



**ENSURING EQUITABLE
DISTRIBUTION OF THE
COVID-19 VACCINE IN
NEPAL**

GENDER EQUALITY UPDATE 26

MARCH 2, 2021

Photo: UNICEF Nepal/2021/LPNgakhushi

On February 6, 2021, the Government of Nepal completed the first target of its COVID-19 vaccination drive. More than 429,000 (including Female Health Community Volunteers) persons received the first dose of the vaccine. The Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) has received 1 million doses from the government of India and procured additional 2 million doses (1 million has already been received and 1 million is coming soon). Further, MoHP is now waiting for 1.9 million doses vaccines to arrive through the COVAX Facility, which is the vaccines pillar of the ACT-Accelerator, convened by CEPI, GAVI, World Health Organisation and UNICEF. As the vaccination rolls out, interventions aimed at responding to the emerging needs of women and excluded groups are vital. These efforts will help ensure the vaccine is distributed in an equitable manner across the government's priority groups.

During the Gender in Humanitarian Action Task Team (GiHA-TT) meeting on December 21, 2020, which focused on women's leadership and decision-making in the rollout of the vaccine, stakeholders were recommended to:

- ✓ Consider gender-related barriers when planning vaccine distribution strategies in order to reach women from excluded groups.
- ✓ Promote women's voices and leadership in all levels of decision-making during the COVID-19 response ensure equitable distribution of the vaccine.
- ✓ Continue efforts to ensure that timely and accurate information on preventive measures and the COVID-19 vaccine are provided with an intersectional approach.



Prof. Dr. Paras Kumar Acharya, Incident Commander at the Patan Hospital in Lalitpur, is one of the first people in Nepal to receive the COVID19 vaccine. Photo:UNICEF Nepal/2021/LPNgakhusi

Priority groups for COVID-19 vaccination



Phase 1

Frontline workers of health and social sector



Phase 2A

All elderly (above 55 years of age and above)



Phase 2B

People with comorbidity (between the ages of 40 and 54)



Phase 2C

Migrant labor and refugees with comorbidity



Phase 3A

Remaining population between the ages of 40 and 54



Phase 3B

Remaining population between the ages of 15 and 39

Checklist

for gender-sensitive and equitable immunization in Nepal

Priority of Women's Leadership and Decision-Making

- ✓ Are women engaged at all levels of decision-making?
- ✓ Are women's voices and needs included in the planning and implementation of the vaccine rollout?

Gender Barriers to Immunization

- ✓ In order to understand the barriers women face in accessing the COVID-19 vaccine, have stakeholders considered unequal social norms, religious practices, lack of autonomous decision-making and control over financial means, the burden of unpaid care work on women, limited freedom of movement, and gender-based violence?
- ✓ Have assessments been undertaken to ensure that women and excluded groups are provided with critical information on the vaccine and personal preventative measures?
- ✓ Do women front-line workers have access to the transportation and resources necessary to access vaccination facilities?

Disaggregated Data

- ✓ Is there disaggregated data available on the sex, age, diversity, and disabilities among populations that have already been vaccinated?

Access to Information and Countering Misinformation

- ✓ Have targeted interventions been carried out to ensure that women and excluded groups, especially those without access to media, are receiving the necessary information on the COVID-19 vaccine and preventive measures?



A healthworker from the Patan Academy of Health Sciences in Lalitpur District gets vaccinated as part of the launch of the COVID-19 vaccination drive in Nepal. Photo: UNICEF Nepal/2021/LPNgakhusi.

- ✓ Are women's organizations being included in the joint effort to build trust and disseminating accurate information about the vaccine and its importance in saving lives?

Two call centers that provide counseling on COVID-19 prevention and treatment have been operating since March 13, 2020. The numbers are 1115 (open from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.) and 1133 (open 24 hours). Both call centers are operated by the Ministry of Health and Population.

Two toll-free hotline numbers that provide information on COVID-19 (1660136040) and information concerning gender-based violence services (9801571236) began operating on November 25, 2020.

The Gender in Humanitarian Action Task Team (GiHA TT) chaired by UN Women Nepal, is a multi-stakeholder dialogue platform comprised of government, civil society and development partners. It has served as a constructive virtual dialogue forum, honoring diversity of voices, demonstrating thought leadership in the context of COVID-19.

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A healthworker is carrying vaccines as part of the launch of the COVID-19 vaccination drive in Nepal.
Photo: UNICEF Nepal/2021/NShrestha