Issue Brief

The MEDBOX team has started a new feature publishing issue briefs on different topics around COVID-19. We would be pleased to receive feedback on this issue brief or topics you would like to see covered in future issues. Registered MEDBOX users can see the latest documents in the ‘My News’ section by selecting their personal preferences under ‘My Profile’.

Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons, Migrants & COVID-19

The outbreak of COVID-19 affects everyone worldwide, including refugees, internally displaced persons (IDP) and migrants. Living in challenging environments with restrained access to healthcare and/or other basic supply, they are facing a strong impairment during these times. The sanitary, legal and political consequences of pandemic will have long-lasting impact on their livelihoods. Therefore, there is an obligation for everyone working with and for these populations to take adequate measures. Particular considerations should be paid to vulnerable groups, e.g. children, the elderly, people with disability or women.

This Issue Briefs highlights relevant documents for people working with refugees, IDPs and/or migrants in the context of COVID-19, e.g. public health professionals, humanitarian aid workers, camp management. It covers different settings and scenarios from sanitary regulations for camp settings, recommendations for risk communication to maternal services. Some material is available in different languages. For further documents please check the COVID19 TOOLBOX and the Humanitarian Aid subcategory.

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Useful resources in MEDBOX

General

The Sphere Standards: COVID-19 Outbreak control
Sphere - Standards (2020)

The Coronavirus is spreading globally. How can individuals, communities and humanitarian actors best respond to the COVID-19 outbreak? How can the Sphere Handbook guide our response? This document has two sections: A. The first section covers fundamental principles which are crucial to a successful, holistic intervention. B. The second covers relevant standards and guidance in the handbook’s WASH and Health chapters. Available in English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Italian

Preparedness, prevention and control of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) for refugees and migrants in non-camp settings
World Health Organization

Refugees and migrants face similar health threats from COVID-19 as their host populations. However, inadequate access to essential services and exclusion may makes early detection, testing, diagnosis, contact tracing and seeking care for COVID-19 difficult for refugees and migrants thus increasing the risk of outbreaks in these population and presenting an additional threat to public health. This document offers guidance to Member States and partners for the inclusion of refugees and migrants, as part of holistic efforts to respond to COVID-19 epidemics in the general populations.


Practical Guidance for Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) for Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Migrants, and Host Communities Particularly Vulnerable to COVID-19 Pandemic
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Cresent Societies IFRC (2020)

This practical guidance is designed to assist programme specialists to implement COVID19 RCCE activities for and with refugees, IDPs, migrants and host communities vulnerable to the pandemic. The guidance highlights key challenges and barriers faced by these people in accessing COVID19 health-related information and presents key considerations and recommendations for planning and implementing RCCE activities. The document can be adapted to countries’ specific context and aligned with national response plans for COVID-19 and national RCCE plans.


Including migrants and displaced people in preparedness and response activities
World Health Organization

Guidance for Asia Pacific National Societies. This document provides guidance for Asia Pacific National Societies on how to include migrants and displaced people in COVID-19 preparedness and response activities.


Available in Spanish for Latin America


Supporting the continuity of health and nutrition services in the context of COVID-19 in refugee settings
UN High Commissioner for Refugees UNHCR (2020)

UN High Commissioner for Refugees UNHCRThe following are key considerations for UNHCR operations on prioritized health care services in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak. These are based on WHO Guidance for Maintaining Essential Health Services and UNHCR guidance for operations and where relevant operation or site level outbreak preparedness and response plans.

Camps and Camp-like Settings

Scaling-up COVID-19 outbreak readiness and response operations in humanitarian situations including camps and camp-like settings
Inter-Agency Standing Committee IASC, IFRC, IOM, WHO (2020)

People affected by humanitarian crises, particularly those displaced and/or living in camps and camp-like settings, are often faced with specific challenges and vulnerabilities that must be taken into consideration when planning for readiness and response operations for the COVID-19 outbreak. They are frequently neglected, stigmatized, and may face difficulties in accessing health services that are otherwise available to the general population. In the context of this Interim Guidance, the people in humanitarian situations affected by this guidance may include internally displaced persons (IDPs), host communities, asylum seekers, refugees and returnees, and migrants when in similar situations. While further adaptations might be needed for some population groups, including those living in slums this interim guidance is issued to assist field staff to immediately respond to urgent needs.


Guidance on Home Quarantine & Isolation in Overcrowded Settings
UN High Commissioner for Refugees UNHCR (2020)

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on how quarantine and isolation can be achieved if there is a suspected or confirmed case in an overcrowded setting. It will focus on informal settlements and collective shelters, but the guidance can be applied in non-refugee settings as well, such as detention centres and crowded neighborhoods. This guidance aims to support a coordinated and efficient response. It supports detailed planning at the regional level and is meant to be adapted to the local context.


Guidance for the prevention of COVID-19 infections among high-risk individuals in camps and camp-like settings
Caroline Favas (2020)

This document provides guidance on the implementation of the shielding approach in camps and camp-like settings for refugees and internally displaced persons. It is intended for the displaced community itself, humanitarian actors and camp coordination / management authorities.


Camp/site management interim operational guidance for COVID-19 readiness and response
UN High Commissioner for Refugees UNHCR

Frequently asked questions (FAQs). This document highlights COVID-19 specific considerations in relation to camp and camp-like settings, and is intended to assist in guiding operations where camp/site management is being implemented. Although the guidance - structured around questions from the field - is intended for camp/site managers, UNHCR senior managers/ heads of offices, field coordinators and other staff.

Food Security and Nutrition

Interim Recommendations for Adjusting Food Distribution Standard Operating Procedures in the Context of the COVID-19 Outbreak
United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs OCHA

This Interim Guidance is intended for field coordinators, site managers and public health personnel, as well as national and local governments and the wider humanitarian community working in humanitarian situations at food distribution sites, who are involved in the decision making and implementation of multi-sectorial COVID-19 outbreak readiness and response activities – the Guidance is therefore relevant for all Humanitarian Clusters and their partners.


Targeting and prioritization of impoverished and food-insecure populations affected by COVID-19 | Safeguarding and scaling up assistance for people most at risk
World Food Programme WFP

The outbreak of COVID-19 comes with unpredictable primary and secondary impacts on vulnerable and food-insecure populations across the world. Mortality and morbidity appear to be most acute for elderly people, and those with underlying health conditions. At the same time, the widely anticipated economic downturn could have a more devastating effect on the world’s poor than the virus itself.


Breastfeeding and COVID-19. FAQ
World Health Organization WHO (2020)

Mothers and healthcare workers who support them have many questions and concerns about whether it is safe for mothers with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 to be close to and breastfeed their babies during the pandemic. To address their questions, WHO has released a list of Frequently asked questions: Breastfeeding and COVID-19.


Mental Health

MHPSS COVID-19 Toolkit Version 1.0 Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic
Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Network (2020)

The COVID-19 pandemic is a rapidly evolving global crisis and there is much that is still emerging in terms of the psychosocial and mental health consequences for the diverse populations affected by this emergency. This toolkit is based on what is currently available and will be updated as additional resources become available.

Emerging Practices: Mental health and psychosocial support in refugee operations during the COVID-19 pandemic
UN High Commissioner for Refugees UNHCR (2020)

This document presents a brief overview of how UNHCR adapts its activities for mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) to the changing context of the pandemic. Staff of UNHCR and partners, in country offices in all regions of the world, have developed innovative field practices to continue providing essential MHPSS services to refugees. The examples in this document are testimony to the commitment and creativity of our staff and can serve as inspiration and encouragement for others to continue integrating MHPSS in the humanitarian work during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.


Basic Psychosocial Skills A Guide for COVID-19 Responders
Inter Agency Standing Committee (2020)

Basic psychosocial support skills are at the core of any Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) intervention. Such skills are also indispensable for many others involved in the COVID-19 response, whether they identify as an MHPSS provider or not. Thus, this guide is meant for all COVID-19 responders.


Available in different languages: English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Amharic, Greek, Chinese, Bahasa Indonesia, Russian

Remote psychological first aid during the COVID-19 outbreak
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies IFRC

Psychological first aid (PFA) is a method of helping people in distress so they feel calm and supported to cope better with their challenges. It is a way of assisting someone to manage their situation and make informed decisions. The basis of psychological first aid is caring about the person in distress and showing empathy. It involves paying attention to reactions, active listening and, if needed, practical assistance, such as problem solving, help to access basic needs or referring to further options for assistance.


Psychological first aid: Guide for field workers

When terrible things happen in our communities, countries and the world, we want to reach out a helping hand to those who are affected. This guide covers psychological first aid which involves humane, supportive and practical help to fellow human beings suffering serious crisis events. It is written for people in a position to help others who have experienced an extremely distressing event. It gives a framework for supporting people in ways that respect their dignity, culture and abilities.

Women & Children

Prevention: Violence against women and girls & COVID-19
UN Women (2020)

This brief provides background information on the root causes and risk factors that explain why violence against women occurs in the first place. It highlights how the context of COVID-19 is exacerbating those factors and the impact it is having on rates of violence against women and the ability to undertake evidence-based prevention work in the current context.


Women and Girls Safe Spaces: Technical Guidance Note for COVID-19
Norwegian Church Aid, International Medical Corps, International Red Cross (2020)

This guidance note aims to provide practical support to service providers operating Women and Girls Safe Spaces (WGSS) on how to adapt programming in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.


COVID-19 Technical Brief for Maternity Services

This Guidance Note offers a list of recommendations based on a combination of WHO guidelines, good practice and expert advice based on the latest scientific research. The situation with COVID-19 is evolving rapidly and the guidance will continue to be updated if and when new evidence or information becomes available.


Quick Tips on COVID-19 and Migrant, Refugee and Internally Displaced Children (Children on the Move)
UNICEF (2020)

Migrant and displaced children are at heightened risk to the immediate and secondary impacts of COVID-19. They often live in cramped conditions with limited access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), may be in immigration detention or “left behind,” live with disabilities, unaccompanied or separated from their families, and can be hardest to reach with accurate information in a language they understand.


Special Settings

We have compiled some key resources for a selection of countries and settings. Please find more documents in our CONFLICT TOOLBOX.
**Myanmar/Bangladesh Rohingya Refugees**

**Covid-19: Rumours in the camps**

*WHAT MATTERS? Humanitarian Feedback Bulletin on Rohingya Response (2020)*

This What Matters? edition focuses on Covid-19 rumours circulating in the Rohingya camps of Cox’s Bazar. It explores some of the more common rumours, discusses sources and formats of information, presents community perspectives about rumours and communication, and suggests approaches to communicating with the Rohingya community about Covid-19.


**COVID-19 Response to Refugees and Host Communities in Bangladesh**

*ACT Alliance appeal: Global Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic – ACT201*

Due to the presence of Rohingya refugees, Cox’s Bazar district is one of the most vulnerable. In the camps, one million Rohingya refugees, half of whom are children, live in some of the densest conditions of 40,000 people per square kilometer (UNO-SAT-REACH Shelter Footprints, May 2019). As of May 18, six Rohingya refugees have been infected with the virus and more than 10000 Rohingyas have been quarantined. Overcrowded camps could have devastating consequences given the recommended practice of physical distancing is particularly challenging and the potential death toll would be unimaginable.


**Thematic COVID-19 Bulletin: Child Protection Myanmar**

*UNICEF*

Violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect still occurs despite COVID-19 and continuity of the child protection case management system is essential to protect all children, including the most vulnerable. UNICEF’s Child Protection support focuses on mitigating the secondary impacts of physical distancing measures by ensuring children, parents and caregivers continue to have access to child protection services.


**Syria**

**Commission Guidance Note on the Provision of Humanitarian Aid to Fight the COVID-19 Pandemic in Certain Environments Subject to EU Restrictive Measures**

*European Commission EC (2020)*

This guidance note on Syria is the first in a series of comprehensive Q&As, which aims to give practical guidance on how to comply with EU sanctions when providing humanitarian aid, in particular medical assistance, to fight the coronavirus pandemic. By clarifying the responsibilities and processes for the provision of this aid, this note should facilitate the task of humanitarian operators in Syria. It should speed up the channelling of equipment and assistance to fight the coronavirus pandemic in Syria. It is addressed to all actors involved in the supply of humanitarian aid, such as the competent authorities of EU Member States, which manage the implementation of EU sanctions, and public and private operators, which must comply with EU sanctions when providing assistance.

Mental Health and Psychosocial Response during COVID-19 Outbreak, June 2020
UNHCR

Key highlights from January to April 2020 (Syria situation) Across the MENA region, UNHCR is receiving alarming reports of increasing mental health issues among the forcibly displaced.


More information here: https://medbox.org/filter/4GINEL0O/toolbox/syria

Venezuela

RMRP 2020 - Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela 2020
R4V; reliefweb (2020)

The Venezuelan refugee and migrant crisis is one of the biggest external displacement crises in the world. The COVID-19 pandemic has compounded an already desperate situation for many refugees and migrants, as well as their hosts, sorely testing health and social welfare systems and the ability of countries to assist the vulnerable population.


A Crisis Within a Crisis: Venezuela and COVID-19
Van PraagO.; and C.J. Amson


Plan intersectorial de preparación y atención COVID-19 – Venezuela
UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs OCHA

In Spanish.


South Sudan

Bridge Builders: Strengthening the role of local faith actors in humanitarian response in South Sudan
Islamic Relief; Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities; RedR UK and Tearfund

This report outlines and analyses the implementation of the Bridge Builder Model. This is a two-way, capacity-sharing model aimed at bringing together local faith actors (LFAs) and international humanitarian actors to increase understanding, trust, coordination and collaboration.

MHPSS Considerations during COVID-19 pre-outbreak response in South Sudan
*MHPSS Technical Working Group*


South Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan 2020 - COVID-19 Addendum (June 2020)
*Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs OCHA (2020)*

This document summarizes preparedness and response activities to address the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak in South Sudan through the end of 2020. The addendum includes the activities and financial requirements of the updated National COVID-19 Response Plan.


**Yemen**

COVID-19 in Yemen: preparedness measures in a fragile state
*Dureab, F.; S. Al-Awlaqi and A.Jahn. The Lancet*

The pandemic eventually reached Yemen, with the first laboratory confirmed case announced on April 10. Yemen has structural vulnerabilities that have developed over a protracted period of conflict and poor governance, and its health system has suffered the most. To prevent a total collapse of Yemen's fragile health system, the government and the international community should act now more decisively.


Yemen five years on: Children, conflict and COVID-19
*UN Children’s Fund UNICEF (2020)*

Millions of children in Yemen could be pushed to “the brink of starvation” due to huge shortfalls in humanitarian aid funding amid the COVID-19 pandemic – according to a new UNICEF report marking more than five years since conflict escalated in the country.


**Hand Outs**

Infographic: Hand washing without soap or safe and clean water
*Pan American Health Organisation PAHO (2020)*

Infographic illustrating how to wash your hands correctly when there is limited access to soap and clean water.

My hero is you - How kids can fight COVID-19
Inter-Agency Standing Committee IASC; World Health Organization (WHO); UNICEF; et al. (2020)

A new story book that aims to help children understand and come to terms with COVID-19 has been produced. With the help of a fantasy creature, Ario, “My Hero is You, How kids can fight COVID-19!” explains how children can protect themselves, their families and friends from coronavirus and how to manage difficult emotions when confronted with a new and rapidly changing reality. The book – aimed primarily at children aged 6-11 years old – is a project of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings, a unique collaboration of United Nations agencies, national and international nongovernmen- mental organizations and international agencies providing mental health and psychosocial support in emergency settings. Available in different languages.


When and How to use masks
World Health Organization WHO (2020)

Factsheet about how to put on, use, take off and dispose of a mask.

https://www.medbox.org/document/when-and-how-to-use-masks

More infographics here:
https://medbox.org/filter/5E6F63AA9977F/toolbox/communication-training

Please select your preferred language in the filter “Language”

Videos / Learning Material

Films about coronavirus (COVID-19)
Picturing Health (2020)

Here you can download animations about COVID-19 for information, community organising, broadcast or whatsapp groups in multiple languages for Africa and Asia. All about COVID-19: Advice for Communities. What is coronavirus? How does it spread? How does hand washing and physical distancing help? What are the symptoms? Who is most at risk of serious illness? This short animation answers these questions. There are versions for Asia and Africa.


How to Wash Your Hands
Scientific Animations without Borders SWABO (2020)

Washing hands is the best way to prevent the spread of germs and diseases. Dirty hands can carry pathogenic germs that can sicken a person or spread diseases to others. The habit of washing hands with soap and water constitutes the first line of defense against the spread of many diseases, from the common cold or diarrhea to more serious illnesses such as meningitis, influenza or hepatitis as well as many other diseases. This 2-D animation describes the importance of hand washing. Available in different languages.

https://www.medbox.org/document/how-to-wash-your-hands
Hand washing facility options for resource limited settings
Africa CDC (2020)

This document provides guidance to AU Member States, states/local bodies, and communities on how to construct and maintain non-contact hand washing stations like Tippy Taps and other alternative hand washing stations.


Corona Crash Course
Jesuit Worldwide Learning (2020)

A new virus, called the Coronavirus emerged in December 2019 and has spread to people around the world. Jesuit Worldwide Learning invites you to learn facts and test your knowledge on the ongoing pandemic caused by Coronavirus (COVID-19) through a fun-interactive crash course! Access is free! You have only to sign up!

https://www.medbox.org/document/corona-crash-course

Coronavirus: No-Panic Helpguide
1mg (2020)

Here are the answers to the most common queries about the novel coronavirus based on our discussion with the various experts from the reputed institutes and analysis of the CDC, WHO, and MoHFW guidelines.


Spread the music, not the virus! Playlist of African songs from different countries
MEDBOX (2020)

MEDBOX has gathered a selection of over 60 African hits from different countries into a play list with the aim of raising awareness on the diverse ways to fight COVID-19 in addition to a COVID-19 Toolbox https://www.covid19box.org with all the up to date information on the pandemic. Feel free to pass it onto your contacts, the poster can be printed and used in different settings such as cultural centers, hospitals and refugee camps.


Further Reading

COVID-19: A Human Rights Checklist
Humans Rights Watch (2020)

Based on Human Rights Watch (HRW)'s reporting on the human rights dimensions of the COVID-19 pandemic (see Related Summary, and the video, below), this document presents 40 questions to provoke thinking about a rights-respecting response to the crisis. The questions address the needs - including around issues of information and communication - of groups most at risk, such as people living in poverty, ethnic and religious minorities, women, people with disabilities, older people, migrants, refugees, children, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people. The resource also identifies a variety of responses to the crisis, some of which are positive and others problematic - with many links to related stories and resources online.

Covid-19 Notes on Migrants - An ICMHD Health Policy Contribution
ICMHD (2020)

These Notes are designed to remind national and local authorities that the war against COVID-19 cannot be won if migrants are forgotten; unus pro omnibus, omnes pro uno”, or one for all, and all for one, must guide the fight against COVID-19.


Reducing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on internally displaced people (IDPs)
ICRC, IFRC (2020)

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has been actively working to meet the public health and humanitarian needs of the many communities around the world affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. While the pandemic is a global challenge, certain groups are particularly vulnerable to both the disease and its secondary impact.


Studies

ApartTogether
World Health Organization WHO (2020)

ApartTogether is a global study to assess the public health social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on refugees and migrants. It is a collaboration between World Health Organization, across its regional offices, the UN System, and a consortium of research centres led by Ghent University (Belgium) and the University of Copenhagen (Denmark). The study aims to better understand how refugees and migrants experience the psychosocial impact of COVID-19 and how they deal with any challenges that have arisen.

In collaboration with key UN partners, the insights from this survey will be used to inform policy and decision-makers on how they can better support refugees and migrants during and after this pandemic. The survey runs until 31 August 2020.

https://www.aparttogethersudy.org/