

# COVID-19 VACCINE IMPLEMENTATION

## JOB AID: Early challenges and locally identified solutions

### INTRODUCTION

The Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator's Country Readiness and Delivery workstream has identified common COVID-19 vaccine introduction challenges and corresponding potential solutions through a series of interactive webinars and a survey of global immunization professionals conducted in March 2021. These challenges have been grouped into three theme areas reflecting the subject matters frequently reported. Potential solutions were

synthesized from the survey responses submitted by health workers and are offered in the spirit of facilitating peer-to-peer learning, but do not imply respective endorsement by that nation's ministry of health. Please note that the challenges for which a corresponding solution has yet to be identified by survey respondents is designated by a red flag (🚩). Additional WHO resources are available at the end of the job aid.



### THEME 1: SUPPLY AND LOGISTICS



#### Key challenges

- Short vaccine shelf life during storage
- Monitoring and maintaining appropriate temperature during vaccine transport to ensure vaccine potency
- Limited supply of vaccine 🚩\*



#### Locally identified solutions

##### Health workers in Benin...

- developed a system that prioritized vaccine flow to the most attended vaccine sites to **reduce the risk of wastage** from vaccine expiry

##### Health workers in Mexico...

- worked with the authorities of the different levels of operation, private industry, and civil society to obtain

resources, protect the vaccine supply, and increase capacities to deliver a **universal programme**

##### Health workers in Niger...

- monitored daily vaccine usage rates to inform **deployment strategies**
- redeployed vaccine from one site to another as needed to avoid expiration



#### Additional global expert wisdom

❗ Systems should be developed to assure that at all times and levels the vaccine is kept at an appropriate temperature.

❗ Capacity limitations must be communicated in advance to mitigate wastage and mishandling risks.

❗ Proper training and communication ensures that all those who come into contact with the vaccine prior to administration are aware of the vaccine product(s)' handling requirements.

❗ Key information such as expiry dates and temperature requirements must be labelled on the vaccine packaging.

🚩 \*Challenges for which a corresponding solution has yet to be identified.



## THEME 2 REPORTING AND MONITORING



### Key challenges

- Achieving optimal COVID-19 vaccine monitoring, including key aspects of reporting Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI)
- Selecting appropriate equity metrics and the assurance of adequate prioritization and monitoring of at-risk groups 
- Confusion about how AEFI monitoring is connected to the COVAX no-fault compensation system 



### Locally identified solutions

#### Health workers in Mexico...

- highlighted the importance of **partnerships** and assuring the government is interested in vaccination
- committed to **innovation** in monitoring and surveillance

#### Health workers in Togo...

- publicized free, publicly financed **management and care** of all AEFI events which remains very important for community members, thereby building trust and confidence in vaccination



### Additional global expert wisdom

**i** The importance of monitoring must be communicated to all stakeholders to increase support, compliance, and effective implementation, noting that reporting helps countries to:

- Monitor the speed of progress in vaccine introduction,
- Address issues of inequitable access,
- Understand the vaccination rates for at-risk groups
- Provide vaccinated individuals with their vaccine certificate,
- Prepare for timely second doses and reduce incidence of drop-outs,
- Maintain transparency and public trust, and
- Learn more about the effectiveness and impact of the vaccine.

**i** Monitoring and investigating AEFI is important to detect and correct any issues with vaccines or administration practices early on, and to maintain confidence in vaccination. It is therefore key to:

- 1) Prioritize AEFI reporting as a key component during all trainings including routine trainings;
- 2) Identify gaps in knowledge and focus on strengthening supervisor's knowledge on AEFI; and
- 3) Have a clear focus on the following aspects of AEFI at all levels:
  - What and how to report, and to whom,
  - What will happen when the AEFI is reported,
  - How will the patient be compensated,
  - How will the vaccinator be protected from litigation and disciplinary action in the event of a mistake.



\*Challenges for which a corresponding solution has yet to be identified.



## THEME 3: COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MOBILIZATION



### Key challenges

- Populations within target groups were **fearful/hesitant** about getting vaccinated
- **Pro-vaccine social media** was insufficient in overcoming vaccine hesitancy
- Insufficient **pro-vaccination communications** from the national and regional levels
- Low/slow **health worker uptake** of COVID-19 vaccine



### Locally identified solutions

#### Health workers in Ethiopia...

- worked with a **trusted and well-followed media outlet** to promote accurate vaccine messaging
- mobilized communities through partners and leaders in trusted communities, religious institutions, and private organizations which led to **community engagement** and higher vaccination rates
- shared success stories with other communities leading to even higher rates in neighboring areas
- sent **text messages** to recipients who had not completed their second dose to ensure adherence to recommended schedule

#### Health workers in Ghana...

- provided counselling through one-on-one meetings as part of a dedicated **educational outreach** campaign

- determined that **one-on-one education** is more fruitful than mass education

#### Health workers in Kenya...

- leveraged **WhatsApp groups** to promote greater awareness of vaccine safety and effectiveness among health workers
- designated and trained specific health workers to serve as **"information ambassadors"**

#### Health workers in Papua New Guinea...

- conducted **trainings for health workers** on vaccine safety and efficacy
- held **person-to-person conversations** as part of social mobilization efforts to tackle false information and rumors
- built trust and promoted positive behavior by engaging early vaccination adopters to serve as **role models** with titles such as "health care hero"



### Additional global expert wisdom

**i** Using a standard "presumption of vaccine acceptance" can be helpful at the beginning of any vaccination visit, followed by readiness to discuss the benefits of vaccination, common side effects, and how to manage side effects.

Aim to create an environment in which individuals are comfortable to ask questions and express their concerns. Be prepared for misinformation management. A recommended formula for responding to misinformation is to: start with the facts, emphasize the importance of credible sources, and repeat the facts, and ensure that any gaps left by the debunking need to be filled. This may be achieved by providing an alternative

causal explanation for why the myth is wrong and, optionally, why the misinformers promoted the myth in the first place.

**i** Key communications tips include:

- Use simple and respectful language,
- Share key messages,
- Explain how to deal with common side effects, and
- Use SMS, email, phone, and community mobilization to follow up about second dose, when needed.

**i** Finding out from the end user population who are the principal influencers in the community allows key messages to be better targeted to those profiles.



\*Challenges for which a corresponding solution has yet to be identified.

# WHO resources

The [WHO COVID-19 Vaccine Introduction Toolkit](#) is a one stop shop for COVID-19 vaccination guidance, trainings, and tools. The Toolkit is updated as new resources become available. It is available in all UN languages: [Arabic](#), [Chinese](#), English, [French](#), [Russian](#), and [Spanish](#).

Additional resources are listed below, along with the icon for the theme to which the resource corresponds.



SUPPLY AND LOGISTICS



REPORTING AND MONITORING



COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MOBILIZATION

## VIRTUAL TRAINING:



- [OpenWHO course for health workers](#) includes modules focused on supply and logistics (Module 2), monitoring AEFI (Module 4), reporting COVID-19 data (Module 5), and interpersonal communications (Module 6).



- [OpenWHO Vaccine Specific Training](#) has short videos explaining the key information for using each of the COVID-19 vaccines that have received Emergency Use Listing.

## EXPERT WEBINAR RECORDINGS, INSIGHTS AND CASE STUDIES:



- [COVID-19 vaccine introduction webinars](#)

## GUIDANCE AND TOOLS:



- [COVID-19 vaccination: supply and logistics guidance](#) helps focal points prepare for and strengthen their supply chain strategies for COVID-19 vaccines.



- [How to manage COVID-19 vaccines without VVM at vaccine service points](#)



- [Monitoring COVID-19 vaccination: considerations for the collection and use of vaccination data outlines](#) minimum and optional data to collect on COVID-19 vaccination rollout and key performance indicators.



- [COVID-19 vaccination dashboard](#) provides data on COVID-19 vaccinations globally.



- [AEFI page](#) provides job aides, manuals, and other resources on reporting adverse events following immunization.



- [Generating acceptance and demand for COVID-19 vaccines](#) is a package of guidance and tools to support countries in preparing for COVID-19 vaccines.



- [10 Steps to Community Readiness](#) provides insight on ten Risk Communications and Community Engagement principles that put communities at the heart of COVID-19 vaccine rollout.



- [Health worker communication for COVID-19 vaccination flow diagram](#) provides key messaging for health workers to communicate during a COVID-19 vaccination session.