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# News

## World Immunization Week 2021—

celebrated in the last week of April (24 to 30 April) – aims to promote the use of vaccines to protect people of all ages against disease. Immunization saves millions of lives every year and is widely recognized as one of the world's most successful health interventions. Yet, there are still around 20 million children in the world today who are not getting the vaccines they need, and many miss out on vital vaccines during adolescence, adulthood and into old age.

### The theme

Using the theme 'Vaccines bring us closer', World Immunization Week 2021 will show how vaccination brings people closer to the goals, moments and people they care most about, helping to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone, everywhere throughout life.

### Objectives

As part of the 2021 campaign, WHO, partners and individuals around the world will unite to:

- Reframe the global vaccine conversation to focus on the importance of vaccines
- Highlight the many ways in which vaccines enable us to live healthy, productive lives by preventing the spread of vaccine-preventable diseases
- Demonstrate social proof that the broader public already values and trust vaccines.

While the world focuses on critically important new vaccines to protect against COVID-19, there remains a need to ensure routine vaccinations are not missed. Many children have not been vaccinated during the global pandemic, leaving them at risk of serious diseases like measles and polio. Rapidly circulating misinformation around the topic of vaccination adds to this threat.

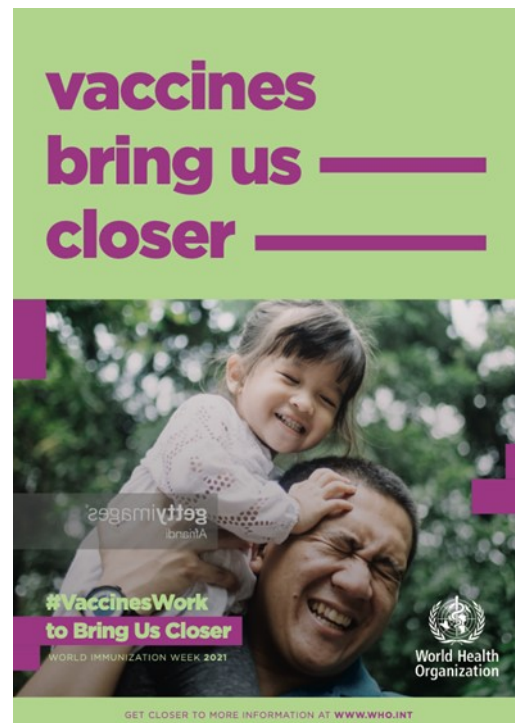
**This year's campaign will aim to build solidarity and trust in vaccination as a public good that saves lives and protects health. To this end, we will be looking for more partners to join us, bringing people together in support of a lifesaving cause, as we shift the emphasis to a more emotionally compelling campaign.**

### Campaign hashtag

#VaccinesWork

### Campaign tagline

Vaccines bring us closer



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## And we're live! Countries begin using the eJRF

[Kristi James](#), WHO Headquarters

After many months of building, improving, and adjusting WHO's and UNICEF's Joint Reporting Form to an online version (known as the eJRF), countries have started entering their data on the new tool.

The eJRF will collect countries' annual immunization data which helps identify trends and gaps at the country, regional, and global level. The data are also used for informing progress with the Immunization Agenda 2030. In addition, the eJRF's flexible design allowed for adding a COVID-19 module for monthly vaccination collection.

In the months leading up to the opening of the eJRF, a team of HQ and Regional colleagues hosted eight informational webinars for over 300 participants, made available in five languages. Most recently, the team led 63 hours of virtual training for more than 1,000 participants, again in five languages.

On 15 March 2021, the eJRF was opened to all Member States, Reporting Entities, and Associate Members to begin entering their annual immunization data. In the first week, 228 users from 109 countries/areas have visited the site and interacted with the tool. This is an encouraging start for a project of this scale.

The next step in aiding this change will be virtual office hours where Zoom links will be open and available for drop-in help. Member States from around the world can simply connect, ask questions, and get help in real-time. Plus, there are built-in training tools for immediate help on simple things like adding a line or understanding how multiple users can work simultaneously.

The goal has been to make the use of the eJRF simple and intuitive but always with personal support to make the transition easy. The start is very encouraging and results will be shared after the eJRF closes.



eJRF in process

# Featured resources: COVID-19 vaccines

## Preparing for COVID-19 vaccine roll-out through simulation exercises

Frederik Copper and Shoshanna Goldin, WHO Headquarters

The current pandemic has shown that many countries face significant challenges across many disciplines. This has underscored the need for regular and comprehensive testing and validation of preparedness and response capacities including through Simulation Exercises (SimEx). WHO has provided extensive support to Member States in carrying out exercises to facilitate capacity building and enhance emergency response. To date there have been 150 simulation exercises implemented across the six WHO regions, and an increasing number of countries are using simulation exercises as continuous learning and system improvement tools.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, WHO has developed and published multiple [COVID-19 specific Simulation Exercise](#) (SimEx) packages in all six UN languages, that aim to strengthen countries' preparedness and response effort in the global outbreak. To date seven specific Table Top eExercise (TTX) packages are available on the WHO website, focusing on different functional areas. The most recent exercises include two vaccine exercises: one focusing on regulatory & safety; and the other one on strategy, supply chain & communications.

Besides the discussion-based exercises, WHO has also developed an operational based COVID-19 vaccine drill, that focuses on practising the vaccine delivery strategy at the vaccination site by deploying real resources and staff. The importance and need for conducting simulation exercises has also been underscored in a recent commentary published in the [Lancet Global Health](#).



Various countries have already used vaccine simulation exercises to test and enhance planning assumption before national vaccine roll out starts, see boxes below. As more countries are receiving COVID-19 vaccines, it is critical that they plan, test and practice their vaccine strategy before national implementation starts. This will help identify what is working well and what is working less well, and enable countries to apply the lessons learned to enhance a smooth, equitable and timely roll out of COVID-19 vaccines.

## COVID-19 Vaccine Simulation Exercises around the World

With support from WHO, [#Moldova](#) conducted the first simulation exercise to prepare for the arrival of [#COVID19](#) vaccines through the COVAX facility.

More info [bit.ly/3rkJn3n](https://bit.ly/3rkJn3n)



Despite being [#COVID19](#)-safe, [#Mauritius](#) launched a COVID-19 vaccination drills to train health workers   to ensure safe and efficient COVID-19 vaccine administration. More info

[bit.ly/30ehWMK](https://bit.ly/30ehWMK)



In [#LaoPD](#), Ministry of Health, WHO & partners participated in a [table-top exercise](#) to

- ✓ discuss COVID19 vaccination strategies
- ✓ identify main challenges to enhance the National Deployment and Vaccination Plan.

More info [bit.ly/3bX2Lgo](https://bit.ly/3bX2Lgo)



In [#India](#), two simulation exercises were conducted in Uttar Pradesh to

- ✓ identify bottlenecks
  - ✓ address possible challenges
  - ✓ ensure a smooth [#COVID19](#) vaccine roll-out in the largest state of the country
- More info

[bit.ly/38fAilb](https://bit.ly/38fAilb)



## PAHO Launches COVID-19 Vaccination Coverage Dashboard for the Region of the Americas

Martha Velandía, Marcela Contreras, Rafael Leon, Carmelita Pacis, Claudia Ortiz, Fernando Revilla, [Octavia Silva](#), PAHO-Washington, DC

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) has launched a [platform](#) that serves as a tool to monitor vaccination coverage, indicators, and activity with COVID-19 vaccines in the Region of the Americas.

Updated weekly on Fridays, the platform uses a combined approach to data collection, based on data submitted by countries in the Americas on a weekly basis or collected through official websites. In the future, the data will include information reported by countries through the electronic PAHO-WHO/UNICEF Joint Reporting Form (eJRF).

Some of the indicators featured in the dashboard include the following:

- **Total doses administered:** All accumulated vaccine doses that have been administered since the beginning of vaccination in a territory/country/region.
- **First dose:** Number of accumulated first doses given when the schedule includes more than one dose.
- **Second dose:** Number of accumulated second doses administered when the schedule includes more than one dose.
- **Single dose:** Number of accumulated single doses applied when the schedule only requires one dose.
- **Complete schedule administered:** This number represents the number of people who received the last recommended dose of any vaccine or completed their schedule. This includes the second dose if the schedule is a two-dose schedule and the single dose in a single-dose schedule.

PAHO looks forward to tracking COVID-19 vaccination progress in the Americas with this dashboard, as well as continuously providing all who are interested with up-to-date information to this end. PAHO's regional dashboard complements WHO's global COVID-19 vaccination dashboard, which can be found at this [link](#).

## New paper outlines challenges with last-mile supply chain financing and recommendations for funders and governments

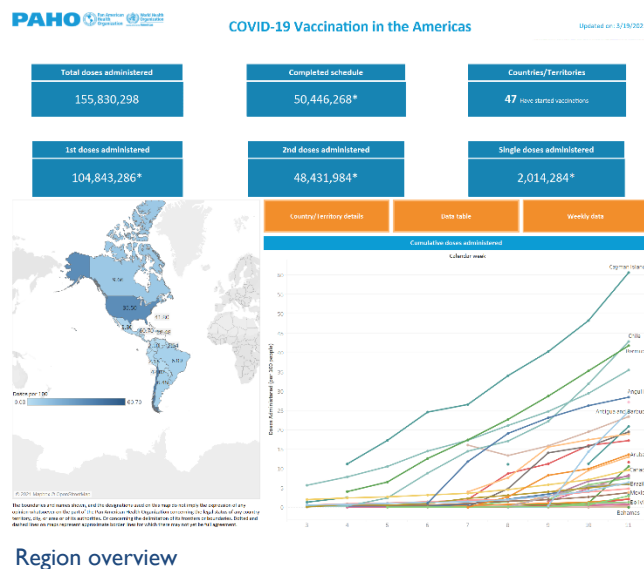
[Jenny Payne](#), VillageReach

Health supply chains in low-income countries have improved markedly thanks to major investments in recent years. Yet the failure to finance last-mile delivery too often prevents products from reaching the people for whom they are intended. COVID-19 only heightens the need to get this right.

A [new paper](#) from Acasus, JSI and VillageReach draws from our collective experience supporting last-mile supply chains, primarily in sub-Saharan Africa, and describes four challenges related to last-mile supply chain financing:

1. Delayed or inefficient fund disbursement prevents timely health product distribution;
2. Inefficient use of available funds constrains their impact;
3. Insufficient financing for last mile supply chain operations impedes activities; and
4. Actual supply chain costs are unknown.

The paper offers examples of how governments and donors have addressed these challenges and outlines recommendations for both funders and governments.





# Past Meetings/Workshops

## Gavi Talks: Gender and Immunization in the context of COVID-19

[Jean Munro](#), Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance

Location: Virtual meeting

Date: [Meeting recording \(5<sup>th</sup> Feb\)](#)

[Meeting recording \(16<sup>th</sup> Feb\)](#)

Participants: Over 200 participants across both webinars, participants were from organizations such as Gavi, WHO, UNICEF, USAID, Global Affairs Canada, and JSI

Purpose: During February 2021, Gavi hosted two webinars to focus on the importance of overcoming gender-related barriers to immunization to achieve equity and increase vaccine uptake. Throughout the pandemic, the Gender and Global Health community have advocated the need for a gender lens in countries' pandemic response, yet a year on from the pandemic outbreak we are witnessing the health inequity and gender equality gap widen further across our globe. In light of these critical and systemic issues, WHO and the Gavi Secretariat presented how partners and countries can incorporate a gender lens into their routine immunization and COVID-19 vaccine roll out to increase vaccine coverage. UNICEF presented how their ROSA gender and immunization toolkit has been used at the country level to provide key country insights into conducting a gender analysis for immunization. The ultimate goal for integrating gender into immunization is for immunization programmes and health systems to reflect the realities, concerns and interests of all genders to reach every last child and adult with immunization.

Details: Presentations were made by Gavi, WHO and UNICEF on the following topics: the Gavi Guidance to Address Gender-Related Barriers to Maintain, Restore and Strengthen Immunization in the Context of COVID-19 (available in [English](#) and [French](#)); Sex and Gender Considerations for an Equitable, Safe and Effective COVID-19 Vaccine Roll-Out; and the UNICEF ROSA Gender and Immunization toolkit and its practical adaptations at the field level with case studies of its use in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

## Over 1,300 national and sub-national Immunization Staff Connect to Learn at the first Teach-to-Reach Connect Event

[Ian Steed](#), [The Geneva Learning Foundation](#) (TGLF)

Location: Virtual meeting

Date: 26 March 2021

Participants: 1,346 national and sub-national immunization staff registered for the first Teach-to-Reach Connect sessions

Purpose: Participants were encouraged (but not required) to focus on three themes in their discussions:

- COVID-19 vaccine introduction.
- Improving immunization training.
- Reaching zero-dose children.

Details: Networking sessions were held in English and French. Participants were randomly matched through a digital platform, and shared experience and learning with one another. On average, about 200 participants at any given time connected with six peers each.

Through event feedback, participants described what they had learned:

*"The discussions helped me to understand that by involving the community with a participatory approach, we can break the barriers and reach the zero-dose children."*

*"We had interesting exchanges on the preparations for the course of the campaign, and especially the management of rumours about the AstraZeneca Vaccine."*

*"I was impressed by the experience shared. It's great that 80% of health workers were vaccinated in just two days of the campaign. I have learned that we need to strengthen communication with health workers to get their support."*

*"The peer I spoke to explained that the launch of the vaccine will be national. All regions will start at the same time. In the country where I am, vaccination has started in the capital and is gradually spreading to the interior."*

100% of respondents to the post-event questionnaire said they would join a future event (n=179).

**Teach to Reach: Connect** is the first Event organized by the Teach to Reach Global community of action, created for Teach to Reach conference attendees, and supported by the Global Council of Learning Leaders for Immunization. More information on the next Event available [here](#).

# Upcoming Course

## WHO Scholar Level I certification on Immunization Agenda 2030 (IA2030)

[Ian Steed](#), The Geneva Learning Foundation (TGLF)

### Application deadline: 4 April 2021 (anglophone and francophone cohorts)

Too many people around the world have insufficient access to vaccines. Immunization Agenda 2030 is a global strategy to leave no one behind.

As an immunization professional working at the national or sub-national level, you are the key to realizing the IA2030 vision and strategy in your local context.

This is the first WHO Scholar course that – in line with Immunization Agenda 2030 – explicitly aims to ‘close the loop’ by more actively engaging global immunization leaders in listening and learning from participants. This WHO Scholar Level I certification course will:

- foster awareness, application, feedback and revision of the IA2030 framework, related activities and documents at all levels of the immunization programme, and
- help you integrate IA2030 strategies and priorities into your immunization context to achieve national, regional and global goals.

### What will I do?

Participants should expect to dedicate at least six-eight hours per week to course work, to:

- Complete successive writing assignments to develop a practical plan suitable for implementation, focused on a selected priority area, integrating core principles and key areas of focus into your context.
- Peer review the drafts of other participants to learn from and provide constructive inputs.
- Revise your draft activities, drawing on what you learned from peer review, resources and ongoing dialogue in the course.

Contribute at least once a week to community dialogue and live online sessions.

### Who should apply?

- The course is most suitable for those directly supporting national immunization planning.
  - National, sub-national, and district EPI management staff, WHO/UNICEF country and regional staff, in-country partner organization staff and consultants are encouraged to apply.
- Women are especially encouraged to apply.

Complete your online application by 4 April 2021!

[Anglophone](#)

[Francophone](#)

## Resources

### LNCT Developed Two New Video Case Studies That Explore How to Create Empathy and Build Demand for Vaccines Among Vulnerable Groups

[Learning Network for Countries in Transition \(LNCT\)](#), Results for Development

[LNCT](#), in partnership with Common Thread, is pleased to announce the launch of two new case studies on vaccine demand in Vietnam. The stories detail the immunization journeys of young mothers Cha and Do through short films to be used for health worker capacity building. In these films, Cha and Do tell their own stories, so that their immunization journeys can be listened to carefully, it helps understand the challenges they face, and learn how their experiences could be made a little easier. The result is two remarkably powerful tales of families overcoming every obstacle to protect their children from vaccine preventable disease.

LNCT is making these films available for anyone to adapt to their own country's health worker trainings on communications, demand generation, and assessing the barriers to immunization. An accompanying facilitator's discussion guide is also available to be used for training purposes. The films are available in English, French, Portuguese, and Russian and the facilitator's guide is available in English with additional languages coming soon.

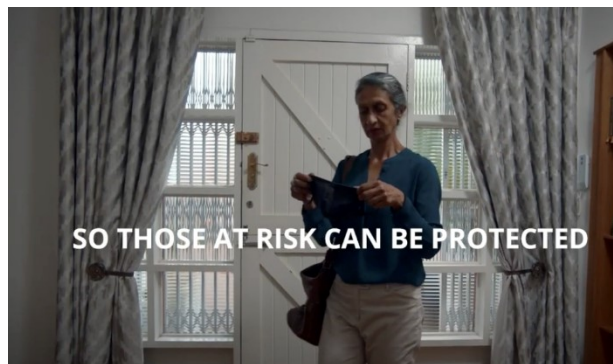
Access all the related materials, including the videos and facilitator's guide on the LNCT website [here](#).

### #TeamVaccines campaign

[Morgane de Pol](#), IFPMA

The International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers & associations (IFPMA) has launched the [#TeamVaccines campaign](#), a global digital campaign designed to build confidence in COVID-19 vaccines. The campaign tells the human stories of real people involved in the making of COVID-19 vaccines.

You can watch Abeda's testimonial [here](#): "[So those at risk can be protected](#)".



Abeda is a pharmacist from South Africa working in medical affairs for COVID-19 vaccines. She tells her personal story about how her brother and his wife have cancer and suffered during the pandemic. She also worries about her elderly mother who suffers from isolation. She explains how she puts her hope in the vaccines because they are the best way to protect the people we love, and because they will help reduce the risk of transmission. Her story is available on #TeamVaccines website [here](#).

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## Links

### Organizations and Initiatives

American Red Cross

[Child Survival](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[Polio](#)

[Global Vaccines and Immunization](#)

Johns Hopkins

[International Vaccine Access Center](#)

[Value of Immunization Compendium of Evidence \(VoICE\)](#)

[VIEW-hub](#)

JSI

[IMMUNIZATIONbasics](#)

[Immunization Center](#)

[Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program \(MCHIP\)](#)

[Publications and Resources](#)

[Universal Immunization through Improving Family Health Services \(UI-FHS\) Project in Ethiopia](#)

PAHO

[ProVac Initiative](#)

PATH

[Better Immunization Data \(BID\) Initiative](#)

[Center for Vaccine Innovation and Access](#)

[Defeat Diarrheal Disease Initiative](#)

[Malaria Vaccine Initiative](#)

[RHO Cervical Cancer](#)

Sabin Vaccine Institute

[Boost – A Global Community of Immunization Professionals](#)

UNICEF

[Immunization](#)

[Supplies and Logistics](#)

USAID

[USAID Immunization](#)

[USAID Maternal and Child Survival Program](#)

WHO

[Department of Immunization, Vaccines & Biologicals](#)

[ICO Information Centre on HPV and Cancer](#)

[National programmes and systems](#)

[Immunization planning and financing](#)

[Immunization monitoring and surveillance](#)

[National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups Resource Center](#)

[SIGN Alliance](#)

Other

[Coalition Against Typhoid](#)

[Confederation of Meningitis Organizations](#)

[Dengue Vaccine Initiative](#)

[European Vaccine Initiative](#)

[Gardasil Access Program](#)

[Gavi the Vaccine Alliance](#)

[Global Polio Eradication Initiative](#)

[Immunization Academy](#)

[International Association of Public Health Logisticians](#)

[Immunization Economics resource](#)

[International Vaccine Institute](#)

[Measles & Rubella Initiative](#)

[Multinational Influenza Seasonal Mortality Study](#)

[Network for Education and Support in Immunisation \(NESI\)](#)

[Stop Pneumonia](#)

[TechNet-21](#)

[Vaccine Safety Net](#)

[Vaccines Today](#)

### WHO Regional Websites

[Routine Immunization and New Vaccines \(AFRO\)](#)

[Immunization \(PAHO\)](#)

[Vaccine-preventable diseases and immunization \(EMRO\)](#)

[Vaccines and immunization \(EURO\)](#)

[Immunization \(SEARO\)](#)

[Immunization \(WPRO\)](#)

### UNICEF Regional Websites

[Immunization \(Central and Eastern Europe\)](#)

[Immunization \(Eastern and Southern Africa\)](#)

[Immunization \(South Asia\)](#)

[Immunization \(West and Central Africa\)](#)

[Child survival \(Middle East and Northern Africa\)](#)

[Health and nutrition \(East Asia and Pacific\)](#)

[Health and nutrition \(Americas\)](#)

### Newsletters

[Immunization Monthly update in the African Region \(AFRO\)](#)

[WHO/Europe Vaccine-preventable diseases and immunization \(VPI\) news \(EURO\)](#)

[Immunization Newsletter \(PAHO\)](#)

[The Civil Society Dose \(GAVI CSO Constituency\)](#)

[TechNet Digest](#)

[Vaccine Delivery Research Digest \(Uni of Washington\)](#)

[Gavi Programme Bulletin \(Gavi\)](#)

[Immunization Economics Community of Practice](#)