



November 2021

Welcome....

to our November 2021 latest news update. CORDS is a program of Ending Pandemics, comprised of six regional networks:

APEIR - [the Asia Partnership on Emerging Infectious Disease Research](#)

EAIDSNet - [the East African Integrated Disease Surveillance Network](#)

MBDS - [the Mekong Basin Disease Surveillance Foundation](#)

MECIDS - [the Middle East Consortium on Infectious Disease Surveillance](#)

SACIDS - [SACIDS Foundation for One Health](#)

SECID - [the South East European Center for Surveillance and Control of Infectious Diseases](#)

The CORDS networks work to to reduce and prevent the spread of diseases by exchanging information and best practice. Our vision is a world united against infectious diseases. Early detection of outbreaks helps keep disease transmission to its area of origin, which, in our increasingly mobile world, is vital to stopping life threatening diseases such as Covid-19, Zika, Ebola and Yellow Fever. The collective expertise of the CORDS networks and their close relationships with local communities facilitates timely detection and response to outbreaks.

Accelerating Covid-19 Contact Tracers Capacity in Indonesia

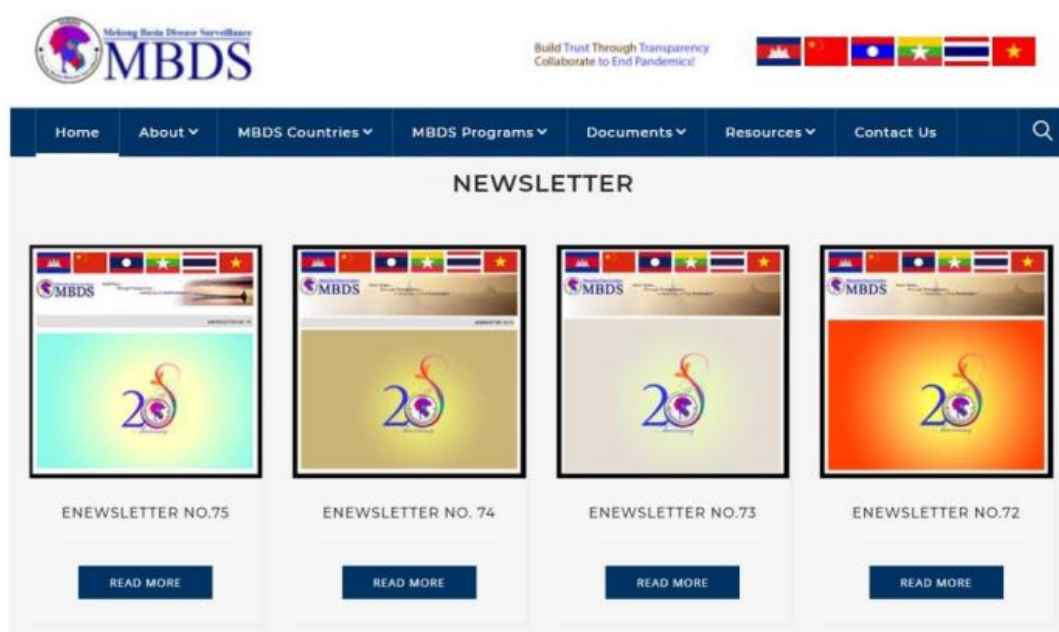
Indonesia, the largest archipelagic country and the fourth most populous, is facing numerous Covid-19 challenges. After a series of national holidays, confirmed cases and daily deaths increased significantly from June to July 2021. The importance of an adequate contact tracing system was acknowledged, yet Indonesia's capacity was limited. Collaboration and coordination amongst key stakeholders was required, with the Ministry of Health, the National Task Force for Covid-19, the Ministries of Education, Culture, Research, Technology and Universities, and international development partners agreeing to work together alongside communities to contact trace online.

Various training materials were designed and developed by the Ministry of Health, the Covid-19 Task Force, WHO Indonesia, FAO Indonesia, and international development partners including the Indonesia One Health University Network and FHI 360, an international not for profit working to improve global health and well-being. The target audience was young professionals, students and health services with the aim of empowering them to perform contact tracing and use the 'Silacak' reporting platform. Training topics covered include isolation and self-quarantine, behavior change communication and patient data confidentiality.

The training alongside monitoring and evaluation activities involving cross-ministerial and international development partners, has helped to increase the level of national tracing data collection from 261,482 confirmed Covid-19 cases in January 2021 to 1,895,085 cases in September 2021*. The Indonesian Government has also been able to increase the human resources needed to collect and analyze the data. In the future it's hoped that the cross-sector collaboration that has enabled the success of the Covid-19 contact tracing system can be implemented in other health policy strategies to help end the pandemic nationally.

Adapted from an article by Nurul Huda, the Asia Partnership on Emerging Infectious Disease Research ([APEIR](#)), first published in Emerging Edition 7.

*Data from the 'Silacak' application.



The Mekong Basin Disease Surveillance Foundation

The Mekong Basin Disease Surveillance Foundation ([MBDS](#)) is a self-organized regional network established in 2001. The cooperative, celebrating its 20th anniversary this year is a collaboration amongst six Mekong Basin countries: Cambodia, China, Lao P.D.R, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. It aims to strengthen national and regional capabilities in infectious disease surveillance, inter-regional collaboration, outbreak response and real time information sharing to control public health threats rapidly and effectively. The work of MBDS can be seen in its monthly newsletters. Activities from September 2021 include:

- 'Training for personnel capacity and development and incident command in crisis situations' in Chiang Rai Province, Thailand
- Covid-19 situational evaluation in Takeo Province, Cambodia
- An update on the Rockefeller Foundation funded MBDS Regional Collaborative Platform Event Based Surveillance Real Time Reporting project.

For additional information on MBDS visit www.mbdnet.org

MECIDS hosts Covid-19 'Training of Trainers'

The Middle East Consortium on Infectious Disease Surveillance ([MECIDS](#)), held a 'Training of the Trainers' Covid-19 epidemiology and laboratory aspects course between 23 and 26 August 2021. The training was led by Prof. Khitam Muhsen of Tel-Aviv University. The four sessions were held virtually for professionals from public health surveillance and laboratory teams as well as those from Universities in Israel, Jordan and Palestine.

The course content included:

- The use of serological tools for the assessment of natural immunity against SARS-CoV-2 among Covid-19 patients
- Sero-epidemiological studies of SARS-CoV-2 infection among health care workers before and after Covid-19 immunization
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of Covid-19 vaccine marketing.
- Post-marketing effectiveness evaluation of Covid-19 vaccines
- Post-marketing safety evaluation of Covid-19 vaccines
- Advances in laboratory methods for the detection of SARS-CoV-2

The interaction and feedback from the participants was very good, with the moderator praising the positive intake of complex material and active participation in the discussions and exercises.

To find out more about the work of MECIDS visit:

www.mecidsnetwork.org



The Democratic Republic of Congo: Pathogen sequencing for infectious disease epidemics

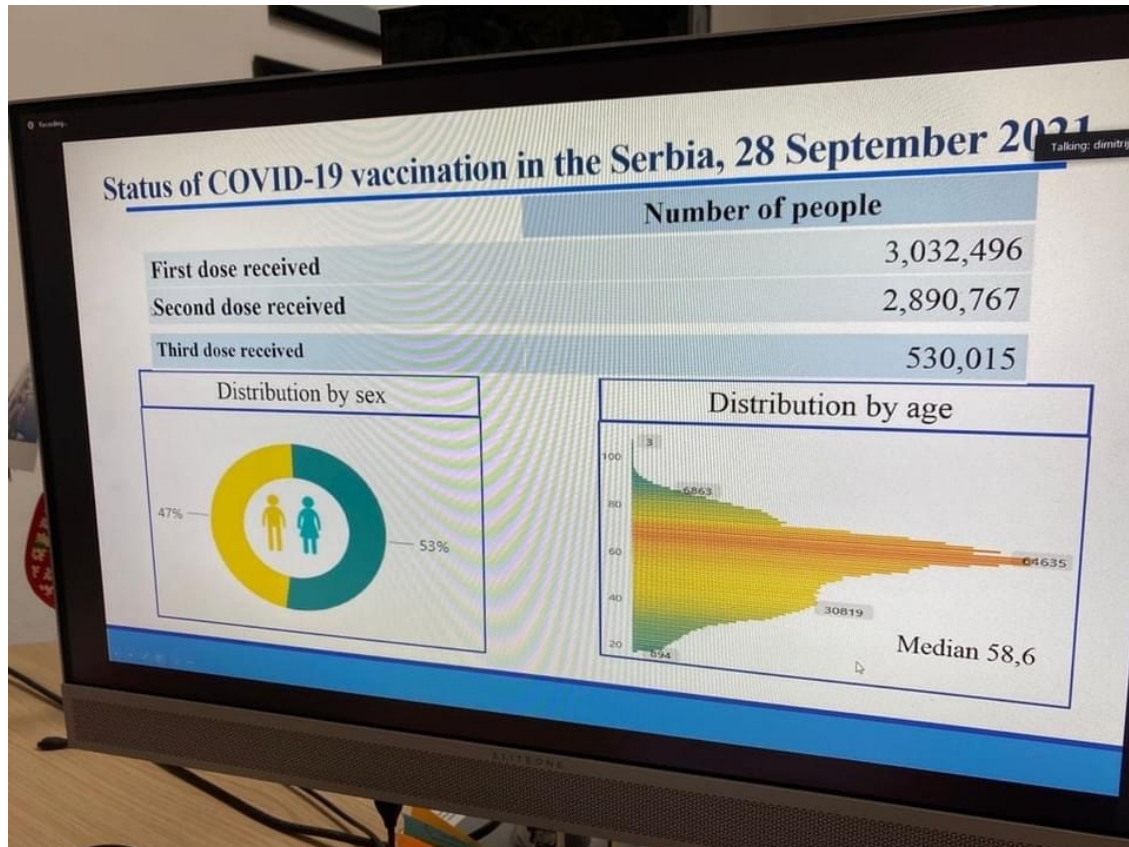
The Institut National de la Recherche Biomedicale (INRB), is the national medical research organisation of The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and a collaborating partner of the WHO since 2018, serving as the national biomedical research laboratory for the Ministry of Health of the DRC. The INRB is also a founding member of CORDS member network SACIDS Foundation for One Health ([SACIDS](#)). The Institut has recently published work describing the contribution of pathogen sequencing in the management of infectious disease epidemics in DRC. Since 2018, the DRC has faced several epidemics and health emergencies, including four successive Ebola virus disease epidemics, which exists currently alongside the Covid-19 pandemic. With the support of various partners including SACIDS, a pathogen sequencing laboratory has been set up at the INRB enabling the rapid diagnosis and characterisation of the pathogens responsible for these epidemics. Since the laboratory was established in April of this year, approximately 1,711 positive samples of SARS-CoV2 have been sequenced. A total of 99 genomes with a coverage of 85% have been generated and published on the GISAID platform to help contribute to the global pandemic response. *

* Data and image taken from Open Access Government, October 2021, pages 168-169, article by Dr Placide Mbala-Kingebeni and Prof. Jean-Jacques Muyembe Tamfam. Read it in full here:

<https://edition.pagesuite-professional.co.uk/html5/reader/production/default.aspx?pubname=&edid=eaaa2691-f2e2-4ecd-9e5e-f2985210b663>

To find out more about the work of SACIDS visit:

www.sacids.org



Covid-19 Vaccination in South East Europe: Challenges and Opportunities

The countries of South East Europe (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Serbia) have established an effective collaboration to strengthen and improve their surveillance and control of infectious diseases. During the Covid-19 pandemic they have expanded their influenza vaccination programs, established Covid-19 vaccination programs and strengthened National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups (NITAG) and vaccine expert group capacities through a partnership between the Southeast European Center for Surveillance and Control of Infectious Diseases ([SECID](#)) and the South Eastern Europe Health Network (SEEHN) in collaboration with the Task Force for Global Health, CDC, USA, WHO Europe and the European Centre for Disease Prevention.

As part of this ongoing collaboration, SECID and SEEHN held two webinars on Covid -19 vaccination in South East Europe, on 29 and 30 September 2021, with the following themes:

- Monitoring and evaluation – the level and development of challenges in digitalized information systems; and
- Covid-19 vaccine safety and surveillance for Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI) in the region.

Attendees included managers of National Immunization Programs, immunization and information experts, pharmacovigilance specialists, as well as NITAG representatives. During the first webinar participants shared information on monitoring and evaluation of Covid-19 vaccinations, including vaccine uptake,

utilization and coverage and the challenges of digital implementation for measuring key vaccination performance indicators. Ensuring equitable vaccine distribution among population subgroups, particularly in underserved categories, as well as the lack of specific vaccination data in most countries in the region on ethnic minorities and vulnerable categories emerged as common issues.

The second webinar was focused on the range of Covid-19 AEFI's, countries' systems to monitor adverse events, capacities and challenges associated with AEFI management and causality assessment, and opportunities to ensure vaccinations are delivered safely. Following presentations from countries and stakeholders, participants expressed their concerns about the lack of capacity in South East European countries to perform systematic casualty assessment. WHO Euro reaffirmed their commitment to help the Balkan countries strengthen their capacities in this area and to work together with SECID and SEEHN to develop a plan to address the need.

To find out more about the work of SECID visit www.secids.com

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Global Health Security Conference, Singapore, 2022

The Global Health Security Conference is taking place from 28 June to 1 July 2022 at the Suntec Convention and Exhibition Centre, Singapore. The deadline for abstract submission is **8 November 2021**. For more information visit:

<https://www.ghsconf.com/event/ce6e8302-3682-4893-9a1f-26827766de77/summary>



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