

The community feedback data under consideration for this report was collected between the **01 April 2021 to 30 April 2021** and shared by Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) focal point in **7 African countries**.

Much of the community feedback was collected through social mobilization activities such as household visits, focus group discussion with community, Key Informant Interview, Community Meetings in Gabon (81), Malawi (56), Benin (10), Cote d'Ivoire (7) and Zimbabwe (6). Community feedback was as well collected media channels like National Society hotline, National Society Radio Shows, Social Media (twitter, Facebook, etc ...), WhatsApp group with community members in Gabon (140), Sierra Leone (65), Malawi (43), Cote d'Ivoire (8), and Benin (4).

Feedback comments linked to COVID-19 were also reported by staff and volunteers in Gabon (17), Lesotho (9) and Zimbabwe (2).

This month **vaccines** were the most commented topic. There were many questions related to the effectiveness of the vaccine, with some people asking whether it was reliable and how they can verify this. There were also questions about how to access the vaccines, who is eligible to be vaccinated and what is the purpose of the vaccination card. In addition, many of the questions were also related to the potential side effects of the vaccine. Some comments mentioned that the vaccine can make people feel ill, cause blood clots, infertility or even death. Many of the comments indicated **vaccine hesitancy**, with the belief that the vaccine is a poison, that it is

of satanic origin or that it was designed to eliminate the African population. There were also a few requests for more information on the origin, side effects and vaccination processes.

**Mistrust in the Response** was another widely discussed topic. Many comments indicated that people believed the Government and responders are using the pandemic to make money. Other comments mentioned that the disease outbreak is a conspiracy to dominate the world. There were also some questions regarding the effectiveness of the public health measures put in place by Governments because of the increase in cases and deaths in some countries.

A topic seen in many of the feedback this month was on **Preventive Behaviours**. There were some comments indicating that face masks have been infected with germs. There were also questions about why there are still strict public health measures in place by the Government if the vaccine is now available to the public. Related to this, many of the comments mentioned non-adherence to the preventative measures.

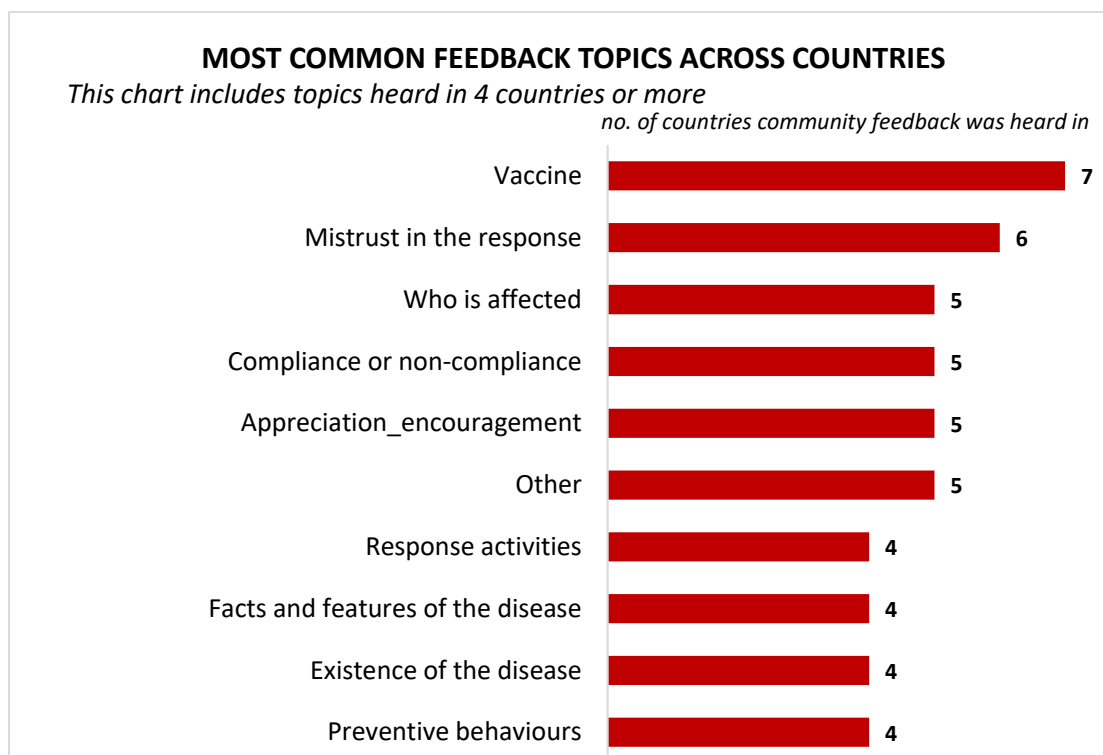
There were also some comments on the **Facts and features of the disease** revealing that some people still cannot make out any visible difference between Malaria and COVID-19 epidemic. However, others believe it is a very dangerous and deadly disease that spreads rapidly and the population at risk are those suffering from chronic health conditions and the elderly.

## 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

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 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ACROSS COUNTRIES

### 1. 1. Comments and questions about vaccine

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

#### Questions:

**"Since vaccinations began, the situation has remained the same, so could you say that the vaccine hasn't improved the situation?"** – Gabon, National Society radio show, 24 April 2021

**"Given that vaccinations have already started, why not lift the curfew?"** – Gabon, National Society radio show, 09 April 2021

**"Can Children also take COVID-19 Vaccine?"** – Sierra Leone, National society hotline, 05 April 2021

**"Those that are sick are the allowed to vaccinate?"** – Malawi, Household visit, 08 April 2021

**"Where can we get vaccinated?"** – Côte d'Ivoire, Focus group discussion with volunteers, 07 April 2021

**"Where can we get a vaccination record for the COVID vaccine?"** – Gabon, Household visit, 05 April 2021

#### Rumours, observations and beliefs:

**"These vaccines aren't suitable for Africans"** – Gabon, National Society radio show, 02 April 2021

**"Anyone who take the vaccine will have Corona"** – Sierra Leone, National society hotline, 01 April 2021

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

**"that COVID Vaccine causes blood clot"** – Lesotho, From National Society focal points reporting to IFRC, 08 April 2021

**"We don't want these vaccines"** – Gabon, National Society radio show, 02 April 2021

**"There is a great improvement on the number of people taking the jab now. For example, some of ZRCS volunteers have been vaccinated."** – Zimbabwe, Meeting, training or briefing of staff and volunteers, 08 April 2021

**"The vaccine is meant to reduce the population"** – Lesotho, From National Society focal points reporting to IFRC, 08 April 2021

#### Suggestions or requests:

**"Some elderly request vaccination to be brought to their home steads instead of awareness only"** – Zimbabwe, Community meeting, 08 April 2021

**"We want them to tell us about the origin of the vaccine and the side effects that could happen after vaccination"** – Gabon, National Society radio show, 08 April 2021

**"To show us a video of the vaccinations"** – Gabon, social media (twitter, Facebook etc), 06 April 2021

## 2. Comments and question about mistrust in the response

Heard in: Benin, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Gabon, Lesotho, Malawi

### Questions:

**"Who is really profiting from this corona business?"** – Gabon, National Society radio show, 02 April 2021

### Rumours, observations, and beliefs:

**"Covid is no more only that government wants to generate money out of covid"** – Malawi, Household visit, 08 April 2021

**"When a strategy doesn't work it should be changed, despite the curfew and partial lockdown cases are rising exponentially and people are dying. You can clearly see that this response isn't working so let us live in peace."** – Gabon, Social media (twitter, Facebook etc), 04 April 2021

**"Covid-19 didn't exist during the presidential campaigns"** – Benin, Focus group discussion with community, 14 April 2021

**"Since the beginning, we've made it clear that it's all a conspiracy; the global powers that be have found the way to subdue the world."** – Gabon, WhatsApp group with staff and volunteers, 25 April 2021

**"It for white people and it's to make money"** – Cote d'Ivoire, Household visit, 13 April 2021

## 3. Comments and questions about preventive behaviours

Heard in: Sierra Leone, Gabon, Malawi, Sierra Leone

### Questions:

**"What can save us from COVID-19?"** – Sierra Leone, National society hotline, 07 April 2021

**"You ain't sharing us PPEs and then how do you expect us to survive?"** – Malawi, Household visit, 07 April 2021

**"Why not distribute masks to the poor?"** – Gabon, National Society radio show, 16 April 2021

**"Have you seen the video about the mask scandal? They introduce germs. Is it done on purpose?"** – Gabon, WhatsApp group with community members, 18 April 2021

### Rumours, observations and beliefs:

**"Washing with hot water will prevent you from getting COVID-19"** – Sierra Leone, National society hotline, 09 April 2021

**"As parents we need to take part in Civic educating our children on how they can handle themselves when they are playing with their friends"** – Malawi, Household visit, 06 April 2021

**"Things have been eased in the town of Moanda; no more mask wearing"** – Gabon, social media (twitter, Facebook etc), 17 April 2021

**"Even after the COVID-19 vaccine you're not allowed to take off your mask, that's not normal"** – Benin, Key informant interview, 14 April 2021

## Suggestions or requests:

**“Because we are poor, we lick protective products. We need help”** – Malawi, Household visit, 07 April 2021

**“We want masks to be generally distributed! We’re tired of washing masks”** – Gabon, Household visit, 16 April 2021

## 4. Comments about Facts and features of the disease

Heard in: Sierra Leone, Gabon, Malawi, Benin

### Rumours, beliefs and observations:

**“Covid-19 isn’t a disease.”** – Benin, Key informant interview, 19 April 2021

**“I don’t see the difference between malaria and covid-19”** – Benin, Focus group discussion with Community, 15 April 2021

**“I heard that covid-19 is a very dangerous disease which spread so fast and deadly, elderly people and people with chronic diseases are at high risk of contracting”** – Malawi, Household visit, 23 April 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: Sierra Leone, Gabon, Malawi, Benin, Cote d’Ivoire

**“Thanks to Red Cross for the fight against COVID-19, Disaster response and Cash transfer”** – Sierra Leone, National society hotline, 04 April 2021

**“Appreciation president and vice president for taking part on vaccination”** – Malawi, Household visit, 23 April 2021

**“Thank you for the work done by the Committee and the Minister in the fight against COVID”** – Gabon, social media (twitter, Facebook etc), 23 April 2021

**“Congratulations to the Red Cross”** Benin, National Society radio show, 01 April 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).