

TEMPLATE FOR SUBMISSION OF CONTRIBUTIONS



2020 Regional Development Forum for Africa (RDF-AFR)

*Digital transformation to accelerate achievement of the SDGs
– Digital development, partnerships and funding*

6-7 October 2020, 12:00 – 15:00 CAR (Virtual meeting)

with preparatory break-out sessions on 5 October 2020 (12:00 – 13:30 CAT time)

CONTRIBUTION BY UNFPA East and Southern Africa Regional Office

TITLE: TuneMe to promote youth Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

EXPECTED DURATION OF PRESENTATION: 5 minutes

CONTACT: UNFPA ESARO

❖ **Africa Regional Initiatives:** [Select the Regional Initiative(s) relevant for your contribution]

[Yes] **AFR Regional initiative 1 – Building digital economies and fostering innovation in Africa**

[No] AFR Regional initiative 2 – Promotion of emerging broadband technologies

[No] AFR Regional initiative 3 – Building trust and security in the use of telecommunications/
information and communication technology

[Yes] **AFR Regional initiative 4 – Strengthening human and institutional capacity building**

[No] AFR Regional initiative 5 – Management and monitoring of the radio-frequency spectrum and
transition to digital broadcasting

❖ **Related ITU development thematic:** [Select the thematic area(s) relevant for your
contribution]

[No] Networks and digital infrastructure

[No] Cybersecurity

[No] Emergency telecommunications

[No] Environment

[No] Digital policy and regulation

[Yes] **Capacity development**

[Yes] **Digital services and applications**

[Yes] **Digital inclusion**

[No] Digital innovation ecosystems

[No] Statistics and data for evidence-based decision making

❖ **Year(s) of implementation:** [Select the year(s) for which your action/project/initiative is
relevant]



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|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------------|
| [No] 2018 | [No] 2019 | [No] 2020 | [No] 2021 | [Yes] Others 2015 – to date |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------------|

❖ COVID-19 response related initiative: [Please indicate if your action/project/initiative is relevant for COVID-19 response]

[Yes] COVID-19 response related initiative

Background [max 300 words]

Africa is experiencing a booming youth population - 41% of the total population is under the age of 15, compared to a world average of 29 per cent. If this large cohort of adolescents and young people is to achieve healthy and productive adulthood, their health and well-being must be protected. Yet, African adolescents and young people face a complex set of risks and vulnerabilities that impede the fulfilment of their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Young people must receive quality information on how to adopt safer sexual behaviors considering the challenges they are facing in accessing quality SRH information due to the coronavirus pandemic. There have been relatively strong increases in the infrastructure enabler, driven by growth in 4G coverage and the expansion of mobile broadband coverage in Sub-Saharan Africa¹. Network quality has also improved significantly and the vast majority of countries now have average broadband speeds that allow reasonable quality internet browsing (greater than 2 Mbps)². Therefore, it is critical that SRHR programmes include mobile technology as part of their strategies to engage, inform, and link young people with accurate information and services.

UNFPA through its flagship youth programme, “Safeguard Young People” (SYP), which is supported by the Swiss Development Agency, in collaboration with Praekelt Foundation, Ford Foundation and DFID developed and rolled out Tune Me, a mobile site (mobsite) designed for low- and high-end devices in environments where high data charges and poor network coverage combine to limit access to online services. Through social features and content designed to engage users rather than lecture, Tune Me aims to equip adolescents with the information and motivation they need to make better choices. Adolescents access Tune Me through the internet browser on their mobile phone or through Facebook’s Internet.org platform. The Tune Me site is also available on Free Basics, which allows any young person with a mobile phone to access the platform without the limitation of data or Wi-Fi connectivity.

Proposal [max 400 words]

The proposed intervention will highlight the role of m-health in global health as an enabler of inclusion and equity in access. UNFPA ESARO will share the journey of www.tuneme.org, while disseminating few selected findings from the evaluation that was conducted in 2019.

TuneMe is live in Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Botswana, Eswatini and Lesotho. Already more than 200 stories exist on the site, covering subjects as diverse as menstruation and gender-based violence. Adapted from a global standard in sexuality education content, the stories are adapted and translated for local audiences to ensure relevance and improve engagement. Tune Me’s newest feature finds youth-friendly clinics by geo-location, including feedback mechanisms to track quality of care. Since December 2015, Tune Me has carried out 219 Facebook campaigns, one radio campaign, and many mobile web banner campaigns. The Facebook page has had over 3 million unique users, over 50 million impressions, over 60,000 likes and

¹ <https://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/GSMA-State-of-Mobile-Internet-Connectivity-Report-2019.pdf>

² *ibidem*



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more than 345,000 clicks. The majority of fans are 18-24 years old. Tune Me is well underway to become the ‘to go to’ mobisite for sexual and reproductive health information.

Government ministries and local youth networks have supported its launch and rollout in country to ensure adequate integration into existing health and education systems and guarantee longer-term sustainability with its inclusion in National Frameworks for out-of-school Comprehensive Sexuality Education. Tune Me’s long-term goal is to empower local youth groups to take ownership of the content, learn to run its mobisite and Facebook platform, and use them as advocacy tools in campaign activities. The content retains essential messaging in order to have impact — for example, around the safe use of condoms — it is also contextually appropriate.

This innovation fits well in environments where mobile phone usage is high but data and Wi-Fi infrastructure is limited. TuneMe’s strength is in its ability to be adaptable and accessible to a wider range of technology-use by young people, particularly in areas with lower economic status. The mobisite has the ability to strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems related to sexual and reproductive health for adolescents and young people and provide foundational evidence that can help improve youth-friendly health services. TuneMe is part of the UNFPA global portfolio on m-health and it will be soon translated into an App to facilitate increase uptake among young people who have access to smartphones in urban areas.

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