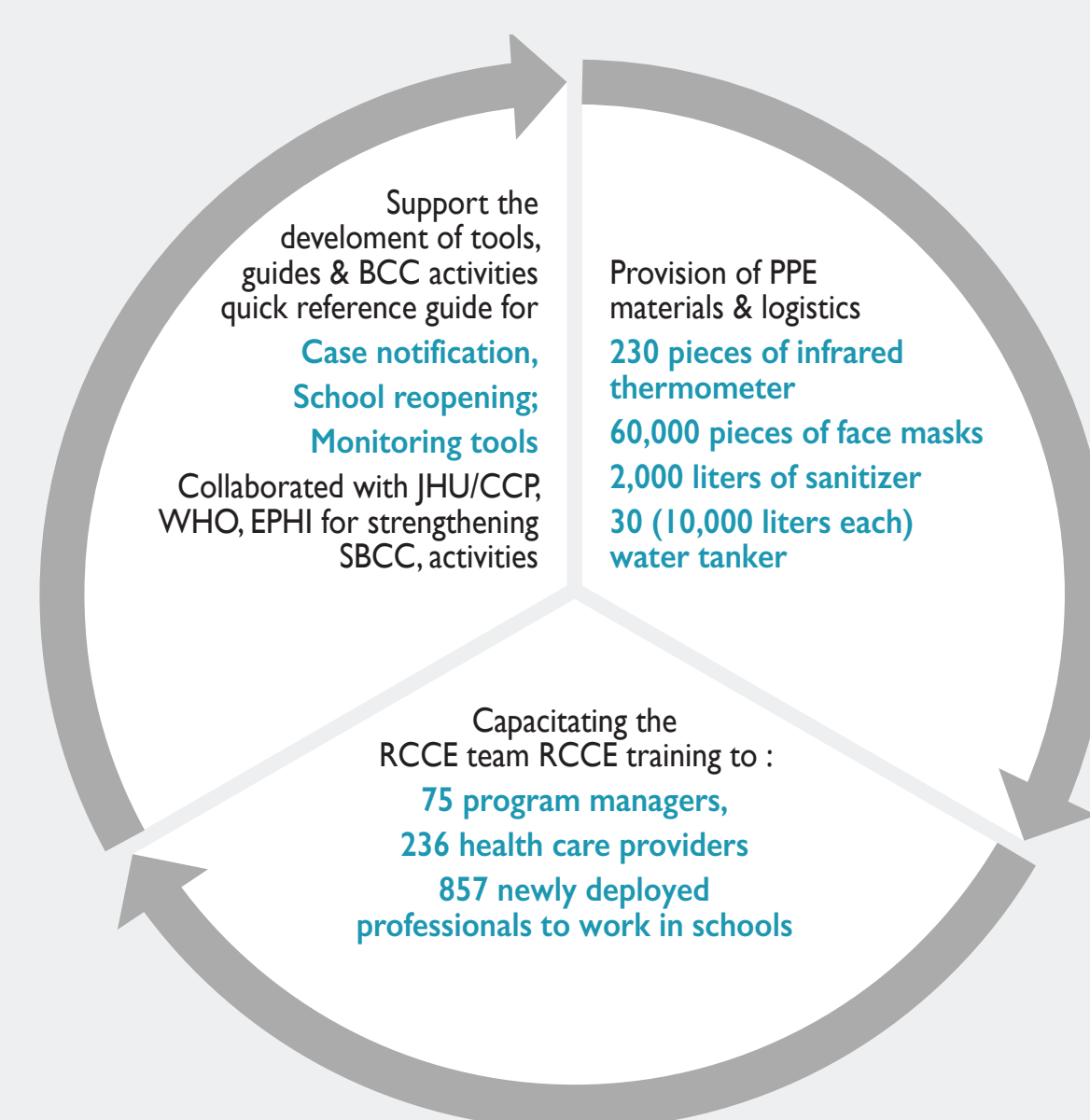
Effects of the pandemic on routine health servicedelivery and utilization

- Stretched the health system
- Decline in service utilization

L10K has made significant contributions to AA health system in general and to the 10 health facilities to effectively respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and maintaining routine services

A Strengthening the health system and activating regional response protocols

- L10K COVID-19 response project has provided substantial technical, logistic and training support to the AACAHB to optimize preparedness and response activities as shown in the figure.



- L10K's support for the 10 PHCUs has helped them to maintain MCH service provision, while responding to the pandemic as shown in the below trend figure from July 2019 to December 2020

D Scale and sustainability

- Study informants affirmed that the intensive efforts made at the 10-high volume health centers were expanded to other health centers in the city.

"The other challenge is that the health system is not absorbing initiatives well or effectively taking ownership and working sustainably. Staff are not motivated and there is a need to think how to continue to sustain such initiatives."

- L10K program lead

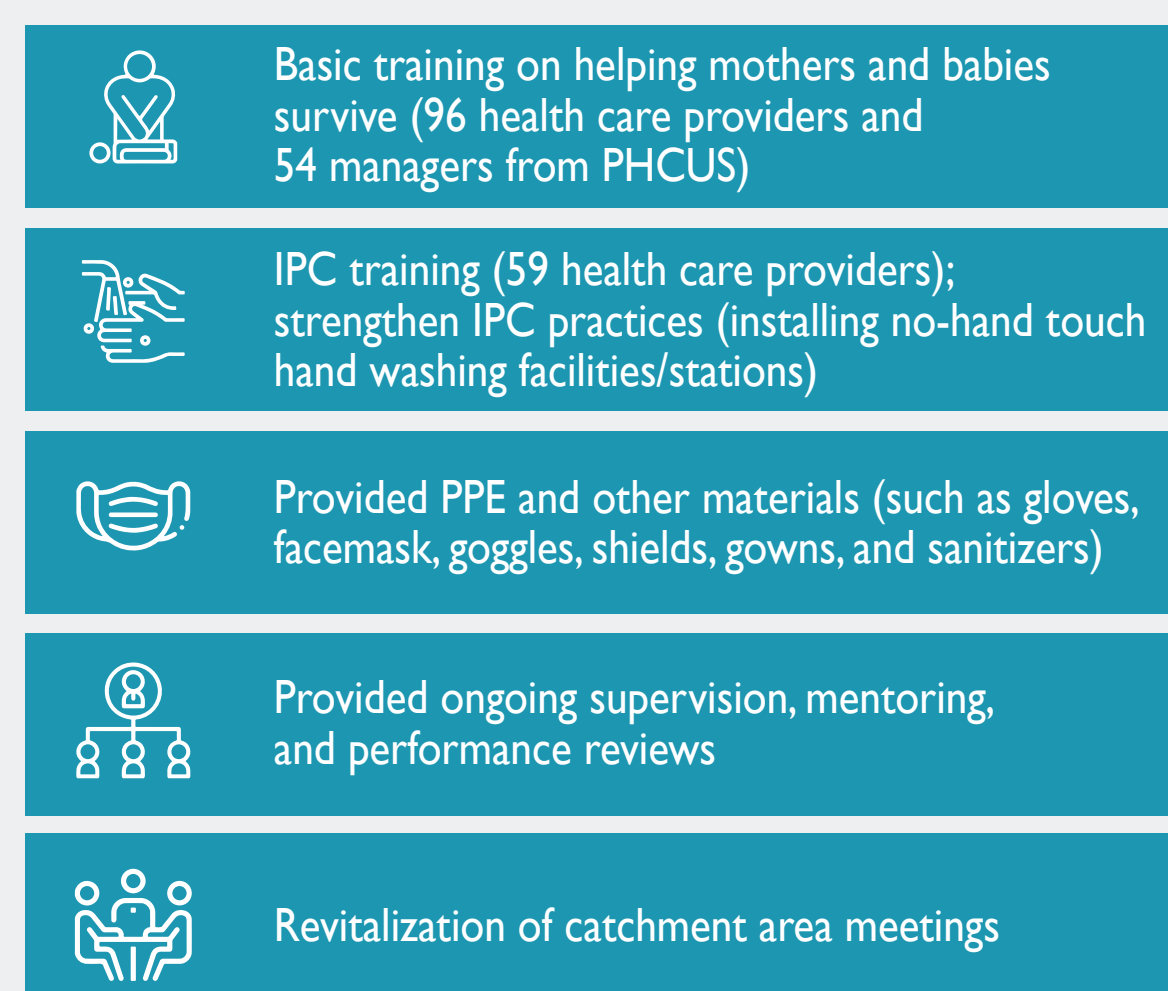
E Areas of improvement

- There are some concerns regarding the sustainability of the efforts so far and further containing the pandemic. Respondents mentioned a need for further support to strengthen the health system.

"We used the same implementation strategies in other health centers and hospitals [in the city]. ... we have scaled up the customized supervision checklist based on the L10K checklist ...for other facility supervision, guidelines updated by L10K were distributed to other facilities, same training was given for other facilities, at least one staff per facility trained, and filled skill gaps to sustain the interventions."

- AACAHB MCH Directorate Director

B Supporting PHCUs to boost their readiness to maintain core functions and adhere to proper



C Resilience of the PHCU in maintaining routineessential MCH services

- The 10 PHCUs that received support from L10K COVID-19 response project showed improved resilience from 77% in July 2020 at baseline to 85% by Feb 2021 (8 months) as shown in the following figure.

CONCLUSIONS

- The adaptive designing and harmonization of the project in addressing the needs of the health system have influenced appropriate use of resources for appropriate pandemic response activities.
- The PHC system, including the community health system, has played a critical role in ensuring the continuity of essential health services despite the challenges posed by the pandemic
- Enhancing the capacity of the PHCU to increase surge capacity; manage and maintain stocks of PPE and other essential medicines and supplies; and ensure timely adaptation to address the potential risk of a COVID-19 case surge; and escalated demand for primary care.
- Innovative strategies can harness the resilience of the community health system to maintain routine services provision in the wake of public health emergencies and attain SGDs and UHC.