Initiatives for the Governance of the Covid-19 Vaccine Rollout, with Special Reference to Social Inclusion

L. Bolton
Institute of Development Studies
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Questions

- *What initiatives are taking place relating to the governance of the Covid-19 vaccine rollout? How will social inclusion be ensured?*

- *What contributions have INGOs, academia, multilaterals, bilaterals, national governments and CSOs made to the thinking behind this?*

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1. Summary

This rapid review was sourced from key websites and used some keyword searching whilst making an effort to filter out news and media. As systematic searching is not possible within the scope of this review, it cannot be considered a comprehensive listing of activity in the area of vaccine rollout. It is also likely that initiatives and support are occurring which are unpublished. This report should, therefore, be considered a snapshot of activity in this area. It comprises a list of what was found and cannot make assertions about inactivity based on what was not found.

The question asked for 'initiatives' to be identified, and it has been interpreted broadly. The search identified reports describing support for rollouts, published guidelines, frameworks, calls to action and opinion pieces. The information is organised by institution type. Often information was in the form of a news piece or blog rather than formal documentation, as the situation is current and unfolding and recent information is only available in this type of media. Vaccine passports were outside of the scope of this review.

International organisation activities

- Gavi play a key role in the COVAX initiative and global procurement mechanism for achieving fair and equitable vaccine access for all countries.

- The WHO are running a campaign, #VaccinEquity, which calls for countries to vaccinate health workers within the first 100 days of the year. They have developed a 'concept' for fair and equitable allocation of Covid-19 health products and an allocation mechanism for vaccine distribution through the COVAX facility. They have produced a values framework guiding allocation both between countries and within countries. They have produced materials for combatting misinformation.

- The UN have proposed the creation of an emergency task force by the G20 countries to support a plan for global immunisation. A UN Office on Drugs and Crime policy paper provides guidance on fake vaccines, vaccine theft, leakages in emergency funding and corrupt procurement systems. The UN refugee agency are working to ensure vaccination protection for forcibly displaced people.

Multilateral donor activities

- World Bank Group vaccine rollout support activities include assistance with procurement and support for equal access. The World Bank are using readiness assessments and working to build community trust in immunisation. Operations are being financed in Lebanon, Cape Verde, Mongolia and Tajikistan. Formation of a National Covid-19 Vaccine Committee and a draft National Covid-19 Vaccine Deployment Plan has been supported in Lebanon.

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has produced a brief on vaccine development status and made recommendations regarding distribution and management. ADB activities include a proposal to establish an Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility, and an environmental examination in Indonesia to support vaccine governance.

Activities by other types of organisations

Non-governmental organisations have produced information supporting well-governed and socially inclusive vaccine rollout identified in press releases, calls to action and blog posts. Organisations

include Human Rights Watch, ActionAid, World Vision, Plan International, Amnesty International, Global Justice Now and Transparency International.

The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation have published briefs advising on communications for vaccine rollout and the effects of digital interventions for vaccine uptake. Nothing was identified from other bilateral donors within the scope of this review.

A number of journal articles on vaccine rollout were identified, including from *The Lancet, The British Medical Journal, Science,* and the *Journal of Risk Research*. Articles from the Brookings Institute TechStream consider technology relating to vaccine rollout. The Social Science in Humanitarian Action Platform published a rapid review on vaccine hesitancy and building confidence in Covid-19 vaccination. Chatham House and the Center for Global Development have held events and published 'comments' related to vaccination.

It was difficult to identify civil society or national government initiatives related to vaccine rollout within the scope of this review.

2. International organisations

Gavi

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, is coordinating Covid-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX),[1] which it co-leads with the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and the World Health Organization (WHO), and key delivery partner UNICEF. COVAX aims to guarantee fair and equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines for every country. It is a global procurement mechanism making investments across a broad portfolio of vaccine candidates to make sure investment risks are shared. COVAX is pooling the purchasing power of all the countries that participate. It offers doses for at least 20 per cent of participating countries' populations, and vaccines delivered as soon as they are available. It is the vaccine pillar of the Access to Covid-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator.[2]

Gavi have a Fragility, Emergencies and Refugees policy, which provides funding for health systems to eligible countries (UN 2021a). The Chief Executive Officer of Gavi is urging the United Nations (UN) Security Council to use its political power to enable vaccine supplies to move into conflict-affected settings.

World Health Organization (WHO)

The WHO are running a campaign, #VaccinEquity, which calls for health workers to be vaccinated within the first 100 days of the year (by 7 April).[3] It is encouraging this not only for reasons of equity but also to reduce the possibility of variant-of-concern strains developing and being transmitted. It is asking world leaders to increase their contributions to COVAX, for vaccine manufacturers to share knowledge, for regulatory bodies to accelerate approval processes, for ministries of health to

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[1] www.gavi.org/covax-facility#what (accessed 8 March 2021)

[2] www.who.int/initiatives/act-accelerator (accessed 8 March 2021)

[3] www.who.int/campaigns/annual-theme/year-of-health-and-care-workers-2021/vaccine-equity-declaration (accessed 9 March 2021)

prepare their health systems for distribution and delivery, and for all governments to ensure that vaccines are free and are equitably distributed.

The WHO has developed a 'concept' for the fair and equitable allocation of Covid-19 health products, and an allocation mechanism for vaccine distribution through the COVAX facility (WHO 2020a). The concept lays out overarching principles and values regarding equitable access and fair allocation. The allocation mechanism outlines goals, target groups, timing and boundaries. . It describes the WHO Secretariat's proposal for vaccine allocation among countries but not within countries.

The WHO produced a values framework in September 2020, which offers guidance both for allocation between countries and for prioritisation within a country. This has been endorsed by the Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (SAGE) (WHO 2020b). The main principle underpinning national equity is to ensure access and benefit for groups experiencing greater burdens from the pandemic. Recommendations are made for priority groups for different vaccines as they are authorised. In this document the recommendations are based on different scenarios that highlight the ethical choices to be made. The WHO has also produced a roadmap to support countries in their planning, which suggests public health strategies and target priority groups for different levels of vaccine availability and epidemiological settings (WHO 2020c).

WHO have also produced materials aimed at combatting misinformation, including tips for identifying misinformation or disinformation,[4] guidance on how to report misinformation online[5] and clarification of common myths.[6]

The WHO produce a 'landscape tracker' providing summaries of vaccine candidate clinical developments, which is updated twice a week.[7]

United Nations

In the Security Council in February 2021, the UN Secretary-General proposed the creation of an emergency task force by the G20 countries, whose task would be to create a plan for global immunisation that would encourage fair distribution and vaccine confidence (UN 2021a). The task force should have the capacity to mobilise pharmaceutical companies and industry actors.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) published a call to action on 23 February 2021 urging countries to accelerate vaccine equity for all health workers.[8] The call was directed at world leaders, vaccine manufacturers, regulatory bodies, ministries of health, and all governments.

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[4] www.who.int/news-room/spotlight/let-s-flatten-the-infodemic-curve (accessed 10 March 2021)

[5] www.who.int/campaigns/connecting-the-world-to-combat-coronavirus/how-to-report-misinformation-online (accessed 10 March 2021)

[6] www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters (accessed 10 March 2021)

[7] www.who.int/publications/m/item/draft-landscape-of-covid-19-candidate-vaccines (accessed 10 March 2021)

[8] www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/news-centre/news/2021/20201_Declaration_COVID-19_Vaccine_Equity.html (accessed 22 March 2021)

A UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) policy paper on the prevention of corruption in vaccine manufacture, allocation and distribution notes the risks of fake vaccines entering the market. Other risks include the theft of vaccines, leakages in emergency funding and corrupt procurement systems (UNODC 2021). The report lists suggestions for immediate domestic response measures as well as long-term measures.

A 'Q&A' published by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN refugee agency, explains how they are working to ensure vaccination protection for forcibly displaced people worldwide (Gaynor 2021). It describes who is responsible for refugee vaccination, highlights the risks of not including refugees in the vaccination rollout, states who will be prioritised amongst refugees, outlines particular challenges reaching people in fragile states, and describes how UNHCR are countering resistance to receiving the vaccination.

On 10 February UNICEF and the WHO put out a joint statement calling for the vaccine rollout to happen in all countries, for governments to share vaccines once they have vaccinated their own health workers and high-risk citizens, for the ACT Accelerator and its vaccine pillar COVAX to be properly funded, and for vaccine manufacturers to allocate supplies equitably (WHO 2021a).

3. Multilaterals

Multilaterals are providing financial support for vaccine rollout. This funding aims to support social inclusion.

World Bank

A World Bank Group vaccination factsheet briefly describes it's support for poor countries with Covid-19 vaccines, which includes assistance with procurement. The aim of this is to enable people in developing countries to have safe and equal access to vaccines (World Bank 2021a). Readiness assessments are used to identify what support is needed. Part of the funding is allocated to building community trust in immunisation. The World Bank has financed operations in Lebanon, Cape Verde,[9] Mongolia[10] and Tajikistan.[11]

Support in Lebanon is part of the existing Lebanon Health Resilience Project[12] and has supported the formation of a National Covid-19 Vaccine Committee and the development of a draft National Covid-19 Vaccine Deployment Plan (World Bank 2021b). This includes readiness for critical regulatory actions for vaccine rollout and the development of an online registration system for eligible priority groups. On 12 February, the World Bank and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) signed an agreement on independent monitoring of the Covid-19 vaccine

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[9] Press release: First World Bank Support for COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout in Africa www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/02/11/first-world-bank-support-for-covid-19-vaccine-rollout-in-africa (accessed 8 March 2021)

[10] www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/02/11/world-bank-approves-507-million-for-affordable-and-equitable-covid-19-vaccine-access-in-mongolia (accessed 8 March 2021)

[11] www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/02/11/world-bank-supports-covid-19-vaccine-rollout-in-tajikistan (accessed 8 March 2021)

[12] https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P163476 (accessed 8.3.21)

rollout (World Bank 2021c). IFRC are to act as a third-party monitoring agency, and their role will include administration from a social safeguarding perspective. They will check the eligibility of vaccine recipients and capture client perspectives and feedback.

Asian Development Bank (ADB)

An ADB brief presents information on vaccine development status and makes recommendations for addressing challenges in distribution and general management (ADB 2021a). Logistical support, particularly cold chain management, is identified as important. National policies are needed to enable regulatory decision making for a safe market place. Digital immunisation information systems and vaccine certificates are needed to help economies return to normal.

ADB activity includes the following:

- a proposal to establish an Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility (APVAX) to support procurement and rollout (ADB 2020), and

- an Initial Environmental Examination in Indonesia to support vaccine governance (ADB 2021b).

4. International non-governmental organisations (INGOs)

Activity from INGOs includes the following:

- Human Rights Watch produced a 'Q&A' on companies' responsibilities for equitable vaccination, testing and treatments.[13]

- ActionAid made a call to action for vaccines to be made available to the world's poorest.[14]

- World Vision have published testimony from key staff voicing their opinions on the vaccine rollout.[15]

- Plan International have made a call for gender equity in Covid-19 vaccine provision to avoid setbacks to women's and girl's rights in low- and middle-income countries.[16] They are also urging governments worldwide to include refugees and displaced people in their vaccination programmes.

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[13] www.hrw.org/news/2021/02/11/universal-and-equitable-access-covid-19-vaccines-testing-treatments-companies-human (accessed 10 March 21)

[14] www.actionaid.org.uk/blog/2020/12/08/a-covid-19-vaccine-must-be-available-for-the-worlds-poorest (accessed 10 March 2021)

[15] www.wvi.org/stories/view/i-cant-stop-shouting-about-vaccines and https://www.wvi.org/stories/view/time-pick-vaccine-pace (both accessed 10 March 2021)

[16] https://plan-international.org/news/2020-12-21-calling-fair-distribution-covid-19-vaccines (accessed 10.3.21

- An Amnesty International press release highlights inequalities in the vaccine rollout in Israel, where those living under occupation are being excluded.[17]

- The International Disability Alliance are calling for persons with disabilities to be included as a priority group.[18]

- Global Justice Now have produced a supporters' briefing with facts and arguments for activists campaigning for pharmaceutical companies to lift patents and share knowledge.[19]

- Transparency International have highlighted corruption risks in their calls for equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines and treatments.[20] They have also published a document outlining questions about the vaccines that governments should be responding to if they are to be fully accountable to citizens, with a template for access to information requests.[21]

- Oxfam have issued a press release in response to the vaccine waiver of Trade and Intellectual Property Rules (TRIPS) being blocked at the World Trade Organization.[22]

5. Bilaterals

The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) have published two briefs relating to vaccine rollout as part of the Covid-19 Global Evaluation Coalition.[23] The first brief is on implementation considerations for communicating about the vaccines (Glenton and Lewin 2020a). Considerations include identifying people's concerns and misconceptions, providing information that people regard as trustworthy, ensuring easy access to information, providing consistent and transparent information, and making sure information is practical. The second brief is on the effects of digital interventions for vaccine uptake (Glenton and Lewin 2020b). The report finds evidence to be fragmented and mixed. Sending vaccination reminders via mobile phone may encourage vaccination, though not among adolescents. The effects of video messaging on parents are uncertain. When implementing digital interventions, governments and other official bodies need to consider acceptability, feasibility, equity impacts and costs (both initial and ongoing). The use of digital interventions may widen inequalities for people with poor access to electricity or devices, or with low digital literacy.

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[17] www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/israel-denying-covid-19-vaccine-palestinians-institutionalised-discrimination (accessed 10 March 2021)

[18] www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/vaccination-roll-out (accessed 10 March 2021)

[19] www.globaljustice.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/resources/peoples_vaccine_briefing_feb_2021_web.pdf (accessed 10 March 2021)

[20] www.transparency.org/en/news/covid-19-vaccine-transparency (accessed 10 March 2021)

[21] https://images.transparencycdn.org/images/FOIA-template_COVID-19-vaccine-information_EN.pdf (accessed 10 March 2021)

[22] www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/rich-countries-block-covid-19-vaccines-waiver-world-trade-organization-oxfam (accessed 22 March 2021)

[23] www.covid19-evaluation-coalition.org/ (accessed 11 March 2021)

6. Academia and think tanks

A number of articles were found through a rapid journal keyword search on Covid-19 vaccine rollout.

- A Health Policy paper in *The Lancet* notes that licensing vaccines is not enough to achieve global control of Covid-19. Vaccines also need to be produced at scale, priced affordably, allocated globally and widely deployed locally (Wouters *et al.* 2021). The paper reviews the challenges in each of these areas and discusses policy implications.

- A blog published by the *British Medical Journal (BMJ)* urges increased cooperation and transparency across different sectors, believing this to be essential for the success of the vaccine rollout (Killen *et al.* 2020). A commentary from *BMJ Public Health* discusses vaccine pricing policy options for low- and middle-income countries (Guzman *et al.* 2021) and there is an editorial on the importance of storage temperature (Shretta *et al.* 2021). Another *BMJ* commentary notes the need to consider each African country separately when planning the vaccine rollout rather than thinking about the African region in a uniform way (Boum II *et al.* 2021). The article also states that Africa needs to invest in research to ensure that strategies are adapted to the African context.

- A commentary published in the *Israel Journal of Health Policy Research* looks at lessons learned from Israel, including the need to understand the barriers faced by disadvantaged groups and to learn how to reach out to these groups (McKee and Rajan 2021).

- A 'comment' from *The Lancet* discusses legal agreements and how they act as barriers or enablers to equitable vaccine access and vaccine nationalism (Phelan *et al.* 2020).

- The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2020) has published a framework for the equitable allocation of the Covid-19 vaccines. 'The report's recommendations address the institutional and administrative commitments needed to implement equitable allocation policies' (p. 2).

- Bubar *et al.* (2021) use a mathematical model to compare different age-stratified prioritisation strategies for vaccine rollout. Their article is published in *Science*.

- Warren and Lofstedt (2021) discuss risk communication strategies in relation to vaccine rollout in Europe in a paper in the *Journal of Risk Research*. It evaluates current vaccine rollout communication strategies in a number of European nations.

- van der Linden et al (2021) write on the issue of misinformation with regard to Covid-19 vaccines, recommending pre-emptive action rather than myth-debunking in *EClinicalMedicine*.

- An article on the Brookings Institute 'TechStream'[24] considers vaccine record verification systems and their need to align with vaccine prioritisation decisions, uphold fairness and equity, and be built on trustworthy technology (Zhang *et al.* 2021).

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[24] www.brookings.edu/about-techstream/

- Another article on TechStream looks at equitable distribution technology, particularly obstacles for individuals without technical resources (Moy and Cannon 2021).

- The Social Science in Humanitarian Action Platform (SSHAP) published a rapid review on vaccine hesitancy and building confidence in Covid-19 vaccination (Hrynick *et al.* 2020). There are a number of blogs and news items on the SSHAP related to vaccine hesitancy and vaccine confidence.[25]

- *The Lancet* published a 'comment' on regulatory mechanisms for vaccine approval and licensure (Smith *et al.* 2020). A *Lancet* editorial looks at access to Covid-19 vaccines beyond COVAX (*The Lancet* 2021). A comment in *Lancet Global Health* discusses challenges to rolling out the Covid-19 vaccine in African countries (Nachega *et al.* 2021).

- There is a K4D helpdesk report on social inclusion and immunisation (Tull 2021).

Chatham House held an event in partnership with the European Peace Institute looking at conflict-sensitive approaches to Covid-19, with a focus on vaccines.[26] Chatham House have also released a podcast on vaccine nationalism and what can be done to encourage more equitable distribution.[27] They have also published a number of expert comments.[28]

The Center for Global Development have published a number of blogs about global equity.[29] There is also a recorded event called 'Equity and Scale in Global Immunization: New Evidence from Nigeria on Cash Transfers for Vaccination'.[30]

7. Civil society organisations (CSOs)

Within the scope of a rapid review, it was difficult to identify specific interventions organised by CSOs on governance or inclusion issues regarding vaccine rollout.

[25] SHAPP 'vaccine' search results www.socialscienceinaction.org/search/?_sf_s=vaccine (accessed 16 March 2021)

[26] www.chathamhouse.org/events/all/members-event/virus-vaccine-and-violence (accessed 22 March 2021)

[27] www.chathamhouse.org/2021/02/undercurrents-vaccine-nationalism-and-military-action-greyzone (accessed 22 March 2021)

[28] For example, 'Time to Clamp Down on Dangers of Vaccine Nationalism' www.chathamhouse.org/2021/02/time-clamp-down-dangers-vaccine-nationalism (accessed 22 March 2021), and 'Beijing's Vaccine diplomacy Goes Beyond Political Rivalry' www.chathamhouse.org/2021/02/beijings-vaccine-diplomacy-goes-beyond-political-rivalry (accessed 22 March 2021)

[29] For example, www.cgdev.org/blog/moral-failure-pandemic-response (accessed 22 March 2021), www.cgdev.org/blog/who-gets-covid-19-vaccine-and-who-pays-need-economic-analysis (accessed 22 March 2021) and www.cgdev.org/blog/release-covid-19-vaccine-contracts (accessed 22 March 2021)

[30] www.cgdev.org/event/equity-and-scale-global-immunization-new-evidence-nigeria-cash-transfers-vaccination

COVAX appointed 'civil society representatives' to key working groups in October 2020.[31] Representatives were selected from a range of CSOs from a range of countries, with gender taken into account. Appointed individuals listed with their organisations are largely from what are classified in this helpdesk report as international organisations, whilst this section aims to look at grassroots initiatives. It is beyond the scope of this report to explore the nuances between these terms and whether differences are important or not.[32] If beneficial collaborations are happening, then semantics are of secondary importance at this time.

A recommendation for governments to work with CSOs has been made in an ADB blog (Morris and Bhargava 2021). The authors suggest that CSOs have previously been underused, though there are useful models that can be scaled up. Gavi have been noted to have worked with over 4,000 CSOs over the years to support immunisation efforts. CSO involvement is recommended in the following areas: educating communities and countering misinformation; mitigating vaccine hesitancy; identifying those who are vulnerable to missing vaccination as a result, for example, of mobility, language or remoteness; monitoring of compliance and integrity; and anti-corruption activities.

The health minister for South Africa has called on civil society organisations to help spread accurate information about the vaccine rollout and to dispel inaccurate information.[33] With the social development minister he has met with a number of civil society groups to support this.

The Movement for Community-Led Development (MCLD) found that they lacked access to reliable information (Veda 2020). They found it difficult to engage with governing bodies to ask for support for vaccine rollout when they met in December 2020 . The MCLD brought in speakers from the People's Vaccine Movement and the WHO to improve understanding. They have engaged in information-sharing with INGOs but need greater access to policymakers and institutional structures. One example of an area where information has been lacking is the question of whether community health workers count as frontline health workers and should be viewed as a priority group. Some civil society representatives have admitted to being reluctant to have the vaccination, given the small amount of information they have received.

The People's Vaccine Alliance is a coalition of organisations and activists campaigning together for a vaccine to be a global common good.[34] It calls on governments and pharmaceuticals to prevent vaccine monopolies, ensure the vaccine is purchased at true cost and sold at affordable prices, implement fair allocation, and ensure full participation of governments in developing countries. It advises citizens on how to take action.

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[31] www.gavi.org/news/media-room/covax-welcomes-appointment-civil-society-representatives (accessed 11 March 2021)

[32] A UNDP definition of CSOs can be found here: www.undp.org/content/dam/china/docs/Publications/UNDP-CH03%20Annexes.pdf (accessed 11 March 2021).

[33] https://health-e.org.za/2021/01/25/civil-society-to-help-end-covid-19-conspiracies-vaccine-rollout/ (accessed 12 March 2021)

[34] https://peoplesvaccine.org/ (accessed 22 March 2021)

8. Governments

It was difficult to identify national government initiatives on vaccine rollout.

An article written by the Executive Director of the African Population and Health Research Center gives some details of Kenya's vaccine rollout plan, which covers a number of areas, including regulatory preparedness, planning and coordination, funding, targeting, supply chain management, acceptance and uptake, safety monitoring, and monitoring and evaluation (Kyobutungi 2021).

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