



Ministry of Health Community Development,  
Gender Elderly and Children



# RELIGIOUS LEADERS TOOLKIT FOR COVID- 19 VACCINATION UPTAKE IN TANZANIA

2021





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# Foreword

Religious leaders are key stakeholders in mass awareness on religious matters and other social issues. Their contribution towards supporting community health and safety is noticeable. At this time where the whole world is facing the Covid -19 pandemic, religious leaders have been continued to deliver messages of hope to their congregations and some have been influencing their members on captivating COVID-19 preventive measures. At this time where the government has managed to bring to Tanzania Covid 19 vaccine, the Ministry of Health acknowledges the position of religious leaders in influencing the community on preventive measures including vaccine uptake.

The ministry has developed this toolkit to enable religious leaders to understand some basic information on Covid -19 vaccination to increase their awareness and minimize some misinformation about the vaccine. This toolkit will therefore play as a reference book to religious leaders and it will help them deliver messages and facts on COVID-19 preventive measures including vaccination uptake and how to continue protecting themselves after being vaccinated.

Also, the use of information provided by this toolkit will help to avoid misinformation on the COVID-19 vaccine among communities in Tanzania. The toolkit will also be used for vaccination advocacy purposes and it will help religious leaders to understand key messages about risks on Covid -19 infections and vaccine efficacy and safety. This toolkit consists of six areas namely: About this Toolkit, The Covid 19 pandemic, COVID-19 vaccine, How to use this toolkit, Things to consider during vaccine advocacy, and A guide to religious Leaders during addressing their congregation. Also, this toolkit is accompanied by posters, a brochure, and a four-week teaching Plan for Religious Leaders.

I believe that the message available in this toolkit will be useful in helping our communities towards preventive measures with a special focus on vaccine uptake. Lastly, let me ask all religious leaders to continue being an example in protecting our health in Tanzania and continue advocating for vaccine uptake.

Prof. Abel N. Makubi

**PERMANENT SECRETARY (HEALTH)**



# Acknowledgement

The Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly, and Children (MOHCDGEC) has developed this Covid 19 toolkit for Religious Leaders to ensure community participation in solving health challenges, with a special focus on Covid 19.

This toolkit will help Religious Leaders to address their Congregations on preventing measures towards Covid -19 and the importance of the Covid 19 vaccine to their members. Again, this toolkit will also be a document of reference for Religious leaders to guide them when speaking about the covid 19 vaccine during sermons, seminars, lessons, and other religious activities. The idea is to help them understand the best approaches towards supporting their members on vaccine uptake, therefore, protect them against COVID-19 infections.

The Ministry recognizes various stakeholders for their support, inputs, and contributions in making this toolkit successful. The ministry provides its special appreciation to Religious Leaders through their representation from the following organizations (TEC, CCT, CPCT, SDA, BAKWATA, HINDU, and BUDHA); representatives from the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elders, and Children from different sections such as Health Promotion Services, Immunization and Vaccine Development program, Officials from the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, the Department of Information and The Department of Information; Tanzania Medicines and Medical Devices Authority, and technocrats from FHI360, TCDC, T-MARC, UNICEF, and WHO.

Lastly, The Ministry conveys its deep appreciation to USAID through its Tulonge Afya project for financial support during developing this toolkit.

Dr. Aifello W. Sichwale

**CHIEF GOVERNMENT MEDICAL OFFICER**





# Introduction

This toolkit is developed to help religious leaders and their organizations in Tanzania support the Covid 19 vaccination campaign, by providing various messages on COVID-19 prevention through vaccine uptake. This toolkit is a joint work done by religious leaders together with other stakeholders from the Health sector in Tanzania.

**Messages provided in this toolkit are categorized in three key areas namely;**

1. Risk of new infections
2. Vaccine effectiveness
3. Vaccine safety.



# About this Toolkit

This toolkit is developed to help religious leaders and their institutions to participate in the ongoing COVID-19 vaccination uptake campaign taking place in Tanzania. It is well known that Covid 19 is a pandemic that has affected the world and has put many communities at risk of being infected by this deadliest disease.

This toolkit aims at increasing community participation in Covid 19 vaccination process and targets religious leaders and their institutions as major groups towards supporting vaccine acceptance in Tanzania. The toolkit provides basic information on Covid -19, vaccination uptakes, and the benefits of being vaccinated.

Religious leaders play a key role in the community and specifically in shaping community behavior change towards making sound decisions on health matters. In their daily activities, religious leaders can influence decision-making and in this case support the vaccine acceptance and uptake in Tanzania. This toolkit uses some sacred books quotes to help religious leaders to deliver the message of hope and encourage vaccine uptake to their congregation.

In past years, some religious institutions and religious leaders from Southern Sahara countries Tanzania included, were involved in a discussion on disease prevention and making their communities safe. Basing on that example this toolkit is developed to help religious leaders to deliver the message of disease prevention to their members. This toolkit cites some examples of various messages collected from different religious studies and from religious leaders which respond to health challenges facing the community.

We are keen on the information and examples provided through this toolkit that will be useful and that it will guide and help religious leaders and their institutions in filling available gaps in the process of vaccination rollout in Tanzania.

Throughout history, vaccinations have proven time and again that they are one of the most successful public health interventions. That success requires large-scale public trust and participation.

Today, multiple COVID-19 vaccines are available, and many have been already vaccinated here in Tanzania. The advent of Covid -19 vaccination and the community acceptance of vaccine uptake will help the community to bring back happiness, love, and unity from a family level.

Some Tanzanians still have questions and doubts about the COVID-19 vaccines and are in search of guidance. Giving people more information about the vaccines, how they were developed, how they were tested, and how they are made, is an important way to answer concerns and encourage people to get vaccinated. As faith and community leaders, you have a critical role in this effort to end the pandemic.



# The situation of the COVID-19 pandemic

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The first cases of COVID-19 were reported in Wuhan, China in December 2019. The COVID-19 outbreak was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by the World Health Organization (WHO) on January 30, 2020, and a global pandemic on March 11, 2020. The WHO, as of 11:30 am Central European Summer Time, July 12, 2021, has reported a total of 186,411,011 confirmed cases and 4,031,725 deaths globally.

The disease continues to affect every country in the world, and African countries are no exception. Every country in Africa has been affected by the pandemic in terms of loss of lives, economic impacts, and disruptions to the social functionality of communities. The first case of COVID-19 in Tanzania was reported on March 16, 2020. Since that time, COVID-19 has had an adverse impact economically and socially, as well as on the health and wellbeing of the people of Tanzania. The country has experienced three waves of the epidemic, with an increased impact in each subsequent wave.

Countries around the world have advocated for and implemented various strategies and approaches to mitigate and control the pandemic, including adherence to infection prevention control protocols by health care workers, physical distancing, wearing of face masks, hand hygiene, and vaccination.

Vaccination has proven to be one of the most effective strategies for controlling the pandemic. Studies have indicated that countries like the United Kingdom, Israel, and Qatar with reported increasing population vaccination coverage for COVID-19, had notable reductions in symptomatic infections, disease severity, hospitalizations, and deaths among vaccinated individuals compared to unvaccinated population, even in the settings with emerging variants.





# The Covid- 19 vaccine

The introduction of Corona-virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) vaccines is a major step towards reducing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and further reducing the associated disease and deaths. Tanzania, like any other country in the world, considers immunization as one of the components to control the pandemic. Implementing the disease control measures is important to ensure the restoration of community wellbeing. The introduction of the COVID-19 vaccine will benefit the population by preventing people from getting seriously ill or dying from COVID-19. This will supplement the main COVID–19 control interventions; physical distance, use etiquette, frequent hand hygiene, wearing a mask, and conducive environmental factors.

The introduction of the COVID-19 vaccine in Tanzania is in line with the National COVID-19 Response Plan which recommends the use of the COVID-19 vaccine as part of preventive measures against the COVID-19 pandemic. This is due to an increase in morbidity and mortality due to COVID-19, inadequate capacity for the country to handle severe and critical cases, the emergence of new viral variants, and as part of the global response. But also, the introduction of COVID-19 in the immunization services is in line with the National Immunization Strategy (NIS) of Tanzania 2021 to 2025. COVID-19 vaccine management in the country will follow the existing vaccination mechanisms.

While there are several COVID-19 vaccines under development and use, the country will only use COVID-19 vaccines that have been approved and registered by Tanzania Medicines and Medical Devices Authority (TMDA).

## Benefits of the COVID-19 vaccine

- Vaccines help your body's natural defenses prepare to fight the virus if you are exposed to COVID-19.
- Reduce severity resulted from Covid -19 infections.
- Reduce COVID-19 related deaths.

## Types of COVID-19 vaccine authorized in Tanzania

The Government of Tanzania through TMDA has currently authorized five types of Covid -19 vaccine to be used in the country. These are Janssen, Pfizer, Moderna, Sinovac, and Sinopharm.

## COVID-19 vaccine's side effects

Some have reported mild to moderate side effects after receiving the vaccine, these are usually minor and can last from a few hours to a few days. Side effects are normal, this means your immune system is building protection against COVID-19. It does not mean that you have COVID-19. Side effects include pain at the site of injection, sore muscles, tiredness, chills, or mild fever. It is rare but possible to have serious side effects such as trouble breathing or low blood pressure.



# How to use this Toolkit

Try to include the vaccination message when addressing your congregations and other members of the community.

- You may opt for special addresses or discussions about vaccination to only men, women, or children.
- Use the information available in this toolkit during advisory moments (i.e. one to one meeting).
- Use printed materials and other documents available to spread the vaccination message.
- Put and spread the vaccination message during your sermons and other teaching sessions.
- You may reach to children through their schools and opt for other social gatherings, media, and youth groups to target those who are not in schools.
- Use this message during youth meetings
- Use your social media accounts, media, T-shirts, posters, sports, songs, etc to spread the vaccination message.



# 1. Things you can do to increase vaccine acceptance to your congregation

There are a couple of things that you can do to increase vaccine acceptance and help to prevent Covid among your Congregation members. It is your role to advise and advocate on the importance to be vaccinated. Below are some hints that are useful when speaking with your members.

**1. Lead by example.**

Get vaccinated and encourage your staff to be vaccinated.

**2. Share educational materials widely.**

Post information in common/high visibility areas in your church. Publish information on the church website, on social media platforms, in emails, and your bulletins.

**3. Consider sending a letter or email to your congregants.**

Start by expressing your concern for the health of your congregants and their families. Provide facts, refer to additional resources, and let them know you are available to answer questions and talk through concerns.

**4. Add laments for the pain that COVID-19 has caused.**

Lament worldwide deaths and losses. Create opportunities to heal as a community.

**5. Highlight the mission.**

work the church has done to respond to COVID-19 so the congregation can remember the real impact it has had on the community.

**6. Have congregation members give testimonies about their vaccinations.**

**7. Have congregation members that are doctors/nurses give testimony about the crisis.**

**8. Create an art wall where congregation members can add their reasons for deciding to get their vaccination.**

**9. Have pastoral leaders talk about their own vaccination experiences. Live stream or post pictures.**

- 10. Explain the Glory of God in enabling experts to discover the Covid 19 vaccine.**
- 11. Provide opportunities to thank physicians/nurses/front-line workers for their efforts during the pandemic.**
- 12. Support those dealing with the response to COVID vaccination (back-up care for single parents, care packages).**
- 13. Offer transportation options to enable those who are homebound to get vaccinated.**
- 14. Be available on a regular schedule to help people register and complete sign-up for COVID vaccination.**
- 15. Work with your local Health Department, pharmacy, or other partners to host a vaccine clinic site.**



## 2. Talking to your congregation

Every interaction is an opportunity to share information, answer questions, and discuss concerns about COVID-19 vaccines. Here are research-based suggestions for productive conversations about COVID-19 vaccines:

- **Start from a place of empathy and understanding.**  
Acknowledge the disruption COVID-19 has caused in all of our lives. Remind congregants that getting vaccinated is the most important thing they can do to move back toward normal activities. Recognize that it's normal for someone to have concerns about a new vaccine for a new virus. Encourage them to ask questions, and answer in a way they can understand.
- **Acknowledge that getting vaccinated is a personal decision.**  
A pastor's role is to provide information, answer questions, and talk through concerns so everyone can make the decision that is right for them and their loved ones. State clearly what we do and don't know.  
  
Don't overemphasize "potentials" (potential risks or potential benefits). Contrast the known long-term effects of COVID-19 with the unknown potential risks of the vaccines.
- **Focus on the benefits of getting a COVID vaccine.**  
Not just the consequences of not getting vaccinated. Emphasize that the benefits of getting the vaccine far exceed the risks.  
  
Explain the health risks associated with declining to be vaccinated.  
Tailor the conversation for the person you're talking with, from your perspective as their pastor.  
  
After talking, let them know you are open to continuing the conversation and encourage them to take at least one step.  
  
That may include scheduling a vaccination appointment, reviewing vetted information you provide about the safety and importance of the vaccines or learning what to expect.

### Be direct.

- Unapowashauri waumini kupata chanjo ya Corona, waambie kwamba;
  - o This vaccine is especially important for you because of your (job/high risk/high-risk relatives/health challenges/etc.)
  - o I believe in this vaccine so strongly that I got it as soon as I could, and I made sure everyone in my family did too.
  - o A vaccine has been reserved for you.



# Messaging that works

In recent research, people have said that these messages would make them more likely to get vaccinated for COVID-19. This can be used in social media, emails, or almost any other communication.

- The vaccines are highly effective in preventing illness – even more effective than the annual flu vaccine.
- The COVID vaccine will help protect you from getting sick.
- The quickest way for life to return to normal is for most people to get vaccinated.
- Nearly all doctors who have been offered the vaccine have taken it.
- Millions of people have been vaccinated safely. Tens of thousands of people participated in the phase 3 trials for the three authorized vaccines. After being fully vaccinated, no trial participants were hospitalized or died from COVID-19.
- A vaccine has been reserved for you.

## Addressing Concerns About Side Effects

- Severe side effects are rare and treatable. Minor side effects usually go away within a few days.
- No one can say for sure, but there is no reason to think there will be any long-term side effects.
- The FDA and CDC will continue to monitor the vaccines for safety to make sure that even very rare side effects are identified.

## Maelezo kuhusu uharaka wa matengenezo ya chanjo ya Corona

- The COVID vaccines have been held to the same rigorous standards as other vaccines. The government didn't cut corners; it cut red tape to expedite the approval process.
- While the vaccines were created quickly, they weren't created from scratch. Researchers have been studying and working with mRNA vaccines (Pfizer and Moderna) for decades, and scientists began using viral vectors (Johnson & Johnson) in the 1970s.
- Viral vector vaccines have been used successfully to treat cancer and prevent diseases like the flu, Zika, and HIV; mRNA vaccines have been studied for the prevention of the flu, Zika, rabies, and other diseases.

## Addressing Misinformation:

It would be impossible to counter all the misinformation being spread about COVID vaccines, but these are some of the most important facts:

- The vaccines cannot give you COVID-19.
- The vaccines do not affect or interact with your DNA in any way.
- The vaccine does not stay in your body
- The vaccination does not affect the reproductive system in any way.



# Appendix - Poster 1

**#UjanjaKuchanja**

**"Vaccine has made my family safe"**

**TUSIFIKE HUKO**  
#UjanjaKuchanja

**COVID – 19 Vaccine is given to people of 18 years and above, free of charge.**

**HEALTH PROMOTION SECTION**  
HPS  
AFYA YANGU MTAJI WAKU

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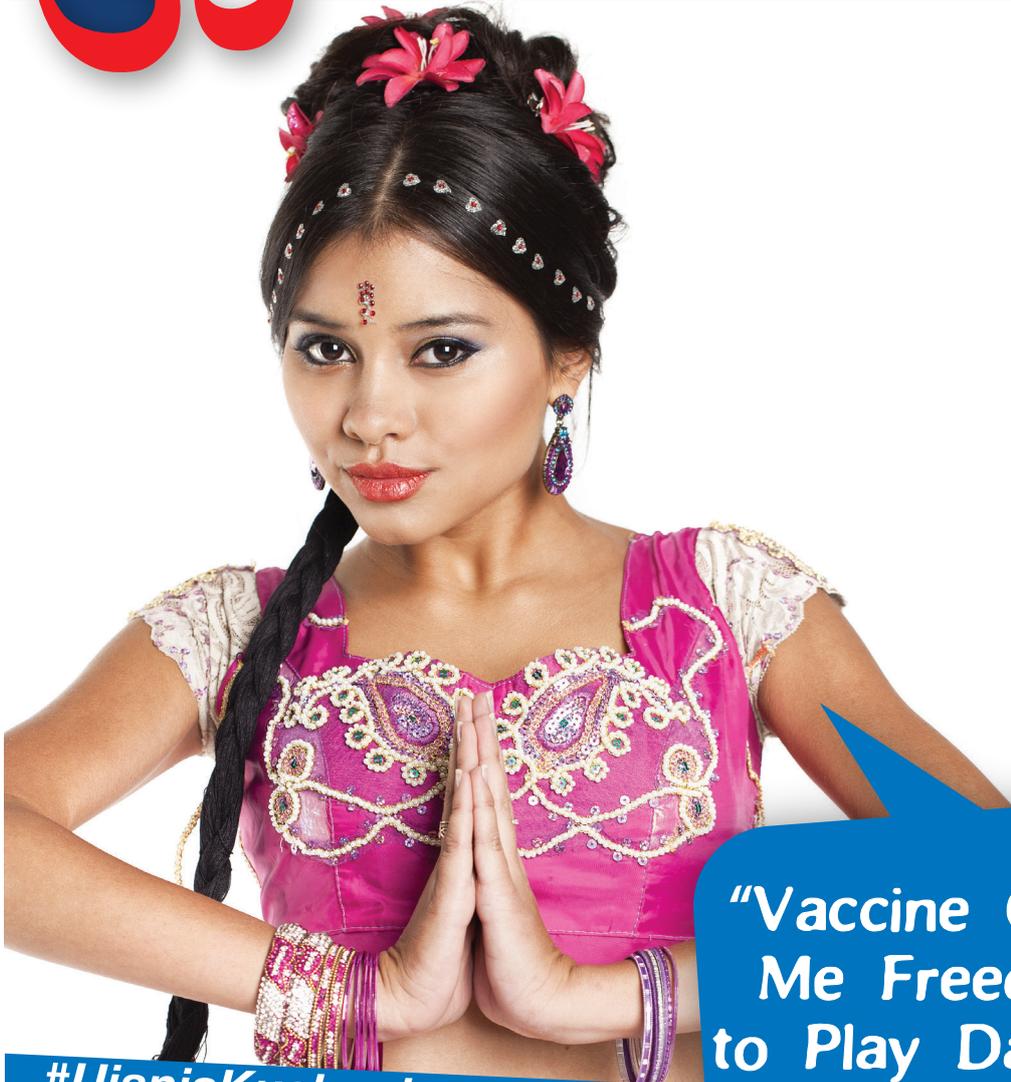




# Poster 2



Ministry of Health Community Development,  
Gender Elderly and Children



"Vaccine Gives Me Freedom to Play Dandiya"

#UjanjaKuchanja



COVID – 19 Vaccine is given to people of 18 years and above, free of charge.



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# Poster 3



Ministry of Health Community Development,  
Gender Elderly and Children



"With Vaccine  
I Can Now  
Play My Sport"

#UjanjaKuchanja



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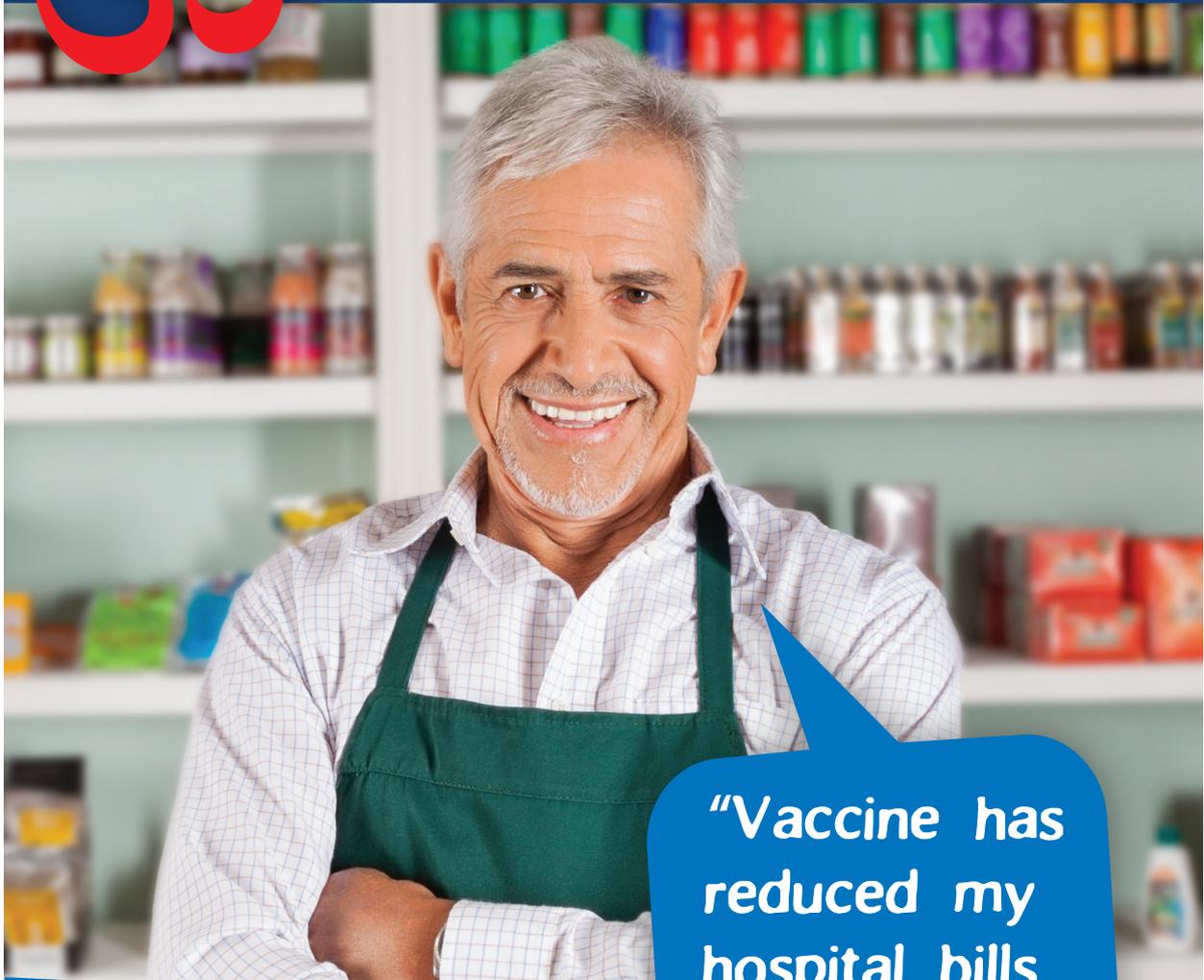




# Poster 4



Ministry of Health Community Development,  
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"Vaccine has reduced my hospital bills worries"

#UjanjaKuchanja



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# Four Weekly Calendar

**MESSAGES OF HOPE**  
A Guide for Religious Leaders on Covid-19 Vaccine  
Messages of Hope During Worship

Week 1

**MESSAGE; TALK ABOUT THE RISK/DANGER OF CORONA DISEASE**

Corona is a very dangerous disease and still exists in Tanzania and around the world. We encourage/advise you to get vaccinated to protect yourself and your loved ones.

My Hindu brethren, it is important that we realize that we are all at risk of Corona infection, and experts tell us that the risk is even higher for those who have not been vaccinated. We must understand that Corona is a very dangerous disease, the risk is not only to lose loved ones, there are people who have lost their wives, children, husbands, fathers, mothers, relatives and friends, but also this disease is very painful if you get it. It also carries high costs of treatment which has left many families in terrible financial situations, let alone the long-term effects of illness.

Please refer to the **Honorable Prime Minister of India Mr Narendra Modi** Speech on Covid-19 when he said "Evam, evam vikarah, apī tarunha sachyate sukham" meaning that "a disease and its outbreak must be dealt with at the very beginning or else it becomes incurable and its treatment becomes difficult".

**Religious Celebrations** - We all need to participate in ceremonial events and activities such as Diwali, Navratri, etc., these activities are important to keep us together as a Hindu community and family. These activities can only be done if everyone grows up safe, and the only security that currently exists is to make sure each of us has been vaccinated against Corona. For example, this year we have decided to postpone these activities because of the risk of Corona disease. The health experts have expressed that, everyone will be safe from this disease once the whole community is vaccinated. Therefore, it is very important for each of us to make sure that we get a COVID - 19 vaccines.

Week 2

Week 2

**MESSAGE; TALK ABOUT CORONA VACCINE SAFETY**

In difficult times of disease outbreaks like Corona, our Healers are Health Experts. These health experts have been empowered by the Gods to be able to heal us. These health professionals have been working hard to ensure that we are safe, this involves treatment and other issues. God he has also given them the ability and knowledge to create Corona vaccines. It is important to note that God has brought this vaccine through health experts and that this vaccine is safe. It is safe because it does not cause any harm to people and is specially designed to protect people from Corona disease, to reduce the severity of the disease but also to reduce the number of deaths associated with the disease.

Health experts have confirmed the safety of the vaccine, but there has been a lot of rumours on the street or on the social networks. The Hindu religion teaches us to ask and follow the advice of technical experts.

**Allah the Almighty has said "Ask the wise if you do not know"**

Our experts, the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children and the Government have said that the vaccine is safe, and the side effects of the vaccine are minor and temporary.

Week 3

Week 3

**MESSAGE; TALK ABOUT THE EFFECTIVENESS / QUALITY OF THE VACCINE**

The basis of the Hindu religion is to protect oneself from the harmful effects of disease or death. So, the health experts have told us that the Corona vaccine provides protection against the virus in attaching the body, but even if you get the Corona disease, this vaccine helps fight the virus and reduces the chances to find yourself on oxygen, in intensive care or being hospitalized.

Being vaccinated reduces the risk of death if you become infected, so it is important to follow the instructions of health professionals to prevent and completely eradicate Corona disease. So, this vaccine is important for you and your family, let's talk to our colleagues at workplaces, home environment and at various gatherings on the importance of COVID - 19 vaccine.

We are also advised to continue to wear masks even if we have been vaccinated, because you may have been vaccinated but others have not been vaccinated so you can carry the Corona virus, although for you it may not show any side effects but you can spread it to other people.

Week 4

Week 4

**MESSAGE; TALK ABOUT SOCIAL AND CULTURAL NORMS THAT CAN LEAD TO THE SPREAD OF CORONA VIRUS**

Every society has its own social and cultural norms, in the places where we live there are different perspectives on health issues. These perspectives and attitudes in one way or another can be the source of poor health conditions among us. The way we live, the way we act and the way we believe has a profound effect in our health. It is our responsibility especially in our communities to be aware that there are things that can lead to the spread of this disease and lead to death among us.

We would like to urge the Hindu community to avoid issues that could lead to these consequences. Words or any kind of actions that prevent you from taking care of your health are dangerous and will lead to the loss of our loved ones. So many things are being said in the streets and in our communities about this Corona vaccine, many of these things are misleading the truth about the safety and quality of the vaccine, let's get rid of this misinformation and let's all get vaccinated.



# Brochure



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"Vaccine has  
made my  
family safe"



COVID - 19 Vaccine is given to people  
of 18 years and above, free of charge.



A famous saying in Gujarati reads, you can't win the world if you are not well, Even the lord teaches us in Bhagwad Gita to keep our body safe and pious as the god dwells in our heart.

In the current difficult times when COVID-19 has engulfed the world, it is our duty to look after well being and health of ourselves and our loved ones. Our national and religious leadership along with renowned doctors and scientists, after in-depth research, have come to a conclusion that Vaccination is the best prevention against COVID-19.

In the meeting arranged by the Hindu Council of Tanzania for all Hindu communities, our leading doctor, Prof. Dr. Kaushik also supported the vaccination program and he informed us that the best vaccine is the one which is available to you immediately. Even our government is providing free of cost vaccination program. Hence, we all must secure the well-being and future of our family by taking this opportunity and get everyone vaccinated.

In case you have any questions and then below FAQ might help otherwise you can always contact The Hindu Council of Tanzania to seek further clarification or information

### 1. What is COVID-19 Vaccine?

It is an effective way to prevent and control the spread of the COVID-19 disease

### 2. How COVID-19 Vaccine works?

The COVID-19 Vaccine enables the body's immune system to fight off the Corona virus when a person is infected.

### 3. Benefits of COVID-19 Vaccine

- Fighting disease by preventing infection.
- Reduce the risk or severity of the disease even if the person becomes infected.
- Reducing deaths from COVID-19.

### 4. Type of COVID-19 Vaccines approved in the country

Four types of vaccines have been approved for use in the country for the prevention of COVID-19. The vaccines are:

- Johnson & Johnson,
- Pfizer,
- Moderna
- Sinovac & Sinopharm.

### 5. COVID-19 Vaccine Safety

This vaccine is safe, has been tested through various scientific studies and has been approved by the World Health Organization and approved by the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children through the Medicines and Medical Devices Authority (TMDA).

### 6. The cost of COVID-19 Vaccines

The CORONA vaccine is provided free of charge

### 7. Access to the COVID-19 Vaccines

It is available nationwide in hospitals and specialized centers.

### 8. Vaccine Beneficiaries

This vaccine is given to all people aged 18 and over. Vaccination is available free of charge.

### 9. Minor side effects of COVID-19 Vaccine

The COVID-19 vaccine has no side effects unless some people can getting minor side effects as with other vaccines including moderate pain in the injection site, fatigue, fever or chills headache.

### 10. Life after being vaccinated with COVID-19 Vaccine

In addition to getting vaccinated, you are advised to continue to protect yourself from COVID-19 by wearing a mask, wash your hands with running water with soap or use a cleanser hands, avoid congestion, exercise and focus on good nutrition.



# Banners

  
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#UjanjaKuchanja

रसी (Vaccine)  
थकी भारो परवार  
सुरक्षति थयो छे.

 COVID-19 नी रसी (Vaccine), 18 वर्षथी उपरना ट्रेकने  
वनिा मुक्थे (FREE) आपवामां आवे छे. 

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