

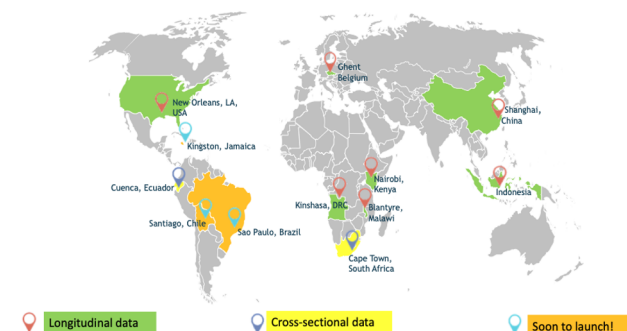
# Opportunities & Challenges of conducting longitudinal research during the COVID-19 pandemic: lessons from the field

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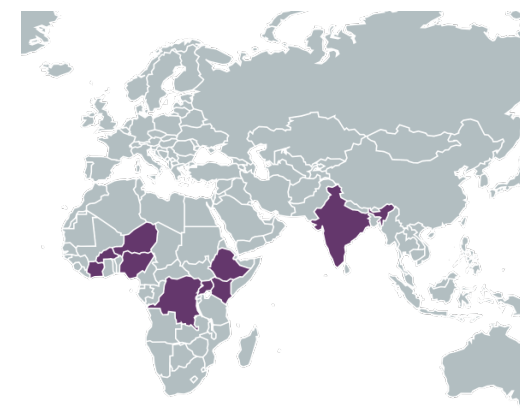
# Longitudinal Research Platforms

- **Global Early Adolescent Study:**  
Multi-site study on gender socialization & health and well being among adolescents 10-14 years living in urban poor communities
- **Performance Monitoring For Action (PMA):**  
National/sub-national cohort studies of women of reproductive age exploring levels and trends in Family Planning in LMIC

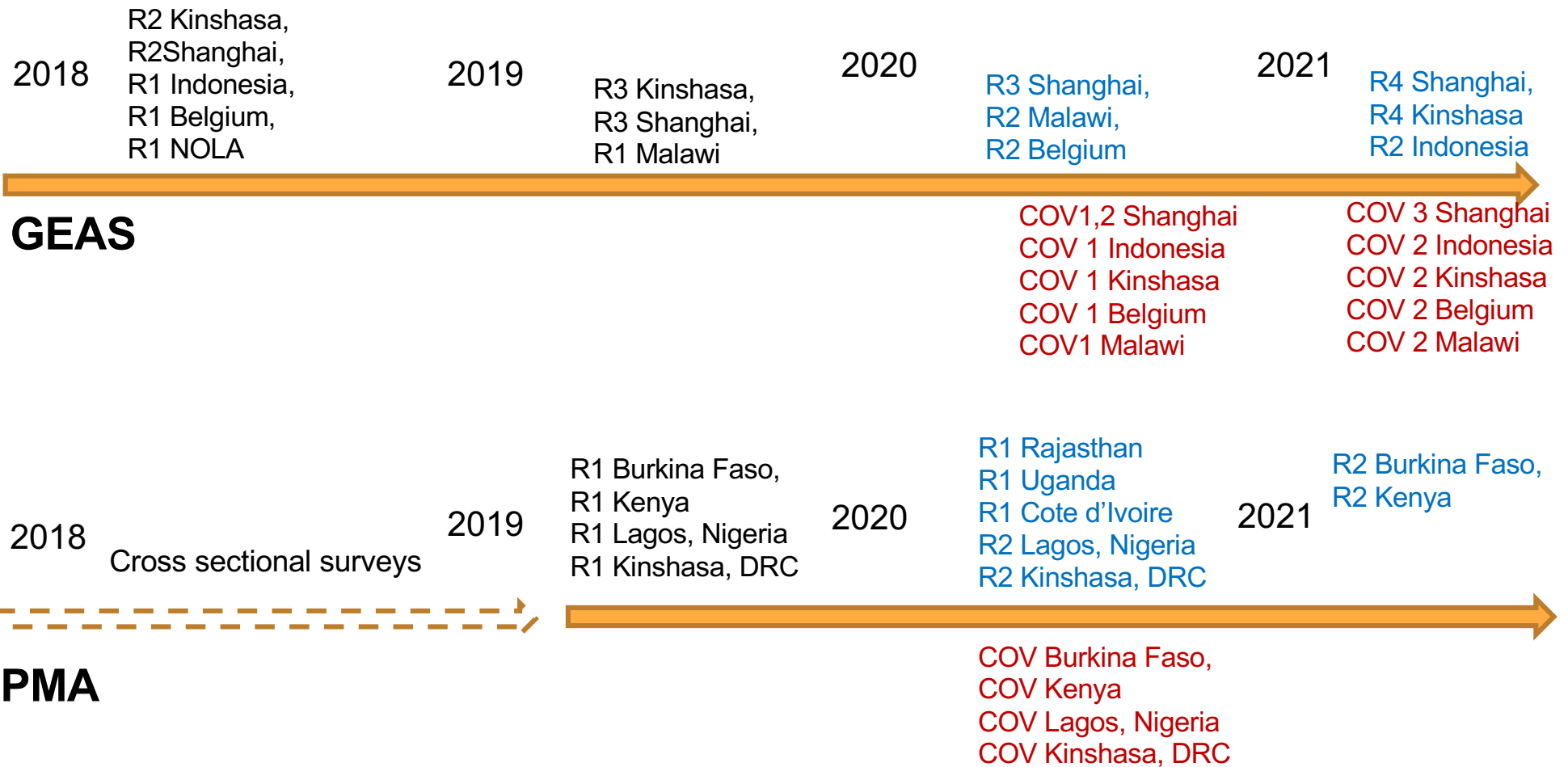
GEAS Country Sites



PMA countries



# Data collection During COVID



# Opportunities

1

## Rapid adaption by leveraging existing resources

- Human capital : Global Network of researchers & HR capacity (coordinating centers, trained staff, experienced interviewers)
- Technical capacity

2

## Innovations

- PMA Remote training model
- GEAS Online data collection

2

## Research

- Pre-COVID measures

# Opportunities: lessons from the field

**GEAS remote data collection:** Online survey data collection in x sites (Belgium, Indonesia, New Orleans, Chile)

1. Importance of known human interface (80% follow-up in Indonesia via teacher What's up message)
2. Use of familiar platforms to facilitate transition to remote data collection
3. Funds to provide free data and/or phone plans to facilitate connectivity to participate;
4. Train field staff to detect and respond to potential technical issues & provide consistent follow-up with participants to identify & address issues

**PMA 3 day remote semi-asynchronous training:** video lectures in youtube private channel and uploaded from GoogleDrive & small group reinforcement activities via What's up, & active monitoring through phone calls

Pierre Akilimali, PMA DRC

1. When the world evolves, evolve with it – thoughtfully
2. Lean into adaptation and reactivity;
3. Failing to plan is planning to fail
4. Trust your collaborators, and be generous and daring with learning opportunities

*"People are naturally scared of what they don't know", says Pierre. "And so sometimes they'll be hostile about innovation, not everyone is ready to adopt innovative approaches. You need to help them to understand the advantages and the risks. And once they've seen it, they can become big fans. But first, you need to dare to try it."*

<https://www.pmadata.org/news/remote-training-success-drc-its-all-your-mind>

# Challenges

## 1 Delays & Cost

- Delays: Half of sites delayed for 6 months to 1 year and 1 GEAS site dropped out
- COVID preventive measures for in person interviews (mask, gloves, screening, COVID factsheets)

## 2 Technical

- Dropped calls & connectivity issues
- Glitches in internet interface

## 3 Selection & data quality

- Lost to follow-up (GEAS= No school support; PMA phone ownership & trust)
- Effect of data collection mode?

## 4 Ethical considerations

- Privacy and confidentiality
- Lack of support systems (mental health distress)
- Incentives in the context of increasing economic hardship

# References

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