

COVID-19: COMMUNITY FEEDBACK REPORT

#32 - AFRICA REGION – 14 JUNE 2021



The community feedback data under consideration for this quarterly report was collected between the **01st January 2021 to 30th April 2021** and shared by Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) focal point in **10 African countries**.

Most of the community feedback data was collected through social mobilization activities such as household visits, focus group discussions and community meetings, in DRC (982), Malawi (460), Gabon (251), Cote d'Ivoire (140), Zimbabwe (86), Benin (17), Lesotho (4), Cameroon (1). Feedback data was also collected through National Society hotline in Sierra Leone (553), Cameroon (67), Malawi (43), Cote d'Ivoire (8), and Benin (1) as well as National Society Radio Shows, Social Media, WhatsApp, and Interactive TV show in Gabon (578), Cameroon (193), Benin (13), and Cote d'Ivoire (3).

Community feedback linked to COVID-19 was also reported by staff and volunteers in Cameroon (565), Zimbabwe (79), Gabon (53), Malawi (46), Cote d'Ivoire (28), Lesotho (9), Benin (7), DRC (5), and Burkina Faso (3).

This report shows an increase in community feedback related to **Vaccines** across the months considered for this report. There were many concerns related to **vaccine safety**, with beliefs that the vaccine is harmful, or it can cause death. There were mentions of blood clots and infertility after taking the vaccine. Some claimed the vaccine is used to eliminate Africans, that it's poisonous or of satanic origin. Many of the comments also expressed fear of taking the vaccine. However, other comments indicated acceptance of the

vaccine and willingness to take it. Several questions and concerns related to how the vaccine roll out will take place, where people can access the vaccine, who is eligible and how effective the vaccine is in protecting against the virus.

Some of the comments seen in this report also indicated **Mistrust in the Response**. In particular, there has been a lot of suspicion of those responding to the pandemic with claims that people are being falsely diagnosed with COVID-19, health workers are harming people by injecting them with the virus or killing patients, and depopulation claims. Many people also believe that the disease is being used **for political purposes or to make money** with comments referring to the pandemic as a business venture.

A common topic has also been the **Existence of the disease**. Many stated that COVID-19 did not exist or that there were no cases in their country or region which was at times linked to the fact that they had not seen or heard of a person affected by the virus. However, there were also many comments that pointed out that COVID-19 was real, and it did exist

Many comments and questions also related to **Preventative Behaviours**, such as how do the PHMs help to protect people and why do authorities not follow the preventative measures. While there were some mentions of the importance of following health measures, others also expressed concerns of wearing the face masks that it can cause health problems, it's not comfortable or too expensive.

TO ADDRESS THIS FEEDBACK, WE NEED TO:

- Make sure that volunteers are updated on the COVID-19 vaccine developments and that they can respond to community member's questions and concerns about the vaccine. Use this [vaccine FAQ guide](#) to help explain the vaccine's safety and benefits, when the vaccine will

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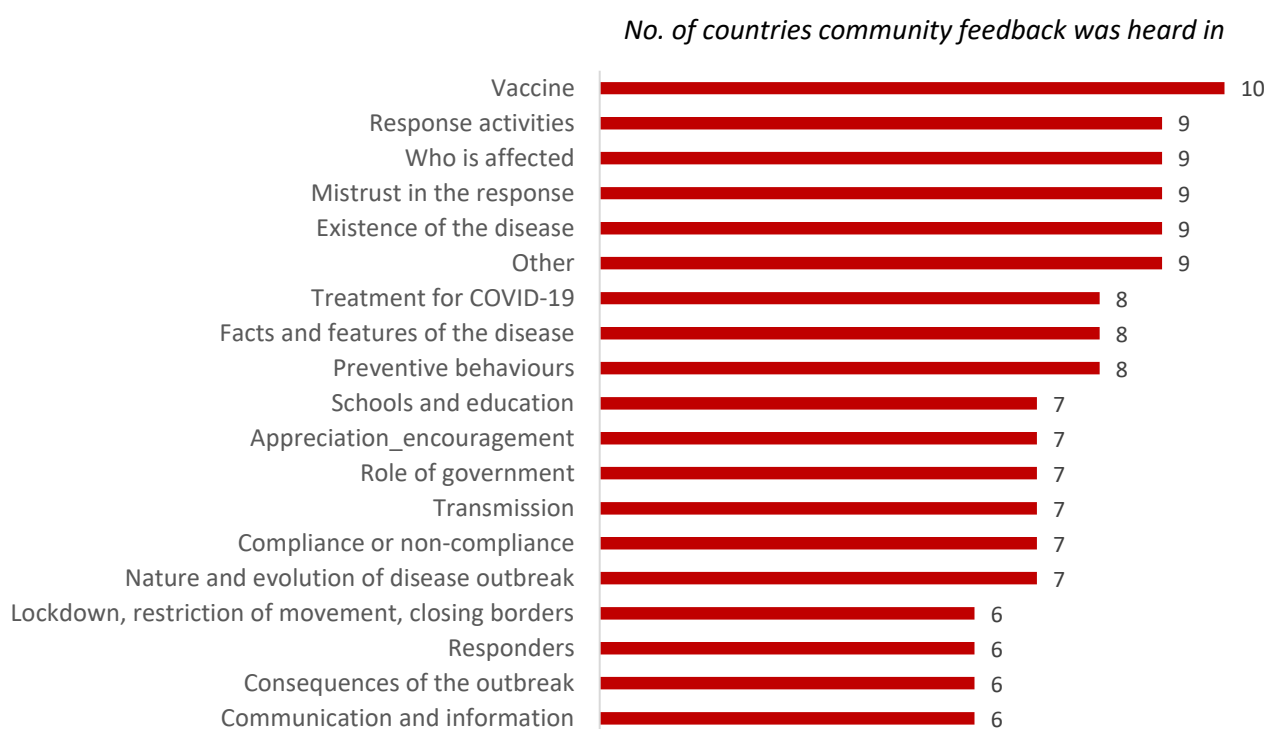


be ready for distribution, who will be immunized, IFRC's role and many more! To debunk claims that the COVID-19 vaccines [are not effective against the virus](#) or that they can [cause infertility](#) or [blood clots](#), use the latest Viral Facts Africa videos to help explain to community members why this is false information. Access all available materials on the COVID-19 vaccines [here](#).

- You can use the [guidance note on mistrust and denial in communities](#). Among other options, is to mobilize and engage with youth groups to stop the spread of misinformation, engage trusted community leaders and key influencers, explain more clearly the case rate in your country and what can be expected in the future and develop radio and TV drama/show content about COVID-19.
- Continue to engage with community members on the public health measures, explain why it can help stop the spread of the virus, how you can practice these measures in your daily life, and in which situations you should follow the health measure to protect yourself. Use this video on [the story of coronavirus](#) to explain how the virus spreads and what we can do to protect ourselves. You can also use these resources including factsheets, videos, and IEC materials on face masks available [here](#), and for physical distancing [here](#).
- Work in partnership with communities to find and support local, practical solutions to preventing the spread of infection and bringing the outbreak under control. Use the [community-led solutions webinar package](#) and the [guidance note on community-led solutions](#), which provides step-by-step guidance to work with communities to plan COVID-19 response measures

MOST COMMON FEEDBACK TOPICS ACROSS COUNTRIES

This chart includes topics heard in 6 countries or more



MOST COMMON COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ACROSS COUNTRIES

1. Comments and questions about vaccine

Heard in: Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Gabon, Benin, Lesotho, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso, Lesotho, DRC

Questions:

"There is now a vaccine for Covid-19, and rumour has it that it is fatal, is this true?" – Malawi, Household visit, 17 February 2021

"We have been hearing a lot about Covid-19 vaccine, others suggest it's one way of de-populating us, what is the truth?" – Malawi, Household visit, 23 February 2021

"If the vaccine does not guarantee us any immunity against the possibility of being infected, why do it?" - Gabon, WhatsApp group with staff and volunteers, 04 April 2021

Rumours, observations and beliefs:

"People are fearful that they will be poisoned by the immunization" – Lesotho, From National Society focal points reporting to IFRC, 08 April 2021

"The vaccine we have is to kill Africans" - Benin, National Society radio show, March 18, 2021

"Vaccination is associated with Satanism initiation" – Zimbabwe, WhatsApp group with staff and volunteers, 26 January 2021

"This vaccine has not yet been proven and you want to vaccinate us already. We are not guinea pigs" - Gabon, National Society radio show, 08 January 2021

"The vaccine that will be make women infertile and life expectancy among adults will be reduced" – Malawi, Household visit, 18 February 2021

Suggestions or requests:

"We want the vaccine for this covid19 disease because the mufflers we wear do nothing" - DRC, Household visit, 20 January 2021

"That the whole country can receive the vaccine" - Gabon, social media (twitter, Facebook etc), 04 April 2021

"Give all possible information to the populations on the corona virus before administering the vaccine and put their lives in danger" - Gabon, social media (twitter, Facebook etc), 04 April 2021

"Government should make the COVID-19 vaccination mandatory requirement for travellers" – Sierra Leone, social media (twitter, Facebook etc), 10 March 2021

2. Comments and questions about Mistrust in the response

Heard in: Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Gabon, Benin, Lesotho, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, DRC

Questions:

"Why is it that corona virus disease patients do not come out alive when admitted in hospitals?" – Malawi, Household visit, 15 February 2021

"Is it true that Covid-19 patients are killed by health workers at the hospital through a poisonous injection?" – Malawi, Household visit, 16 February 2021

"Do you want to exterminate the whole population through covid?" - DRC, Household visit, 25 January 2021

Rumours, observations, and beliefs:

"Covid19 is not a pandemic it is the rivalry between the countries of great economic powers and which have come here to Africa their trash because we accept almost everything here" - DRC, Household visit, 04 January 2021

"political inventions of the whites and the rich" - Cameroon, Face to face through social mobilizer, 07 February 2021

"The Government wants to keep us in COVID-19 until 2023, the year of the presidential elections" - Gabon, WhatsApp group with staff and volunteers, 05 March 2021

"People are dying of different illnesses, but they are all labelled as Covid-19" - Malawi, Household visit, 18 February 2021

"Rumours, fictitious disease, disease of business, the state is making easy money" - Cameroon, Face to face through social mobilizer, 16 January 2021

3. Comments and questions about Existence of the disease

Heard in: Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Gabon, Benin, Lesotho, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, DRC

Questions:

"Does the disease truly exist or maybe it's just a lie?" – Malawi, Household visit, 23 February 2021

"Why don't we show coronavirus deaths so that we know it's true?" - Cameroon, Face to face through social mobilizer, 18 March 2021

Rumours, observations and beliefs:

"I do not know a person affected, or someone who has a sick relative?" - Gabon, Social media (twitter, Facebook etc), 02 March 2021

"The disease does not exist, these are the flu that we are used to in Africa – DRC, From National Society focal points reporting to IFRC, 16 January 2021

"Covid-19 is real, but the unfortunate part is that the medicine for covid-19 is not yet found– Malawi, Household visit, 06 April 2021

"This covid disease exists except that we do not see and show us the victims." - DRC, Household visit, 04 January 2021

4. Comments and question about Preventive behaviours

Heard in: Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Gabon, Benin, Lesotho, Malawi, Zimbabwe, DRC

Questions:

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"What are the precautions to protect against the disease?" - Cameroon, National Society radio show, 12 January 2021

"Finally, what good is this curfew and all these measures if there are still deaths and new positive cases?" - Gabon, Social media (twitter, Facebook etc), February 27, 2021

"Can we who eat chili and bitter things be affected by corona?" - Ivory Coast, Household visit, 17 March 2021

Rumours, beliefs and observations:

"Medical masks cause respiratory diseases" - DRC, From National Society focal points reporting to IFRC, 16 January 2021

"Covid is real but we prevent by wearing of face mask, and observe social distance" – Malawi, Face to face through social mobilizer, 10 February 2021

"We do not refuse to bring the masks, but we do not have the moneys for the purchased ones." – DRC, Household visit, 22 January 2021

Suggestions or requests:

"The government must distribute the masks the hydroalcoholic gels" - Malawi, Household visit, 07 February 2021

"We have to change the taps of the hand washers that we put on the market because they break down all the time" - Cameroon, National Society radio show, 11 February 2021

"Red Cross should undertake massive sensitization on COVID-19 and Ebola" – Sierra Leone, National society hotline, 09 March 2021

APPRECIATION - ENCOURAGEMENT

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

Statements of thanks and encouragement

Heard in: Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Gabon, Benin, Malawi, DRC

"The government has done well in putting in place guidelines in fighting covid 19" – Malawi, National society hotline, 16 February 2021

"Thanks for bringing the topic on covid-19 calm" - Cameroon, National Society radio show, February 18 2021

"Thanks to Red Cross for the case transfer and educating us about government measures put in place to reduce the spread of Corona in Sierra Leone" - Sierra Leone, National society hotline, 03 March 2021

"Thanks to you for the advice, if we apply them the disease will not pass through us." DRC, Household visit, 01 January 2021