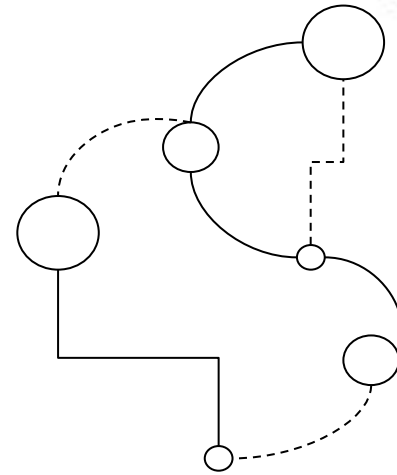


Syrian Arab Red Crescent

Bringing the Service closer to communities

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The Problem

Situation overview

- Syria is one of the countries in the MENA region with the lowest COVID-19 vaccination rates. Up until June 20th, 2022, only 15% of the total Syrian population had received the COVID-19 vaccine. (with 9.6% having received the full vaccination protocol)
- Currently Syria has around 6.7 million IDPs, constituting around 37% of the total Syrian Population.
- The Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) conducted a KAP survey to identify the reasons resulting in a low vaccine uptake. 384 surveys were filled across 7 governorates.

Problem statement

- The main reasons behind the low COVID-19 vaccine uptake were linked to:
 - Vaccine hesitancy within the general population as a result of rumours being circulated in the communities
 - Doubts regarding vaccine efficacy and fear of its side effects
 - Lack of trust regarding the vaccine source
 - The MoH was incapable of reaching with the vaccines, some areas where the most vulnerable people resided
 - Lack of knowledge from the side of the general population on how to register for the vaccine and consequently, receiving it

The Solution

Actions

- Following the KAP survey findings , actions were taken to combat rumours and provide the most vulnerable people with access to COVID-19 vaccines. Actions taken were:
 - 24,000 awareness sessions were undertaken in targeted communities across Syria
 - A total of 370,000 people were reached through household visits
 - 300,000 people were assisted with the COVID-19 vaccination process and were referred to specific vaccination centres
 - In hard-to-reach areas where MoH mobile vaccination teams couldn't access, the volunteers transported people wishing to receive the vaccine, to the nearest accessible vaccination point.
 - Coordination was made with the MoH's mobile vaccination teams in order to reach the most vulnerable and hard-to-access communities including never-been-accessed-before IDP and refugee camps

Measurement

- The number of people who received the COVID-19 vaccine after participating in SARC's RCCE activities.
- Qualitative data and stories from the field





Outcomes and Key Learnings

Outcomes and Impact

- 26.4% of the people who received sensitisation messages received the COVID-19 vaccine within a short timeframe, out of which around 20% were people from the most vulnerable groups..
- In one of the communities with a high number of IDPs and returnees in Aleppo, the vaccination rate reached 95% among the people aged 18+ following SARC's community interventions.
- Community leaders and gatekeepers from many communities became advocates for the COVID-19 vaccine. In one of the IDP camps, a gatekeeper was able to convince 40 people to get the COVID-19 vaccine.
- The health promoters were able to reach one of the bedouin camps that had never been accessed before, with information about the COVID-19 vaccine, as well as routine Immunisation information. The teams were able to earn the trust of these communities, who agreed to receive COVID-19 vaccines, as well as vaccinate their children according to the national vaccination schedule.

Key Learnings

- Linking the MoH's mobile vaccination teams to the communities that are hardest to reach
- Gaining the trust of the community gatekeepers and IDP camp leaders, who in turn played a crucial role in advocating for COVID-19 vaccine uptake
- Closely coordinating with the MoH's field offices
- Tailoring sensitisation messages to the specific context, according to each community targeted (take into consideration the different customs and cultural norms preventing vaccine demand, and target them accordingly -specially in displaced camps)
- Coupling sensitisation activities with on-the-spot vaccination for the community members who wished to get vaccinated



THANK YOU

