

Community feedback considered in this report was collected between the **24 and 30 June 2020** and shared by Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) focal points in **9 African countries**.

Community feedback was collected during conversations with community members during social mobilization activities in three countries: the Democratic Republic of Congo (2070 feedback comments), Côte d'Ivoire (12) and Gabon (3). Feedback collected through social media, WhatsApp groups and interactive radio shows in Gabon (116) and Cameroon (35) has also been included. Sierra Leone Red Cross also shared the community feedback relating to COVID-19, which was received through their National Society hotline (64). Focal points in five countries shared the main rumours, observation, beliefs, questions or suggestions they are hearing in their countries: Burkina Faso, Burundi, Lesotho, Mozambique.

One of the most common topics were questions and comments about **ways to protect yourself from COVID-19**, with most comments about **face masks**. People question the efficiency of face masks, as well as share rumours that the masks are infected with COVID-19. There was an increasing amount of statements mentioning the **non-**

compliance with rules such as wearing face masks and physical distancing.

Another common topic are **ways to treat COVID-19**. There were still many mentions of and questions about herbs and traditional medicine to be used as treatments. There are also some comments about medication being available already.

A common topic across types of feedback are also **lockdown measures and the restriction of movement**. Many ask about government's plans in terms of these measures and about the reopening of certain places such as schools and places of worship. Some suggest to close or control country borders, or to impose a lockdown.

There were still comments **indicating mistrust in people or organizations** in relation to the outbreak. Most commonly it was mentioned that the outbreak is used to **make money, for political purposes or for intentionally harming people**. Many also **do not believe that the disease is real**.

There are more and more questions about the **number of confirmed cases**, as well as the **geographic areas affected** by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many stated that they don't believe there are any cases in their area.

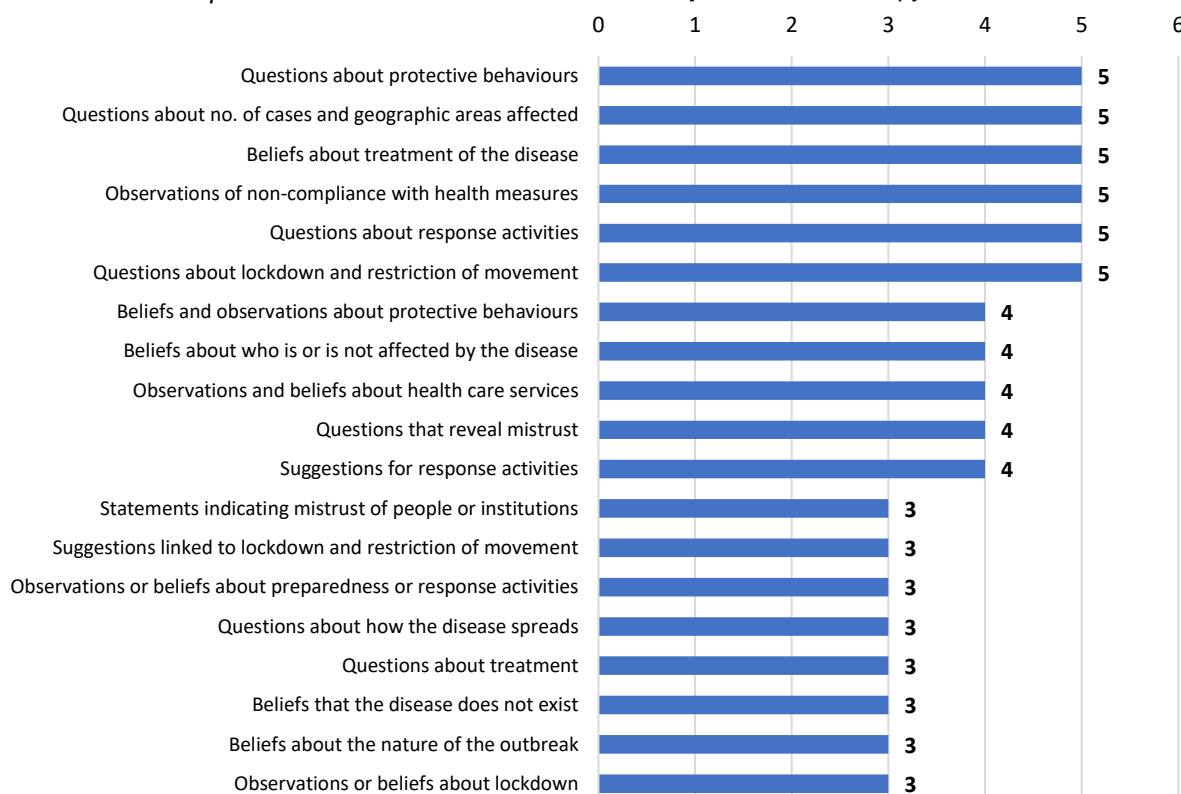
TO ADDRESS THIS FEEDBACK, WE NEED TO:

- Actively discuss COVID-19 prevention and who can catch the virus during all social mobilization activities. Explain how COVID-19 spreads, so people understand why prevention measures work. Also warn people about the measures that won't work.
- Provide practical guidance on how to address challenges to adopt protective behaviours, such as how to make your own face mask and use it in a safe way. Clarify when to practice physical distancing and which measures are necessary within a household – and which are not.
- Share the Ask Dr Ben videos, especially the ones on [who should wear a face mask](#), on [safe mask use](#) and the one addressing the belief [Africans are immune](#). Consider dubbing these into local languages or remaking with National Society health staff and sharing widely with volunteers and communities through social media and WhatsApp.

- Address the rumours and questions on COVID-19 treatment with communities by explaining that so far no cure has been proven to work. Until we have proof, people should continue to follow measures like physical distancing and hand washing as we know these definitely work. Provide practical advice on how to alleviate symptoms, where to seek help and how to care for sick people in your household in a safe way.
- Work with local and national media and ask them to help address gaps in knowledge and misinformation through their reporting, including reporting stories about people who have recovered from the disease so people realize the virus is real. If your National Society is broadcasting radio or TV shows consider having a show where people who have had COVID-19 can call in to tell their story.

MOST COMMON FEEDBACK TOPICS ACROSS COUNTRIES

This chart includes topics heard in 3 countries or more *no. of countries community feedback was heard in*



MOST COMMON COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ACROSS COUNTRIES

1. Statements about protective behaviour and non-compliance

Heard in: Burundi, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Gabon, Lesotho, Sierra Leone

Rumours, observations and beliefs:

"Almost the entire population does not wear a mask apart from in the services that require it." – Côte d'Ivoire, face to face to RC volunteer, 25 June 2020

"Some people are not using their face mask the right way." – Sierra Leone, National Society hotline, 26 June 2020

"Masks are not worn regularly." – Cameroon, WhatsApp group with staff and volunteers, 26 June 2020

"Masks don't protect you, otherwise the disease would have decreased." – Côte d'Ivoire, 28 June 2020

"Police officers arresting people for face mask." – Sierra Leone, National Society hotline, 26 June 2020

Questions:

"How long does a washable mask last?" – Cameroon, National Society radio show, 24 June 2020

"If people respect the 1 m distancing measures, why do they need to wear masks?" – DRC, household visit, 24 June 2020

"During this pandemic period, do people who are married need to separate?" – Burundi, National Society report, 29 June 2020

Suggestions:

"Please provide us with buckets with taps, masks and soaps." – DRC, household visit, 24 June 2020

"Red Cross to help with food and face mask." – Sierra Leone, National Society hotline, 26 June 2020

2. Beliefs and questions about treatment for COVID-19

Heard in: Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Gabon, Lesotho

Rumours, observations and beliefs:

"Traditional remedies are effective, but since the government cannot say that Cameroon has found the drug, they are still unofficial." – Cameroon, social media, 26 June 2020

"We do think our traditional medicines can cure COVID-19 if we get it one day." – DRC, household visit, 26 June 2020

"COVID 19 can be cured if people are allowed to use traditional herbs." – Lesotho, National Society report, 29 June 2020

"A steam bath combined with certain elements would be ideal to combat COVID-19." – Gabon, social media, 25 June 2020

Questions:

"Is drinking hot water with lemon a possible remedy for COVID-19?" – Cameroon, National Society radio show, 27 June 2020

"What is the real medicine for these pandemics?" – DRC, household visit, 24 June 2020

"Can COVID-19 be cured using UV?" – Gabon, National Society radio show, 25 June 2020

3. Questions and suggestions relating to lockdown and restriction of movement

Heard in: Burkina Faso, DRC, Gabon, Mozambique, Sierra Leone

Questions:

"When Mozambique had 1 case we closed the schools and now that we have more than 800.....cases we are about to open. What is this, government!?" – Mozambique, National Society report, 24 June 2020

"Any further lockdown plan from the government?" – Sierra Leone, National Society hotline, 26 June 2020

"When will the measures about going to school be lifted?" – DRC, household visit, 25 June 2020

"Why are the borders still closed?" – Burkina Faso, National Society report, 29 June 2020

Rumours, observations and beliefs:

"Famine will kill us because of the lockdown." – DRC, household visit, 24 June 2020

"We are tired of staying at home because of coronavirus." – DRC, household visit, 26 June 2020

"Schools will be open on Monday." – Sierra Leone, National Society hotline, 26 June 2020

Suggestions:

"We demand for our borders to be secured to limit the spread of coronavirus." – DRC, household visit, 26 June 2020

"The lockdown has proven ineffective so we are relaxing it. Remove the lockdown now and let the curve follow its course." – Gabon, social media, 24 June 2020

"For me, the schools would still be closed, but the churches should open." – Mozambique, National Society report, 24 June 2020

4. Statements and questions indicating mistrust and denial of the pandemic

Heard in: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, DRC, Gabon, Lesotho

Questions:

"Who created COVID-19 and what is it that he wants to achieve?" – Lesotho, National Society report, 29 June 2020

"Why are you increasing cases to get funding, when the lockdown is going to be lifted?" – DRC, household visit, 24 June 2020

"What happens to the funds that institutions give to CORUS on a daily basis?" – Burkina Faso, National Society report, 29 June 2020

Rumours, observations and beliefs:

"Coronavirus doesn't exist; it's a way of making money." – DRC, household visit, 26 June 2020
DRC, household visit, 24 June 2020

"It's the electoral campaign that has already started." – Burkina Faso, National Society report, 29 June 2020

"Everything about the management of this pandemic is a lie." – Gabon, social media, 24 June 2020

"These results are because of stupidity and it's an inflated number." – Gabon, social media, 26 June 2020

5. Questions about number of cases and geographic areas affected

Heard in: Burundi, Cameroon, DRC, Gabon, Sierra Leone

Questions:

"What is the exact number of confirmed cases in Burundi?" – Burundi, National Society report, 29 June 2020

"What is the current COVID-19 situation in DRC?" – DRC, household visit, 26 June 2020

"Which districts have not registered a confirm case of Covid 19 in Sierra Leone?" – Sierra Leone, National Society hotline, 18 June 2020

APPRECIATION - ENCOURAGEMENT

The statements of thanks and encouragement listed below represent the most frequently heard comments across countries in the IFRC Africa region.

Statement of thanks and encouragement

Heard in: DRC, Sierra Leone

"Thank you for your message, we are happy." – DRC, household visit, 26 June 2020

"We say thank you to you, the Red Cross agents, for raising awareness in our area." – DRC, household visit, 24 June 2020

"Thanks a lot to Red Cross for the fight against Covid 19." – Sierra Leone, National Society hotline, 24 June 2020