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THE NEXT NORMAL

Rethinking Travel in the Era of COVID-19

Over the past year, First Fruit has closely monitored the global travel situation to understand how our foundation will need to rethink travel moving forward. This report aims to contextualize our findings as they apply to our role as grantmakers, while emphasizing the vital role of international travel in our mission toward deepening relationships and impact with key partners in the Majority World.

A N E W N O R M A L



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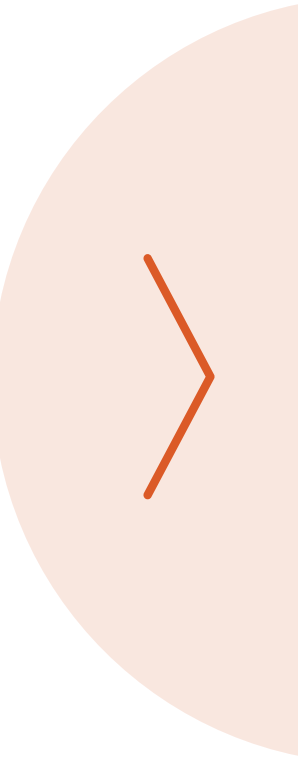
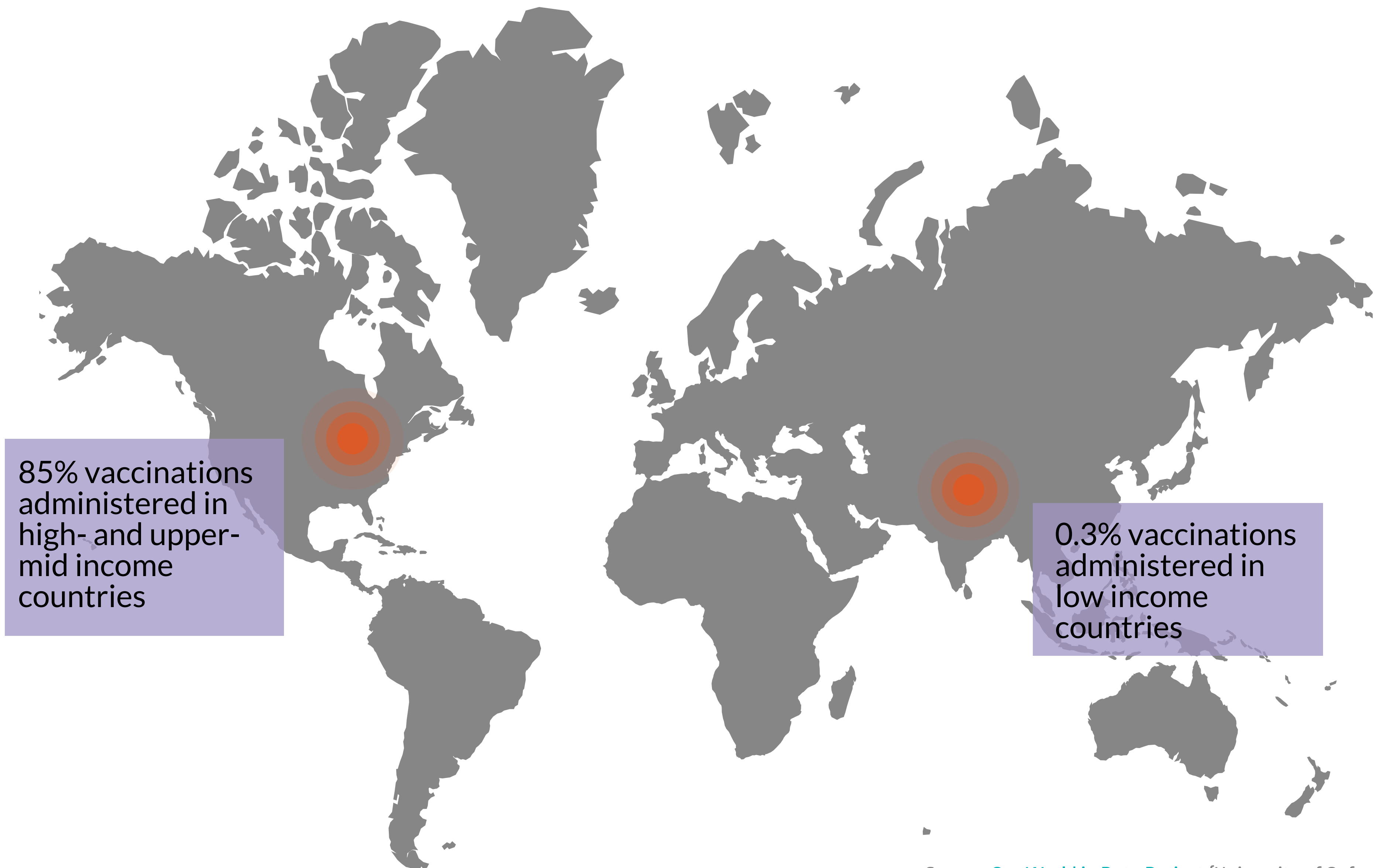
While we understand the virus better than we did back in 2020, and are more effective at preventing its spread today, there's a long road to recovery across the globe. We continue to witness inconsistent global recovery as different countries experience peaks and plateaus of the virus at different rates, exacerbated by highly infectious new variants. Consequently, resuming international travel will be a long and slow process wrought with trial and error, experienced by countries around the world as they work to contain the spread of COVID-19.



C O V I D - 1 9 V A C C I N A T I O N S



The map below, published by the NY Times, [tracks the rate of COVID-19 vaccinations](#) around the world, a significant factor influencing global travel recovery. There are stark gaps between vaccination programs in different countries, with a few countries yet to report a single dose, and the lowest vaccination rates concentrated in the Global South.



Source: [Our World in Data Project](#) (University of Oxford), July 2021

NEW 'HOOPS' TO JUMP THROUGH



Image Copyright: Sorax

Extra travel rules are being imposed by governments around the world, such as mandated quarantines and certifying COVID-19 tests and vaccinations. As a result, airports will need to reorganize their infrastructure to accommodate new regulations. While some airports will have the resources to implement an efficient system, others will struggle, with travelers facing long lines as a result.

For example, unvaccinated US passengers traveling to Egypt must have a printed medical certificate with negative COVID-19 test results, taken no longer than 96 hours before departure. The certificate must be verified by the issuing laboratory. Vaccinated passengers must provide a vaccination certificate showing they were fully vaccinated at least 14 days before departure. In addition, a completed 'Public Health Card' must be presented to immigration upon arrival.

V A C C I N E P A S S P O R T S



Image Copyright: Forbes

Vaccine passports will bring on new issues to address at every level of society.

Unlike the more traditional yellow fever vaccination cards needed for travel to certain countries in the African continent, digital documenting to prove that you've received a COVID-19 vaccine adds a whole new dimension of things to consider, such as: who owns or holds the data, especially since the sensitive information involves multiple stakeholders?

A senior adviser on President Biden's COVID-19 task force, said that the administration has a series of guiding principles about developing vaccine passports, but doesn't believe the data should be held by the government.

At the end of March 2021, New York became the first state in the US to formally launch a digital passport for COVID-19. The Excelsior Pass is a free app developed in partnership with IBM that will help verify vaccination and testing for COVID-19, intended to fast-track the reopening of sports arenas, music venues, restaurants, and businesses.

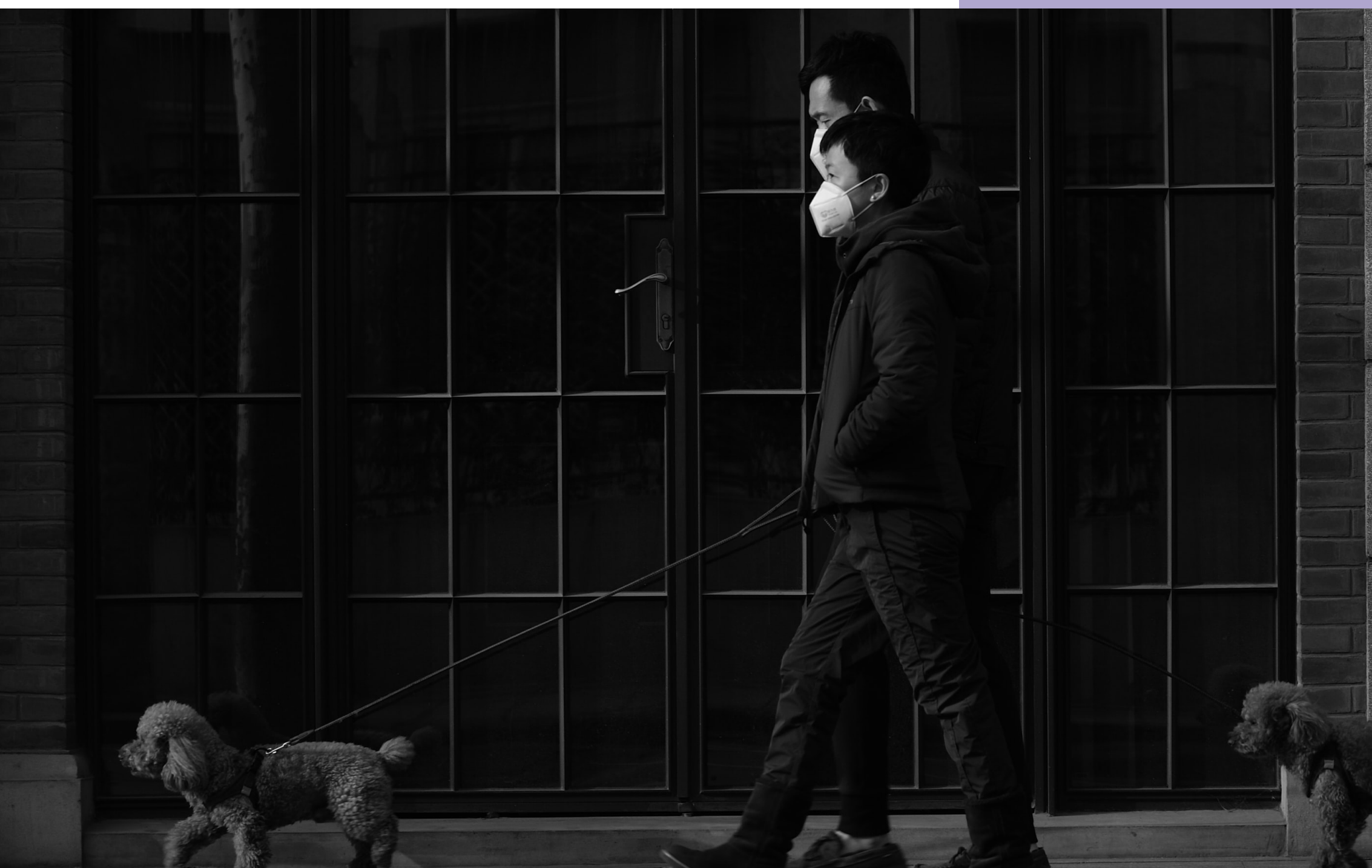
A C A S E
S T U D Y :
I S R A E L
G R E E N
P A S S



Image Copyright: Getty Images, Jack Guez

Although Israel has recently experienced new clusters of the virus, in early 2021 they were the poster child for post-pandemic life. By March 2021, the country outpaced the rest of the world in vaccinations, with 55 percent of the population receiving one dose of the Pfizer vaccine and more than 41 percent receiving two doses. With its vaccine passport called the Green Pass released in February, Israel piloted the first digital app with the hope of bringing about a long-awaited return to 'normal' life.

Unfortunately, the pandemic is on the rise again in many regions of the world, largely driven by new variants like the highly contagious Delta variant, first identified in India.



The pandemic highlighted the need to redefine essential travel for employees.

Image Copyright: Unsplash

PREPARING FOR SAFE TRAVEL: What should we be evaluating?

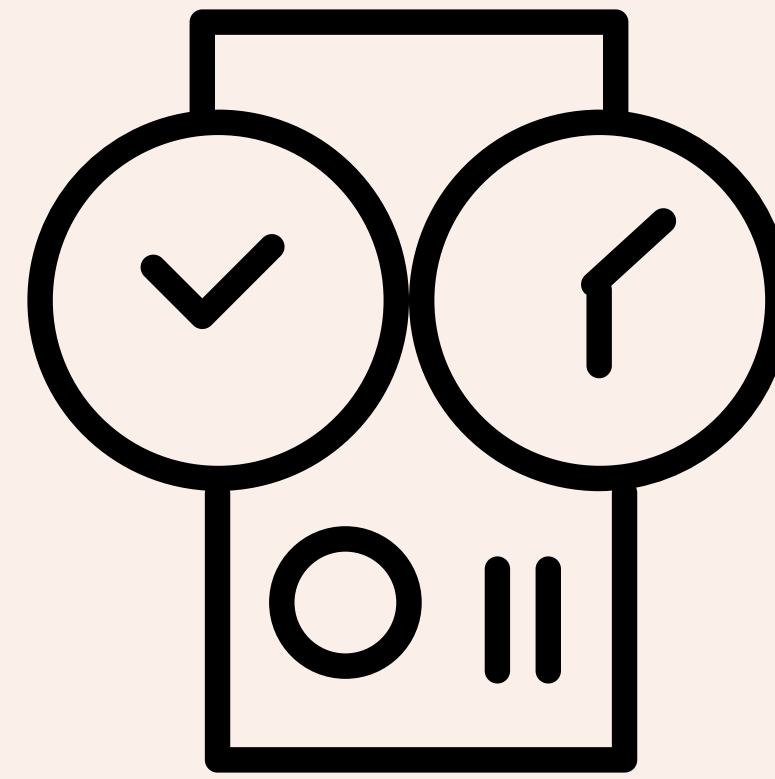


Travelers' Personal Risk Assessment



Takes into account the necessity and nature of the trip.

- Health issues (risk for severe disease)
- Risk tolerance
- Immunity (antibody presence)



Trip-based Determinants



Assesses trip details influencing risk of exposure to COVID-19.

- Destination country
- Airports
- Planned activities
- Ground transportation
- Lodging



Travel, Governmental, Employer Policies



Existing policies may need to be revised.

- Health insurance coverage
- Employer travel guidelines
- Government regulations at both origin & destination countries

Air travel demand back to 2019 levels will likely not take place until 2024 globally.

Source: [McKinsey & Company](#).



Image Copyright: AFP, Jiji

Experts are predicting that travel recovery will most likely be led by Asia–Pacific, which could recover in 2023 compared to travel within North America and Europe. Even in an optimistic scenario where the virus is effectively contained, and economic policy response is moderately effective, full air demand recovery is not expected before 2022.

P R O J E C T E D T R A V E L T I M E L I N E

Today to 2023

This projected travel timeline, based on current, observable travel patterns as well as forecasts made by travel authorities and research firms, helps us consider the impact of COVID-19 on air travel.

TODAY

Some business travel, but primarily personal and leisure-based.

Mainly domestic but some international travel is occurring.

LATE 2021

Led by business travelers and mid-to-high-tier frequent fliers.

Mainly long-range, international flights through mid-2022.

MID 2022

Business travel grows, with strong bookings for premium cabins and first class.

Closer to pre-COVID levels of travel.

2023

Leisure travel industry reaches 80-90% of pre-COVID volume.

At or above pre-pandemic traffic.

W H A T D O O U R
P A R T N E R S S A Y ?

In our desire to learn from a variety of organizations, we asked colleague foundations, global missions networks, and our grantees, to share their approach to travel in this era of COVID-19.

Guidelines

PRACTICAL

"Is it physically possible to get to the place we want to go?"

"What is the cost in terms of time and quarantine expense?"

"What is the risk to us and them?"

RELATIONAL

"Does the gathering include building relationships and trust?",

"Does the gathering involve complicated or high-level communication?"

"Is there a need to 'show up' to identify with or understand the local context?"

Many of our grantees, rather than abiding by hard and fast rules about if and how their team should travel, take more of a case-by-case approach that focuses on personal discernment for team members. These ministries are providing their staff with general guidelines and questions to help potential travelers make wise decisions in their planning.

T R A V E L I S H A P P E N I N G

For many of our partners, the past year has been one of the most difficult and challenging years in the history of their organization, so we were surprised to learn that many of them had the resources and capacity to travel during the pandemic. We wanted to know what travel looked like for them, as well as their expectations for travel in the second half of 2020 and into the future. Their insights are reflective of their organizational and relational needs as they carried out their mission—in spite of COVID-19.

Domestic, Regional, International



Where mobility was possible, the first level of travel was in-country, domestic travel.

Regional travel began to slowly occur, followed by limited international trips in the summer and fall of 2020.

Small Gatherings



Gatherings within an organization are being prioritized in 2020, given that ministries have not been able to meet in-person for over a year.

These gatherings are primarily strategic or leadership meetings.

Improved Travel Budgets



In 2020, travel budgets dropped considerably and were reallocated to other areas in response to COVID-19.

By 2022, many organizations anticipate their travel budgets returning to pre-pandemic levels.

C O N C L U S I O N



Today's evolving landscape requires travelers to adapt to new restrictions impacting travel, requiring new habits to be formed. We can prepare for these changes now and turn obstacles into opportunities, as we rethink travel in the era of COVID-19.

I M P O R T A N T R E S O U R C E S

CDC - [COVID-19 Travel Recommendations by Destination](#): International travel recommendations related to COVID-19 are updated weekly. CDC reviews data reported to the WHO daily to determine a destination's COVID-19 Travel Health Notice level.

State Dept.: The Department of State advises all U.S. citizens to read the country-specific travel advisories and U.S. Embassy COVID pages for updates. Includes information for mandatory COVID-19 testing requirements, quarantines, travel restrictions, and closed borders: [International Travel Information](#).

IATA COVID-19 Travel Regulations Map: The International Air Transport Association (IATA) introduced a [free online interactive world map](#) to provide travelers with the latest COVID-19 entry regulations by country. The map relies on IATA's Timatic database which contains comprehensive information on documentation required for international travel.