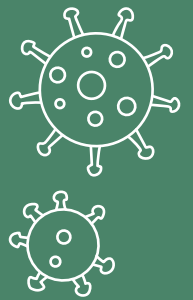




World Health  
Organization

# Strengthening COVID-19 vaccine demand and uptake in refugees and migrants



An operational guide

To support all those responsible for planning and implementing the rollout of COVID-19 vaccine to refugees and migrants at national and local levels

14 March 2022







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## Executive summary

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities in certain populations, which may include refugees and migrants. These populations may face a range of personal, social and physical barriers to uptake of COVID-19 vaccines that will underpin their decisions, motivation and ability to be vaccinated as rapid rollout of COVID-19 vaccines takes place globally; to date these populations have shown lower COVID-19 vaccination uptake and intent to vaccinate in the few countries where this has been measured. WHO recommends that vaccine prioritization within countries should include refugees and migrants and calls for affordable, non-discriminatory access to vaccines for all populations.

This document has been developed as an operational guide to support policy-makers, planners and implementers at national and local levels, including in governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), WHO country offices and other stakeholders responsible for the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines to refugee and migrant populations. The guide is designed to provide practical support, strategies and good practices for understanding and addressing personal, social and practical barriers to COVID-19 vaccines among refugee and migrant populations, acknowledging that they may face a range of unique barriers to accessing immunization systems that need to be better considered by policy-makers and planners.

This guide provides an overview of key activities and considerations for increasing confidence and uptake of COVID-19 vaccines in refugee and migrant populations with the aim of supporting the operationalization of the recent WHO interim guidance COVID-19 Immunization in Refugees and Migrants: Principles and Key Considerations. The guide covers data collection, coordination of policy and planning, implementing communication strategies, social media monitoring, community engagement, capacity-building, and monitoring and evaluation.

The guide should be read in conjunction with a range of relevant supporting reports and guidance documents from WHO (for example on allocation and prioritization of COVID-19 vaccination, prioritizing uses of COVID-19 vaccines when supply is limited, and guidance on acceptance and demand) and relevant organizations. At each point in the guide, these supporting documents are grouped together as Key resources to support each of the priority areas outlined. To facilitate use of this guide, a checklist of key action points is also provided. This guide is highly relevant as a supporting tool for the delivery of all vaccinations to refugee and migrant populations.

To support the development of the document, a rapid evidence review was carried out of peer-reviewed and grey literature on barriers to vaccination in refugees and migrants worldwide. In addition, evidence, action points, and case studies were identified through compiling documents, guidelines and toolkits developed by WHO and other relevant organizations. Information was also obtained from expert members of a WHO-convened technical working group, a series of regional dialogues and a final consultation with key NGOs, WHO representatives and international and regional representatives from international organizations.

# Checklist of priority actions

This checklist provides priority actions and examples to achieve high confidence and uptake of COVID-19 vaccines for refugees and migrants. These domains and actions are not necessarily chronological and may take place concurrently.

Priority	Key implementation considerations
<b>Be driven by data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Use existing tools to generate, analyse and use evidence about each community's context, capacities, perceptions and behaviours</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Obtain accurate refugee and migrant population estimates to facilitate the allocation of resources, vaccine procurement, deployment planning and to help to estimate vaccination coverage and needs in specific settings</li></ul>
<b>Coordinate, plan and implement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Work proactively with community-based organizations, refugees and migrants' rights organizations and community leaders to identify challenges and devise concrete strategies to address them</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Review the required national and local capacity for implementation, readiness, legal frameworks and regulatory requirements for vaccinating all refugees and migrants to ensure equal access to COVID-19 vaccines</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Innovation in service delivery may be required to reach these populations</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Plan, budget, deliver and evaluate</li></ul>
<b>Address key barriers to health and vaccination systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Engage with community organizations to identify drivers and barriers to vaccination</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Utilize community and peripheral health centres as these are known to be more accessible for refugees and migrants, in particular for refugee and migrant women</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Consider onsite camp settings, resettlement or workplace vaccination</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Consider mass vaccination campaigns with women vaccinators to ensure social acceptability of services for refugee and migrant women in communities with gender segregation</li></ul>

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