

Migrant Community Barmer, Rajasthan

COVID-19 VACCINATION
diaries

The migrant community of Barmer received ready assistance and smooth COVID-19 vaccinations through the Project's initiatives





The Barmer district in Rajasthan is home to a community of Pakistani Hindu refugee families who are extremely poor, and engaged in daily labour or contract jobs. The COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing vaccination program has also been one of trials and tribulations for them. Legal paraphernalia, lack of proper documentation, coupled with low vaccine-awareness and baseless fears have made it a challenge for the State Government and other welfare organizations to access, persuade and increase vaccine penetration among them.

The MOMENTUM Routine Immunization Transformation and Equity Project, supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), ensures equitable vaccination to vulnerable, hard-to-reach, and marginalized communities. The State Government collaborated with the Project, and delegated the awareness programs and vaccine dispensation activities to local change agents to increase vaccine uptake among under represented groups. In Rajasthan, the Project has engaged local Non-Governmental Organizations like Ladli Foundation, JATAN Sansthan, DHARA Sansthan, Transport Corporation of India Foundation (TCIF), Society for All Round Development (SARD) and HelpAge India to build vaccine confidence amongst priority groups.



The Project and its sub-awardees faced considerable difficulties in accessing daily-wage labourers in the community due to their rigorous work schedule. Fears of fatality and severe side effects have also held sway over the pregnant and lactating women of the community. Insecure and mistrusting, stories of mild side effects spread rapidly through the community, triggering stiff reluctance.



The Project team conducted in-depth door-to-door surveys to draw up an accurate list of unvaccinated members, and organized targeted awareness counselling to boost their confidence surrounding the COVID-19 vaccine. Considerable improvement in uptake and penetration of vaccines was recorded as more and more vaccinated members became community influencers and drew larger crowds to easy-access vaccination camps set up in the precincts.



Today, the migrant population of Barmer is completely protected against COVID-19 and has headed off to work without fear.



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