

COVID-19: COMMUNITY FEEDBACK REPORT

#5 - AFRICA REGION - 29 April 2020



Community feedback considered in this report was received through reports from Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) focal points, as well as through primary data collection, in 12 African countries.

Red Cross and Red Crescent National Society CEA focal points were asked to share the main rumours, observation, beliefs, questions or suggestions they are hearing in their countries and to grade them according to their frequency. Focal points from the following six countries provided information this way: Congo-Brazzaville, Kenya, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Sudan.

Community feedback was also collected during social mobilization activities in the Democratic Republic of Congo (3031 feedback comments), South Sudan (59), Côte d'Ivoire (36), Ghana (10), Burkina Faso (6). Activities include focus group

discussions, household visits, community meetings, social mobilization in public spaces, as well as interactive radio shows. Information was not gathered through structured surveys, but volunteers documented comments relating to COVID-19 they heard during their interactions with community members.

Burundi Red Cross shared community feedback received through their National Society hotline (83), and Burkina Faso Red Cross shared comments shared through social media (6).

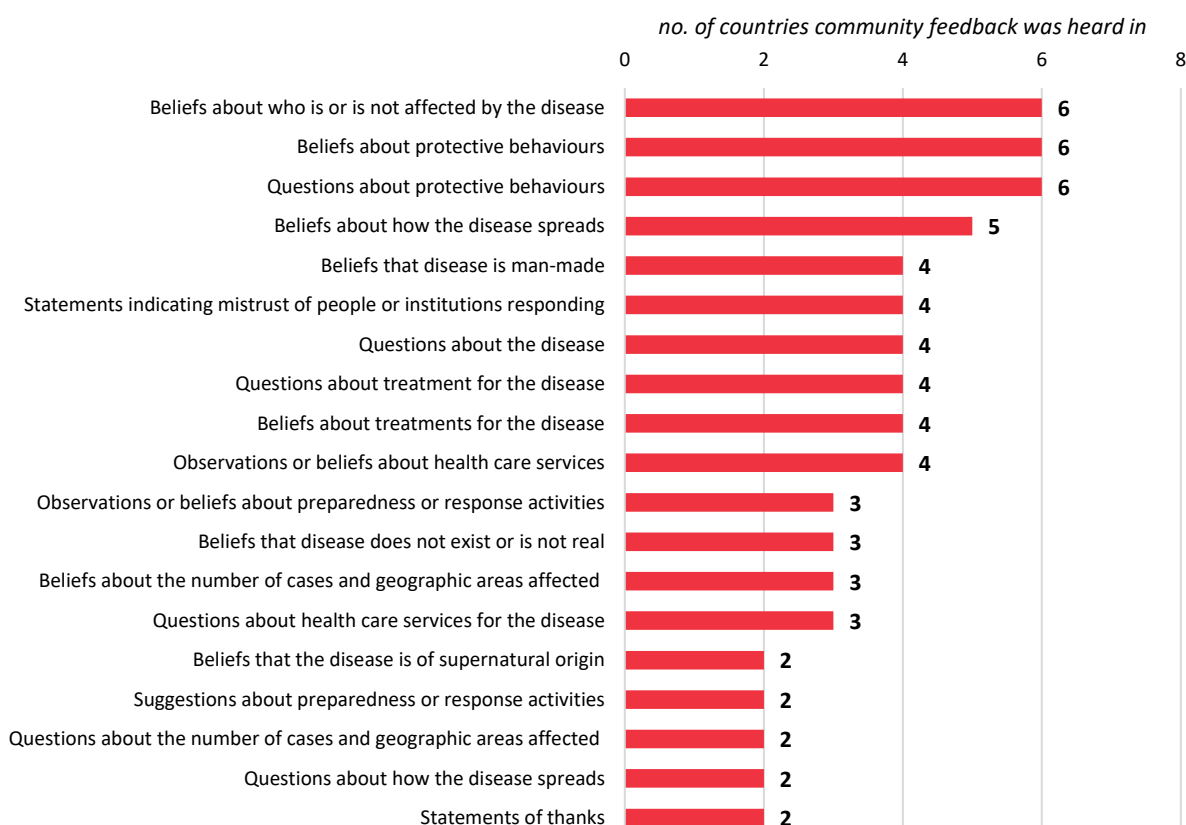
Information included in this report was collected between 15 and 21 April.

These highlights are not representative for the countries mentioned in the update but indicate broad trends in community perceptions of COVID-19.

OVERVIEW

MOST COMMON FEEDBACK TOPICS ACROSS COUNTRIES

This chart includes topics heard in 2 countries or more



This report shows there persists a confusion in communities about COVID-19, particularly about **who is or is not affected by the disease**. Common beliefs are that it is only white or rich people that are affected, only old people, or only those who have traveled to foreign countries.

There is still a **lack of knowledge and numerous rumours on how to protect yourself** from COVID-19, with many people mentioning hot baths or drinks, traditional herbs, alcohol or salt and salt water as ways to prevent the disease. There are also many rumours and misperceptions on **how COVID-19 is spreading**, with some believing that the disease is airborne.

Many comments indicate **mistrust in people or organizations in relation to the outbreak**. Comments mention that the disease was **created by foreigners**. There are comments that the outbreak is used for political purposes and/or making money.

There is also an increasing number of **rumours and questions about vaccines**, with some people believing that there is a vaccine that kills people or infects them with COVID-19.

Suggestions from community members include an increase of hygiene and health promotion efforts, restriction of movement as well as the re-opening restaurants, schools and shops.

If these rumours are not addressed, they could affect the safe access of Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers. Based on the feedback in the report, National Societies and partners are recommended to scale up risk communication to explain who can be affected by COVID-19 and correct methods of prevention and treatment. It is also important to explain the virus is a natural phenomenon and what the Red Cross Red Crescent is doing to bring the outbreak under control, including explaining why these activities are expected to help

RUMOURS – OBSERVATIONS – BELIEFS

Beliefs about who can be affected

Heard in: Burkina Faso, DRC, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan

“Covid-19 only for white people.” – Focus group discussion with volunteers, South Sudan, 16 April 2020

“Covid-19 attacks mostly white skin.” – Household visit, DRC, 18 April 2020

“Corona virus doesn't kill black people.” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“Corona is a virus that belongs to the Chinese.” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“COVID will not affect the Africans.” – National Society report, Sudan, 17 April 2020

“The virus is a disease of the rich, it only affects the white people.” – National Society report, Mozambique, 20 April 2020

“It's a disease of the rich and white, I don't take aeroplanes. How can I get a disease like that?” – Focus group discussion with community members, Burkina Faso, 15 April 2020

“Covid-19 is a curse from God to white men for practicing Gay and Lesbianism.” – Community meeting, South Sudan, 17 April 2020

“COVID-19 attacks only old people.” – National Society report, Rwanda, 17 April 2020

“COVID-19 belongs only to the rich and the elderly....” – Household visit, DRC, 17 April 2020

Beliefs about protective behaviors

Heard in: DRC, Ghana, Kenya, Niger, South Sudan, Sudan

“Hot bath, hot tea without sugar can prevent one from getting Covid-19.” – Focus group discussion with volunteers, South Sudan, 16 April 2020

“The corona virus is not resistant to the heat so you should drink hot water in the morning.” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“If you take herbal preparation made of leafs from 9 different trees, twice a day, you will never contract the disease .” – Community meeting, Ghana, 21 April 2020

“Local herbs will protect the Sudanese people from Corona.” – National Society report, Sudan, 17 April 2020

“Grind salt and sprinkle around your house, the virus cannot come close to your house.” – Community meeting, Ghana, 21 April 2020

“Swimming in saline Indian ocean water would prevent infection.” – National Society report, Kenya, 17 April 2020

“Frequent consumption of alcohol can prevent one from Covid-19.” – Focus group discussion with volunteers, South Sudan, 16 April 2020

“Masks increase corona disease.” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“We will be able to protect ourselves against corona because the prevention measures against corona and the Ebola epidemic are almost the same.” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“We pray to God that's why we can't get corona disease.” – Face to face to RC volunteer, DRC, 15 April 2020

Beliefs about how the disease spreads

Heard in: Burkina Faso, DRC, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique

“The coronavirus disease stays in the air” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“The sun kills the virus on clothes and surfaces” – National Society report, Mozambique, 20 April 2020

“The corona virus is found in women's makeup products.” – Face to face to RC volunteer, DRC, 15 April 2020

“The disease is not resistant to alcohol.” – National Society report, Namibia, 13 April 2020

“The insalubrity and the total absence of latrines in the market can lead to the corona.” – Face to face to RC volunteer, DRC, 17 April 2020

“The coronavirus was created by Chinese and injected into pigs. Those who eat the meat were infected with the virus.” – Face to face to RC volunteer, Ghana, 21 April 2020

“5G antennas can transmit the virus.” – National Society report, Kenya, 17 April 2020

“Products imported from China or purchased at a Chinese store transmit COVID-19.” – National Society report, Mozambique, 20 April 2020

Beliefs that the disease is man-made

Heard in: Burkina Faso, DRC, Ghana, Rwanda

“The new coronavirus is a disease created in a laboratory in China...” – Social media, Burkina Faso, 15 April 2020

“Ebola and corona were manufactured in America.” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“It is white people who create epidemics and pandemics to get richer and richer.” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“CORONA virus is a bomb formed by the whites to finish off Africans which backfired on the whites.” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“COVID-19 was fabricated.” – National Society report, Rwanda, 17 April 2020

“The coronavirus was created by Chinese and injected into pigs.” – Face to face to RC volunteer, Ghana, 21 April 2020

Statements indicating mistrust of people or institutions responding to the disease outbreak

Heard in: Burkina Faso, DRC, Ghana, South Sudan

“Covid-19 is a politicized disease.” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“Covid-19 is a white man's strategy to exterminate the black man.” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“A way to reduce world population.” – Focus group discussion with community members, Burkina Faso, 15 April 2020

“CORONA virus is not true you are trying to kill people by force.” – Household visit, DRC, 17 April 2020

“The test kits were made in Wuhan where the disease was first detected. The Chinese infected the test kits they brought to Ghana to kill people.” – Nation Society interactive radio show, Ghana, 21 April 2020

“The dead bodies of the covid-19 infected people are used to produce corned beef for Africans with the intention of killing them.” – Face to face to RC volunteer, Ghana, 21 April 2020

“A new way to make money.” – Focus group discussion with community members, Burkina Faso, 15 April 2020

“Corona is a disease created to do good business.” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“Covid-19 is Economy torturing not disease.” – Community meeting, South Sudan, 17 April 2020

Beliefs about ways to treat COVID-19

Heard in: Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, South Sudan

“Chloroquine is the cure for the virus.” – Face to face to RC volunteer, Côte d'Ivoire, 17 April 2020

“We have learned that chloroquine is the best drug to treat the coronavirus, but some countries are still resisting.” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“The consumption of Ké (local liquor) cures coronavirus.” – Face to face to RC volunteer, Côte d'Ivoire, 17 April 2020

“This coronavirus disease can be cured by prayer.” – Household visit, DRC, 17 April 2020

“COVID-19’s treatment is in the bible.” – Household visit, DRC, 17 April 2020

“Lubutari (bitter greens) is medicine for Covid-19.” – Focus group discussion with volunteers, South Sudan, 16 April 2020

Observations or beliefs about health care services

Heard in: Côte d’Ivoire, DRC, Ghana, Kenya

“Vaccines containing the corona virus are made available in the health centre.” – Face to face to RC volunteer, Côte d’Ivoire, 15 April 2020

“The vaccine has CORONA virus has already caused the death of a person in Turkey so we don’t want this disease.” – Household visit, DRC, 17 April 2020

“The coronavirus vaccine is planned in Africa to increase the chain of contamination to the African people.” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“Covid-19 is a poison that’s injected through the vaccine.” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“BCG vaccine would prevent COVID19 infection.” – National Society report, Kenya, 17 April 2020

“The test kits were made in Wuhan where the disease was first detected. The Chinese infected the test kits they brought to Ghana to kill people.” – National Society interactive radio show, Ghana, 21 April 2020

Observations or beliefs about preparedness or response activities

Heard in: Côte d’Ivoire, DRC, Niger

“People are complaining about the closure of the city’s restaurants and shops.” – Face to face to RC volunteer, Côte d’Ivoire, 17 April 2020

“People complain about school closures.” – Face to face to RC volunteer, Côte d’Ivoire, 16 April 2020

“The bishop is also in complicity in the corona scheme because he has accepted that the doors of the churches be closed.” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“Community disapproval of containment measures with uprisings in some areas of Niger.” – National Society report, Niger, 20 April 2020

Beliefs that the disease does not exist or is not real

Heard in: Burkina Faso, DRC, Niger

“Coronavirus doesn’t exist, even health workers have told us that.” – Focus group discussion with community members, Burkina Faso, 15 April 2020

“CORONA virus is not true you are trying to kill people by force.” – Household visit, DRC, 17 April 2020

“So far, some communities have reservations about the existence of Covid19.” – National Society report, Niger, 20 April 2020

Belief about the number of cases and geographic areas affected

Heard in: Burundi, DRC, Rwanda

“There should be many cases that are not reported by the Government.” – National Society hotline, Burundi, 17 April 2020

“They say there are no cases of covid-19 in Goma.” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“There is no COVID-19 in Rwanda.” – National Society report, Rwanda, 17 April 2020

“Covid19 has not yet arrived in Africa precisely in the Congo.” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

Beliefs that the disease is of supernatural origin

Heard in: Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Kenya

“Covid-19 is a punishment from God.” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“Covid-19 is a satanic disease.” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“Corona is a plague that God gave to the white people.” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“Covid-19 is a curse from God to white men for practicing Gay and Lesbianism.” – Community meeting, South Sudan, 17 April 2020

QUESTIONS

Questions about protective behavior

Heard in: Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Ghana, Rwanda, South Sudan

“How many times do you have to wash your hands to protect yourself from COVID-19?” – National Society hotline, Burundi, 19 April 2020

“What can I do to prevent COVID-19?” – National Society hotline, Burundi, 19 April 2020

“Is COVID-19 preventable?” – National Society report, Rwanda, 17 April 2020

“In order to avoid corona contamination, you say that it is necessary to respect the distance of one meter and the motorcyclists are allowed to carry only one person, so we wonder on the motorcycle between the motorcyclist and his customer is there the distance of one meter?” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“How can you respect social distancing (1m) living in the same family?” – National Society report, Rwanda, 17 April 2020

“Should the bride and groom separate in the event of a partner's infection with COVID-19?” – National Society hotline, Burundi, 19 April 2020

“How can the spread of the disease be prevented during the time of fetching water at the borehole?” – National Society interactive radio show, Ghana, 21 April 2020

“Where to do social distancing and how can a family of 7-10 persons social distance.” – Community meeting, South Sudan, 17 April 2020

Questions about the disease

Heard in: Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC

“What are the symptoms of coronavirus?” – Household visit, DRC, 17 April 2020

“Are malaria and typhoid signs of COVID-19?” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“How long does it take for symptoms of covid-19 to develop?” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“How can you tell if a baby has corona?” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“What is the symptomatic difference with Ebola?” – Face to face to RC volunteer, Côte d’Ivoire, 16 April 2020

“What is the origin of COVID-19?” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“Did Ebola and corona come from a bat?” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“Can an infected person who recovered later die of COVID-19 due to recurrence of the disease?” – National Society interactive radio show, Ghana, 15 April 2020

“Are those who are cured of COVID-19, are they cured forever?” – Face to face to RC volunteer, Côte d’Ivoire, 17 April 2020

“After how many days that corona virus can lead to death if left untreated?” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

Questions about ways to treat COVID-19

Heard in: Burundi, Côte d’Ivoire, DRC, Rwanda

“Is there a treatment of COVID-19?” – National Society hotline, Burundi, 19 April 2020

“Can COVID-19 be destroyed by consuming hot drinks?” – National Society hotline, Burundi, 19 April 2020

“How can this covid-19 drug be found?” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“Is Covid-19 curable?” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“Does chloroquine cure COVID-19?” – National Society report, Rwanda, 17 April 2020

Questions about health care services for the disease

Heard in: Burundi, Côte d’Ivoire, DRC

“Is there a vaccine for COVID-19?” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“Is it true that the vaccine against COVID-19 kills?” – Household visit, DRC, 17 April 2020

“Why bring the corona vaccine as a test in Africa?” – Household visit, DRC, 17 April 2020

“Why aren’t the sick people together for their care?” – Face to face to RC volunteer, Côte d’Ivoire, 17 April 2020

“In which hospital can a patient with EVD and COVID-19 be treated?” – Household visit, DRC, 17 April 2020

“Can all health facilities receive covid-19 in case of suspicious cases?” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“Why hasn’t a COVID-19 treatment centre been built?” – Household visit, DRC, 18 April 2020

Questions about the number of cases and geographic areas affected

Heard in: Burundi, DRC

“How many cases are there in Burundi?” – National Society hotline, Burundi, 19 April 2020

“There are how many people identified as coronavirus cases?” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“As the radio says the CORONA killed two people, is this real?” – National Society hotline, Burundi, 17 April 2020

Questions about how the disease spreads

Heard in: Burundi, DRC

“How does COVID-19 spread?” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“Can you become infected when you live in the same house or when you share a meal?” – National Society hotline, Burundi, 19 April 2020

“Can we infect ourselves from objects or materials from China?” – National Society hotline, Burundi, 19 April 2020

“Can we contaminate ourselves using blowtorches?” – National Society hotline, Burundi, 19 April 2020

“Is corona sexually transmitted?” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“After death how long does this corona virus stay in the tomb?” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

SUGGESTIONS

Suggestions about preparedness or response activities

Heard in: DRC, Rwanda

“We want to be sensitized on CORONA virus also to better understand.” – Household visit, DRC, 16 April 2020

“We want you to raise awareness about CORONA virus because the EBOLA virus epidemic does not exist, that's the end of it.” – Household visit, DRC, 16 April 2020

“Local authorities suggest organizing more other sessions of mobile radio.” – National society report, Rwanda, 16 April 2020

“Make handwashing stations available every time between avenues to limit the chain of contamination of the corona virus.” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“Give us leaflets on COVID-19.” – Household visit, DRC, 16 April 2020

“That the provincial government, following the new case of Beni, can take severe and strict measures to ban motorcycle traffic on the Butembo-Beni road to prevent the transmission chain of the MVE and Corona.” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

“If really CORONA is already in Bunia we have to isolate these people and their contacts if possible.” – Household visit, DRC, 17 April 2020

“It is necessary that the heads of state authorize us to open schools, churches and markets because the corona does not exist here.” – Household visit, DRC, 16 April 2020

“Quarantine is not a good way to protect yourself; look for other ways to protect yourself from corona.” – Household visit, DRC, 17 April 2020

“It will be better to organize food distribution for people who are in need.” – National Society report, Rwanda, 17 April 2020

VIOLENT OR SENSITIVE COMMENT

Threatening people who want to vaccinate people

Heard in: Goma/DRC

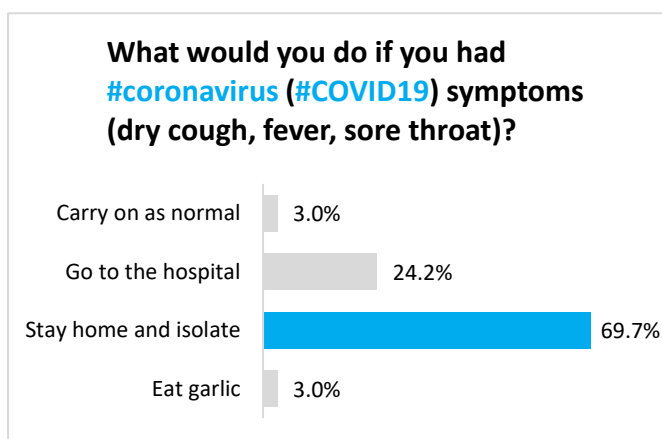
“If the corona vaccinators get here, they’ll be beaten to death....” – Household visit, DRC, 15 April 2020

Call for killing people infected with COVID-19

Heard in: Juba/South Sudan

“Killing affected persons will reduce Covid-19.” – Community meeting, South Sudan , 17 April 2020

TWITTER POLL



The poll was posted on the IFRC Africa twitter account and open from 21 to 24 April. Thirty-three twitter users answered the question on what they would do if they had Covid-19 symptoms. More than two-thirds of the respondents indicated to stay home and isolate in that case.

NEXT STEPS

How should we respond to community feedback? Update your messages and activities to;

- share this factsheet with staff and volunteers
- address rumours and misinformation, you hear in communities by providing the correct information,
- answer questions communities have about COVID-19, and
- use community suggestions to improve the response where possible.

To support this process, the IFRC CEA team will;

- support more National Societies to collect, use and act on community feedback,
- produce weekly fact sheets addressing the most commonly asked questions, rumours and fears, collected that week from communities across Africa,
- produce weekly videos with a health expert answering most relevant questions from community members and providing the needed facts, the videos will be shared through IFRC Africa’s Twitter platform.