

## **800 000 to receive Covid-19 vaccine in the kingdom of Eswatini //**

*Most of the Israeli population is already fully vaccinated against Covid-19. IsraAID, the largest humanitarian aid organisation in Israel, is working to mirror that success in the Kingdom of Eswatini.*

Eswatini has many challenges: 69% of the country's population live below the poverty line and the country has the highest HIV prevalence in the world. Numbers that do not bode well with a global pandemic. But, it is precisely because of this experience that Eswatini has an existing healthcare network that can be leveraged for their ongoing Covid-19 vaccination rollout.

In light of this reality, it's even more important that the population of 1.15 million people, 800 000 of whom are eligible to be vaccinated, theirs as soon as possible.

For a mass vaccination campaign to be successful, there must to be community buy-in. As a community that has already had to make great efforts over the last decade to improve access to HIV testing stations, access antiretroviral treatment for the vulnerable and have honest dialogues with community leaders and health centre staff about medication, there is already an established level of trust and infrastructure.

Using this infrastructure and with IsraAID's experience, the government is able to successfully reach and vaccinate substantially more people on a daily basis. But a successful vaccination requires a lot more than syringes and vaccine vials.

This is why the NGO provides ongoing wellness support and education to medical workers. Stress related issues within medical centres are on the rise and by providing psychosocial aid, preventative measures can be put in place to lighten the burden for front line workers.

Additionally, those receiving vaccines have been given access to information sessions through facilitated discussions with community leaders. Community events such as the Bushfire Festivals are being leveraged to spread the word, and ensure the correct information is being shared, empowering the community to make informed decisions.

The vaccination drive launched in March 2021 and Eswatini is expected to receive different vaccine types, potentially including Oxford AstraZeneca, Moderna, Pfizer, and Johnson & Johnson vaccines through a number of equity-oriented efforts such as COVAX and the African Union.

The vaccination rollout is scheduled to be ongoing throughout the rest of this year. The successful culmination at the end of 2021 will not only prove to be an example to other developing countries of what can be achieved, but will also leave Eswatini with learnings that can be adapted to ensure the protection of those most vulnerable through any future crisis.

