

# COVID-19: COMMUNITY FEEDBACK REPORT

#28 - AFRICA REGION – 15 FEBRUARY 2021



Community feedback considered in this report was collected between **04 January 2021 and 31 January 2021** and shared by Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) focal points in **4 African countries**.

Most of the community feedback was collected from National Society hotline in Sierra Leone (223) and Cameroon (14) and through conversations during social mobilization activities such as face to face discussions and household visits from Cameroon (155) and Gabon (23) respectively. Comments related to COVID-19 were also received from National Society radio shows in Cameroon (86) and Gabon (31), as well as WhatsApp, interactive TV shows and social media from Gabon (46).

Feedback was also collected through meetings, trainings or briefings with staff and volunteers in Democratic Republic of Congo (5) who shared the main rumours, observations, beliefs, questions or suggestions they heard in their country.

The **nature and evolution of disease outbreak** was a frequently discussed topic among community feedback this month. There were many questions about how long the disease outbreak may last and on the evolution of the pandemic with some people asking whether the outbreak has already ended. There were also questions about the number of confirmed cases and deaths in specific regions, with some people believing that number of cases have increased.

**Vaccines** continued to be a popular topic with many people asking questions on the side

effects of the vaccines, how many doses is to be taken for one to be protected against the virus, and the effectiveness of the vaccine to protect people against the virus. There were also some comments indicating hesitancy towards the COVID-19 vaccine and rumours about the origins and testing process of the vaccine. In addition, there were suggestions about immunisation, such as vaccination should be a voluntary act and should be for free.

Feedback comments on **preventative behaviours** is still a widely discussed topic. Many of the comments were requests for the distribution of personal protective equipment, particularly face masks and also soap and hand sanitizers. There were a few questions related to how to wash our hands properly, how to use a hand sanitizer or wear a face mask and how following these preventative behaviours can help to stop the spread of infection.

In relation to this trend, **compliance or non-compliance** was equally a major topic in this month's community feedback. There were comments related to observations of non-compliance with public health measures (PHM), particularly in public transports. There were also comments related to how to get the population to respect measures put in place by the authorities and there were calls to continue the adherence of protective behaviours.

## TO ADDRESS THIS FEEDBACK, WE NEED TO:

- Ensure community members are informed of the evolution of the epidemic to help them better understand why it's still crucial to follow the public health measures. This Ask Dr Ben video gives [tips for how we can make our friends and families understand that COVID-19 is real](#) and encourage them to follow the prevention measures. See [Ask Dr Ben Factsheets 21, 26 and 28](#) for tips on how we can stay informed of the evolution of the pandemic.
- To help stop misinformation and rumours that the outbreak is over we need to provide up to date information on the number of cases and the outlook for Africa. This [video](#) helps to explain why the outbreak is not over and [Factsheets 23, 26 and 28](#) help to explain the

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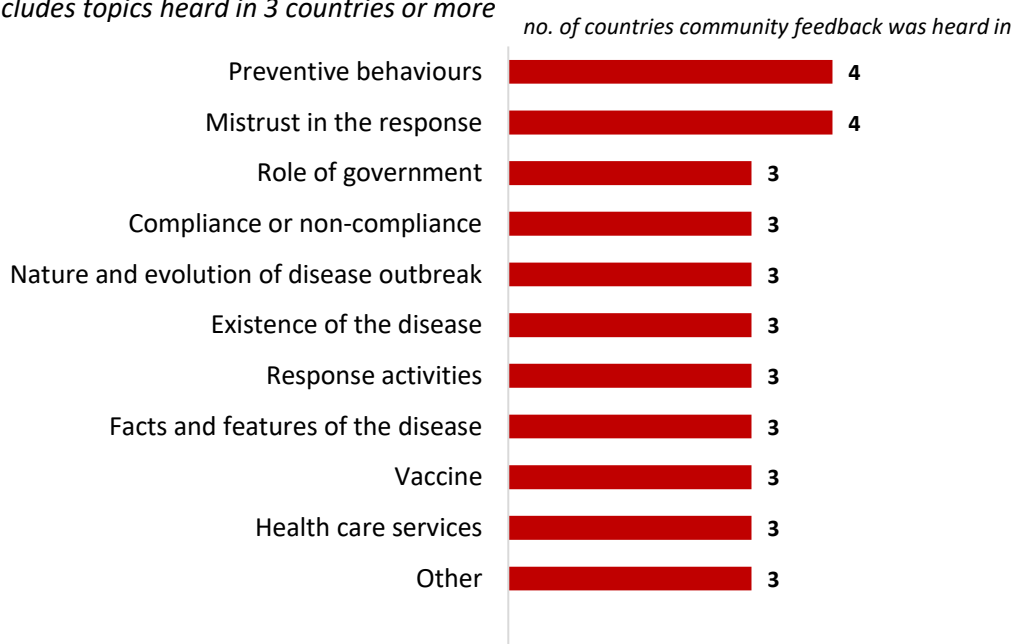


emergence and eradication of infectious diseases and [Factsheet 23](#) address the question why Africa has been less affected than other parts of the world.

- 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 new [vaccine FAQ guide](#) to help explain the vaccine's safety and benefits, when the vaccine will be ready for distribution, who will be immunized, IFRC's role and many more! Access all available materials on the COVID-19 vaccines [here](#).
- 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.
- Ensure volunteers know how to answer questions about how the disease spreads and consider doing a radio or TV show to explain this topic more clearly. [The Ask Dr Ben Factsheets 2,3, 4 8, 10, 14, 20, 21, and 26](#) all help to provide answers on this topics.

## MOST COMMON FEEDBACK TOPICS ACROSS COUNTRIES

*This chart includes topics heard in 3 countries or more*



## MOST COMMON COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ACROSS COUNTRIES

### 1. Comments and questions about the nature and evolution of disease outbreak

Heard in: Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Gabon, DRC

#### Questions:

**“why is the disease still on the rise in Europe yet elsewhere the vaccine is already available?”** – Cameroon, Face to face through social mobilizer, 16 January 2021

**“there’s a second wave of covid pretty much everywhere and what about Gabon?”** – Gabon, Household visit, 09 January 2021

**“How many confirm death of Corona?”** – Sierra Leone, National Society hotline, 20 January 2021

**“What’s causing it to come back?”** – DRC, National Society radio show, 20 January 2021

#### Rumours, observations and beliefs:

**“High increase of Corona in Sierra Leone”** – Sierra Leone, National Society hotline, 16 January 2021

**“COVID 19 will not end soon in the world because of movement of people”** – Sierra Leone, National Society hotline, 16 January 2021

### 2. Comments and questions about vaccines

Heard in: Cameroon, Gabon

#### Questions :

**“is there a vaccine that’s already approved by the WHO?”** – Cameroon, Face to face through social mobilizer, 16 January 2021

**“Does this vaccine have side effects?”** – Cameroon, National Society radio show, 19 January 2021

**“Is this vaccine also effective against the second strain that’s just appeared?”** – Cameroon, National Society radio show, 19 January 2021

**“How do we know this vaccine isn’t going to cause problems for us?”** – Gabon, Social media (twitter, facebook etc), 05 January 2021

**“is the vaccine compulsory, otherwise no one can go to public places?”** – Gabon, Social media (twitter, facebook etc), 05 January 2021

#### Rumours, observations and beliefs:

**“The vaccine they want to inject us with comes from Satan, it contains a microchip, a sign of the mark of the beast it talks about in Revelation”.** – Cameroon, From National Society focal points reporting to IFRC, 16 January 2021

**“there is a lot of talk on social media about the side effects of this vaccine”** – Gabon, Household visit, 09 January 2021

***“the vaccine is considered to be a vital component in the fight against the coronavirus epidemic; it’s free and not compulsory”*** – Gabon, Interactive TV show, 09 January 2021

***“This vaccine hasn’t yet been proven and you already want to vaccinate us. We’re not guinea pigs”*** – Gabon, National Society radio show, 08 January 2021

## Suggestions or requests:

***“vaccine demand for healthy people”*** – Cameroon, Face to face through social mobilizer, 16 January 2021

***“This vaccine is the big unknown so I don’t see why we need to rush into it.”*** – Gabon, National Society radio show, 08 January 2021

***“Let us decide whether to be vaccinated or not”*** – Gabon, Social media (twitter, facebook etc), 09 January 2021

## 3. Comments and questions about compliance or non-compliance

Heard in: Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Gabon

### Questions:

***“How many passengers are allowed in a public Vehicle”*** – Sierra Leone, National society hotline, 17 January 2021

***“how do we get the population on board with protective measures?”*** – Cameroon, National Society radio show, 13 January 2021

***“What do you think of this situation where policemen on the road aren't wearing a mask and even doctors in the hospital aren't wearing a mask?”*** – Cameroon, National Society radio show, 21 January 2021

***“What norm to you want us to adapt to?”*** – Gabon, Social media (twitter, facebook etc), 09 January 2021

### Rumours, observations and beliefs:

***“Drivers overloading Vehicle with Passengers”*** – Sierra Leone, National society hotline, 04 January 2021

***“We respect the protective measures so we can protect ourselves and the lives of others”*** – Cameroon, National Society radio show, 21 January 2021

***“By respecting the protective measures we will save lives.”*** – Gabon, Social media (twitter, facebook etc), 09 January 2021

***“Empty bellies don’t need protective measures and health is given by God?”*** – Gabon, Social media (twitter, facebook etc), 09 January 2021

### Suggestions or requests:

***“Immigrants must be quarantined to prevent the spread of COVID 19”*** – Sierra Leone, National society hotline, 08 January 2021

***“Red Cross to help with government measures put in place to reduce the spread of Corona.”*** – Sierra Leone, National society hotline, 22 January 2021

***“Let’s continue to wear a mask and respect the protective measures.”*** – Cameroon, National Society radio show, 15 January 2021

## 4. Comments and questions about preventive behaviours

Heard in Cameroon, DRC, Sierra Leone, Gabon

### Questions :

**“Does washing hands with sanitiser make you completely immune?”** – Cameroon, National Society radio show, 19 January 2021

**“Here we wash bibs, is that normal?”** – Gabon, household visit, 09 January 2021

**“What are the protection methods?”** – Cameroon, Face to face through social mobilizer, 16 January 2021

### Rumours, beliefs and observations:

**“People are not washing their hands with soap”** – Sierra Leone, National Society hotline, 04 January 2021

**“Washing our hands not only protects us from coronavirus but also from cholera”.** – Cameroon, National Society radio show, 07 January 2021

**“Face masks are accessible to everyone and there are those that are adaptable to everyone!”** – Cameroon, National Society radio show, 07 January 2021

**“Medical masks cause respiratory diseases.”** – DRC, From National Society focal points reporting to IFRC, 16 January 2021

### Suggestions and Requests:

**“Red Cross to help with Corona posters”** – Sierra Leone, National Society hotline, 19 January 2021

**“We want people to avoid contact with contaminated objects, we want gloves”** – Cameroon, Face to face through social mobilizer, 16 January 2021

**“we need water in popular areas, protective badges”** – Cameroon, Face to face through social mobilizer, 16 January 2021

**“Distributing masks, distributing hand sanitiser, supporting rural communities.”** – Cameroon, Face to face through social mobilizer, 16 January 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: Cameroon, Sierra Leone

**“Lots of luck with the campaign you’re doing, the project instructor is doing a good job, thank you for what you do, lots of luck but we hope it won’t stop there.”** – Cameroon, Face to face through social mobilizer, 16 January 2021

**“thank you for bringing the health awareness teams to the field, congratulations on the rapid screening tests.”** – Cameroon, Face to face through social mobilizer, 16 January 2021

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***“Thanks to Red Cross for their support during the Raining Season, and a gentle reminder for a relocation of our community”*** – Sierra Leone, National society hotline, 08 January 2021

***“Thanks to Red Cross for educating us about government measures put in place to reduce the spread of Corona in Sierra Leone.”*** – Sierra Leone, National society hotline, 22 January 2021

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON IFRC EFFORTS TO DOCUMENT, ANALYSE AND USE COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON COVID-19 IN AFRICA, PLEASE CONTACT ELISABETH GANTER RESTREPO AT [ELISABETH.GANTER@IFRC.ORG](mailto:ELISABETH.GANTER@IFRC.ORG).