



**World Learning**  
EDUCATION | DEVELOPMENT | EXCHANGE

## **Our Approach to COVID-19**

World Learning Youth Programs recognizes risk as inherent in all travel, and we continually work to identify, mitigate, and manage risks within our program contexts. We continue to closely monitor the impact of COVID-19 on our youth exchange portfolio and the travel industry.

### **What COVID-19 protocols are World Learning Youth Programs implementing this summer?**

[Read our inbound COVID-19 risk management protocols.](#)

[Read our outbound COVID-19 risk management protocols.](#)

### **How does World Learning Youth Programs decide when it is safe for a travel program to take place where there might be heightened risk of COVID-19?**

World Learning Youth Programs uses a variety of monitoring sources and relies on a risk committee, chaired by the Director of Security, to comprehensively evaluate risk. Key resources for monitoring risk include daily Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) news summaries, International SOS risk alerts, global and local news sources, local health ministries and other government agencies, and the U.S. Department of State travel warnings.

During a public health emergency such as the current COVID-19 pandemic, World Learning Youth Programs also relies on guidance from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

In addition, during periods of heightened health risks, World Learning Youth Programs closely monitors actions taken by the governments in the countries and local communities where our programs operate, such as movement restrictions or quarantine requirements that would potentially impact the program.

Finally, World Learning leverages the expertise and knowledge of our local partners, who provide us with updates about issues of concern and potential impact to our participants and program locations. Our local partners have extensive networks that include local governments, public health authorities, U.S. Embassy services, and informal sources—all of which help to inform our decisions about programs.

### **What if my program gets canceled prior to the start date?**

If we do make the difficult decision to modify or suspend any World Learning Youth Program prior to departure, we will work with U.S. Department of State colleagues to determine the best contingency plan for each exchange.

Given the changing nature of the pandemic, we may be required to switch to hybrid (in-country) or virtual exchanges and will avoid cancelling programs to the best of our ability.

## **Does World Learning Youth Programs require proof of COVID-19 vaccination prior to travel?**

Yes, World Learning Youth Programs requires participants to be up to date with their COVID-19 vaccine prior to the start of their program and asks enrolled participants to submit a copy of their proof of COVID-19 vaccination by as a part of their pre-departure paperwork.

In accordance with the CDC, World Learning considers participants to be up to date once they have received:

- Two (2) doses in a 2-dose vaccine series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines; OR
- One (1) dose in a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine.

AND

- Latest dose of the relevant booster when it is recommended by the CDC and is available.

*In short, even if a participant received the original monovalent booster, they still need to receive this updated bivalent booster when it is recommended by the CDC, to be in line with World Learning requirements.*

*\*Any participant who resides in a country without access to the bivalent booster will only be required to have the primary series of the vaccine along with any booster dose that is available to them (such as a monovalent booster).*

World Learning understands that there are legitimate reasons why participants may not be up to date with their COVID-19 vaccine. In turn, we provide the opportunity to petition for an exemption to our vaccination requirement on the grounds of medical reasons, sincerely held religious beliefs, or unavailability of the vaccine/booster doses. Petitions will be reviewed by World Learning's Risk Assessment Committee if they do not present undue hardship and/or pose a direct threat to the health and safety of the requesting participant or to other members of our programs. If a participant's petition is denied and they wish to travel on the program, they will need to be fully vaccinated, including boosters, no later than two weeks prior to their departure date.

For travel into the United States, the CDC will accept vaccines that are approved or authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as well as vaccines listed for Emergency Use (EUL) by the World Health Organization (WHO).

*Please note that with regards to exemptions, World Learning Youth Programs cannot guarantee that unvaccinated travelers will be granted entry to all program countries.*

## **What can I expect from World Learning Youth Programs as my program approaches?**

The World Learning Youth Program team will be in close contact with selected participants as we plan for your program, and prior to your departure, we will share the most current COVID-19 considerations, information, and expectations pertaining to your destination. Feel free to email us – via your program's email address (below) – we are happy to answer your questions!

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