International cooperation to increase access to COVID-19 vaccines

Public hearing by the German Ethics Council - International Perspectives on Pandemic Preparedness and Response

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Vaccine cooperation has focused on Act-A and COVAX

31 Dec 19
‘Viral pneumonia’ reported by Municipal Health Commission in Wuhan

11 Jan 20
WHO has received genetic sequence of the novel coronavirus

11 Feb 20
WHO R&D Blueprint activated to speed up diagnostics, vaccines & therapeutics

24 Apr 20
Access to Covid-19 Tools Accelerator (Act-A) is launched

29 May 20
WHO launches COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP) for voluntary knowledge & IP sharing

18 Nov 20
Pfizer & BioNTech conclude phase 3 study of vaccine candidate

24 Feb 21
COVAX’s first vaccine delivery to Ghana

20 Jan 21
US government agrees to join COVAX

8 Apr 21
COVAX vaccine deliveries reach over 100 economies

Sources:
https://www.who.int/news/item/29-06-2020-covidtimeline,
To fight COVID-19, Act-A focuses on three sets of technologies.
COVAX is Act-A’s vaccine pillar

Sources: https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/act-accelerator-impact-report-summary
COVAX’s goal is twofold

“[COVAX’s] aim is to **accelerate the development** and manufacture of COVID-19 vaccines, and to guarantee **fair and equitable access** for every country in the world.”

Sources: Quote: [https://www.gavi.org/covax-facility](https://www.gavi.org/covax-facility); image: [https://www.flickr.com/photos/worldeconomicforum/49425193463/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/worldeconomicforum/49425193463/)
COVAX is by far the best-funded pillar of Act-A

Contributions to Act-A
In billion USD (21 May 2021)

*Pending contributions are still to be allocated
Source: Act-A Commitment Tracker [https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/access-to-covid-19-tools-tracker](https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/access-to-covid-19-tools-tracker)
Most COVAX donors are public institutions

COVAX contributions overall
In percent (21 May 2021)

- Public donors: 93%
- Private donors: 2%
- Multilateral donors: 5%

Source: Act-A Commitment Tracker https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/access-to-covid-19-tools-tracker

Top ten COVAX donors
In billion USD (21 May 2021)

- United States: 2.5 billion USD
- Germany: 1.8 billion USD
- United Kingdom: 1.1 billion USD
- European Commission: 0.6 billion USD
- Norway: 0.4 billion USD
- Japan: 0.4 billion USD
- Canada: 0.3 billion USD
- Saudi Arabia: 0.3 billion USD
- Sweden: 0.3 billion USD
- Gates Foundation: 0.2 billion USD

Source: Act-A Commitment Tracker https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/access-to-covid-19-tools-tracker
COVAX is a buyers’ and distribution club

Advantages

• **Equity:** Distribute first to the world’s health workers, then the world’s vulnerable, then others

• Public sector **efficiency:**
  • Lower **prices**
  • Reduced **country risk**

Image sources: Unicef Ethiopia [https://www.flickr.com/photos/unicefethiopia/51018703602](https://www.flickr.com/photos/unicefethiopia/51018703602) & Argentinian Ministry of Health [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Primer_%E2%80%90%E2%80%90cargo_COVAX_Argentina_03.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Primer_%E2%80%90%E2%80%90cargo_COVAX_Argentina_03.jpg)
COVAX subsidizes vaccine development and distribution

COVAX provides
- **Push** subsidies (R&D and manufacturing)
- **Pull** subsidies (demand guarantees)
- Country **distribution support** (demand)

**Advantages:** Speeds up vaccine production and distribution

COVAX has not ensured global vaccine equity

Source: https://ourworldindata.org/covid-vaccinations (accessed 25/5/2021)
COVAX changes from solidarity to charity

Funding gap for Act-A
In billion USD (21 May 2021)

*Pending contributions are still to be allocated
Source: Act-A Commitment Tracker https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/access-to-covid-19-tools-tracker
Ethical questions raised

1. Equity:
   • Saving lives abroad vs saving lives at home?
   • What constitutes a fair vaccine price in times of crisis?

2. Social contract: What are the rights and obligations of corporations producing life-saving vaccines?

3. Relationship to the environment?
Thank you

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https://www.sum.uio.no/english/research/projects/norways-public-private-cooperation-for-pandemic-p/
Backup
COVAX has been split into two buyers’ clubs

Based on [5] and [37]