

Community feedback considered in this report was collected between **07 December 2020 and 03 January 2021** and shared by Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) focal points in **7 African countries**.

Most of the community feedback was collected through conversations with community members during social mobilization activities such as household visits and focus group discussions in Democratic Republic of Congo (640), Gabon (100), Malawi (53) and Togo (5). Comments related to COVID-19 were also received through the NS hotline from Sierra Leone (131) and Gabon (4), as well as interactive radio shows, social media and WhatsApp in Cameroon (223) and Gabon (130).

Feedback was also collected through meetings, trainings or briefings with staff and volunteers in Gabon (9) and from focal points in Seychelles (3) who shared the main rumours, observations, beliefs, question or suggestions they heard in their country.

Similar to previous months, the most common topic mentioned in community feedback across the countries was about **preventative behaviours**. There were many questions on face masks, why we should wear them, how to use them and what are the different types of masks recommended. There were also questions about other preventative behaviours such as physical distancing and handwashing, such as how to greet people, how to wash hands properly and how to continue following these measures at home. There were numerous requests for protective materials, in particular people asked for face masks, soap and wash basins.

During this reporting period, there was an increase in questions and beliefs about **vaccines**. Some of the key narratives on this topic, included questions about the safety of the vaccines and when it will become available in the Africa region. There were also questions about how people will be able to access the COVID-19 vaccine once it is distributed. Some comments indicated hesitancy or mistrust towards the vaccine, for example some people mentioned they do not wish to get the vaccine, that people in Africa don't need the vaccine or that the vaccine has been developed to kill Africans.

The Nature and evolution of the disease was a trending topic in the feedback data with few questions on the number of cases or deaths in a specific country or region and some people also asked when the pandemic will end or whether it has already ended. There were also several comments debating the **existence of the disease**, with some people stating they believe it exists and other people doubted the existence of the disease. In this context it was also discussed where are all the COVID-19 patients and **requested to show sick or recovered people in the media**.

There were many concerns about the **lockdown measures and restriction of movement** during the festive season in December, especially questions regarding public gatherings, curfews and reopening of places. There were also comments about how people are tired of the restrictions and want to see them lifted.

TO ADDRESS THIS FEEDBACK, WE NEED TO:

- 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](#).

COVID-19: COMMUNITY FEEDBACK REPORT

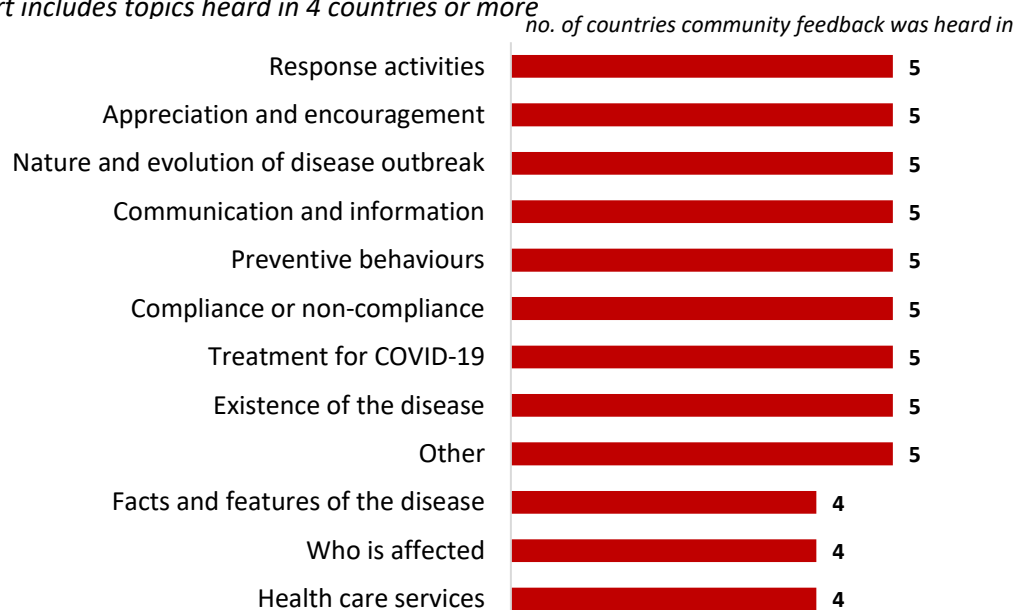
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- Work in partnership with communities to find and support local, practical solutions to preventing the spread of infection and bringing the outbreak under control. Use the [community-led solutions webinar package](#) and the [guidance note on community-led solutions](#), which provides step-by-step guidance to work with communities to plan COVID-19 response measures .
- Make sure that volunteers are updated on the COVID-19 vaccine developments and that they are able to 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](#).
- 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. We need to provide up to date information on the number of cases and the outlook for Africa – and be clear on the fact that the pandemic is not over (this [video](#) helps to explain why the outbreak is not over). [This factsheet](#) can be useful and can be adapted to a specific country, [Ask Dr Ben Factsheet #23](#) explains why Africa has been less affected than other parts of the world.
- Explain that it is difficult to show sick or deceased people from COVID-19 because of the protection rights and dignity of the affected persons but try to find ways to share testimonials of those who have recovered from the disease. Use this [tipsheet](#) to help you product testimonials of people affected by the virus and try to encourage staff and volunteers of your National Society who have recovered from COVID-19 to share their own story.

MOST COMMON FEEDBACK TOPICS ACROSS COUNTRIES

This chart includes topics heard in 4 countries or more



MOST COMMON COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ACROSS COUNTRIES

1. Comments and questions about preventive behaviours

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

Questions:

“How reliable are these masks?” – Gabon, National Society radio show, 18 December 2020

“What steps have you taken to respect the protective measures?” – Cameroon, household visit, 16 December 2020

“Can I remove facemask in public place after using it for a long time?” – Sierra Leone, National Society hotline, 12 December 2020

“Is the mask the new vaccine against Covid?” – DRC, Household visit, 18 December 2020

Rumours, beliefs and observations:

“Many people are complaining about lack of soap and mask” – Malawi, Household visit, 07 December 2020

“Facemask is too expensive in our community” – Sierra Leone, National Society hotline, 14 December 2020

“I’m tired of wearing masks!” – Gabon, Household visit, 25 December 2020

“We don’t know anything about your protective measures, God is the only one who protects us.” – DRC, household visit, 16 December 2020

“To avoid getting infected this holiday season, you need to avoid going to places where there are large gatherings.” – Cameroon, Social media (twitter, facebook, etc.), 20 December 2020

Suggestions and Requests:

“Asking for masks, buckets and soap” – Malawi, household visit, 07 December 2020

“Bring us the things that we know can help us with this disease, such as soap, wash basins, masks and other protective items.” – DRC, Household visit, 23 December 2020

“Red Cross to help with facemask” – Sierra Leone, National Society hotline, 18 December 2020

2. Comments and questions about the COVID-19 vaccines

Heard in: Cameroon, DRC, Gabon

Questions:

“Is the aim of the Covid vaccine to eradicate the black race?” – Cameroon, National Society radio show, 22 December 2020

“How can we trust a vaccine that comes from white people?” – Cameroon, WhatsApp group with community members, 09 December 2020

“How are we going to access the vaccine?” – Gabon, Social Media (twitter, facebook, etc.), 13 December 2020

“When will this Covid 19 vaccine be available?” – DRC, Household visit, 18 December 2020

Rumours, observations and beliefs:

“The vaccine doesn’t seem to be completely perfect. Some lives may be in danger” – Gabon, Social Media (twitter, facebook, etc.), 22 December 2020

“I wouldn’t get vaccinated but I would continue with the protective measures” – Cameroon, Social Media (twitter, facebook, etc.), 13 December 2020

“Our reluctance about the future vaccine is because we don’t trust the government.” – Cameroon, Social Media (twitter, facebook, etc.), 13 December 2020

“in my opinion, the vaccine created by westerners is a poison just for killing Africans, since we’re the one continent that’s least affected “We don’t need the vaccine as blacks are already immune to covid-19” – Cameroon, Social Media (twitter, facebook, etc.), 10 December 2020

Suggestions or requests:

“It would be better to use this vaccine in Asian and European countries where the mortality rates are very high” – Gabon, Social Media (twitter, facebook, etc.), 15 December 2020

“We want people to be vaccinated and protected” – DRC, Household visit, 16 December 2020

“The authorities in our countries should certify the quality and effectiveness of vaccines produced by Europeans.” – Gabon, other, 07 December 2020

3. Comments and questions about the nature and evolution of the disease, including comments about its existence or non-existence

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

Questions:

“How many cases of covid do we have?” – DRC, Household visit, 18 December 2020

“How many confirm case and death of COVID 19?” – Sierra Leone, National Society hotline, 14 December 2020

“What guarantee do we have that covid19 exists?” – DRC, Household visit, 14 December 2020

“How are we meant to believe that covid-19 exists when we have never seen a sick person?” – Cameroon, National Society radio show, 22 December 2020

Rumours, observations and beliefs:

“COVID 19 will not end soon in the world.” – Sierra Leone, National Society hotline, 16 December 2020

“My fear about the approaching holiday season is that we will have a new infection peak.” – Cameroon, Social Media (twitter, facebook, etc.), 12 December 2020

“Coronavirus is present.” – Malawi, Household visit, 07 December 2020

“This covid disease exists, except we don’t see or get shown the victims.” – DRC, Household visit, 18 December 2020

“No one can get corona here since there isn’t any where we live.” – Cameroon, WhatsApp group with community members, 09 December 2020

4. Comments and questions about lockdowns, restriction of movement and closing borders

Heard in: Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Gabon

Rumours, observations and beliefs:

“Could reopening public places increase the number of infections in Cameroon?” – Cameroon, National Society Radio Show, 19 December 2020

“We are worried about the christmas lockdown” – Sierra Leone, National Society hotline, 14 December 2020

“I’m dreading another lockdown with the approaching holiday season” – Cameroon, WhatsApp group with staff and volunteers, 13 December 2020

“We also think that our borders are being closed to prevent expats bringing the virus in” – Gabon, Other, 07 December 2020

Questions:

“So because of COVID-19 we can’t celebrate anymore?” – Gabon, Household visit, 25 December 2020

“How long until the lockdown is completely lifted?” – Gabon, Household visit, 22 December 2020

“Any lockdown plan from the government?” – Sierra Leone, National Society hotline, 13 December 2020

“Any public gathering allow during this festive season?” – Sierra Leone, National Society hotline, 08 December 2020

“When will the bars reopen?” – Gabon, Household visit, 19 December 2020

Suggestions or requests:

“Let us out of lockdown, we can’t live any more, we’re suffocating” – Gabon, WhatsApp group with staff and volunteers, 20 December 2020

“We honestly only want one thing, freedom.” – Gabon, WhatsApp group with staff and volunteers, 20 December 2020

“We want to be let out of lockdown.” – Gabon, WhatsApp group with staff and volunteers, 20 December 2020

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, DRC, Malawi, Gabon, Sierra Leone

“Many people are thanking for guidelines” – Malawi, Household visit, 07 December 2020

“Thank you very much to the Red Cross for your teaching” – DRC, household visit, 16 December 2020

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“Thanks to you and your volunteers for raising awareness of community health” –
Cameroon, National Society radio show, 24 December 2020

“Thank you to the Red Cross volunteers, I really appreciated it and learnt a lot about covid thanks to you.”– *Cameroon, National Society radio show, 18 December 2020*

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON IFRC EFFORTS TO DOCUMENT, ANALYSE AND USE COMMUNITY FEEDBACK
ON COVID-19 IN AFRICA, PLEASE CONTACT ELISABETH GANTER RESTREPO AT
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