

CAMEROON RED CROSS

All Against COVID-19: A Case Study



Putting Community Feedback to Good Use

At the beginning of the COVID19 outbreak, the Cameroon Red Cross saw the opportunity in collecting community feedback to know more about perceptions and needs related to the new coronavirus. Once collected through different channels to reach audiences inclusively, the National Society analyzed feedback in real-time with the support of IFRC to guide its action and response to COVID19.



The National Society put the feedback to good use by taking steps to help communities to protect themselves from COVID19 including using community voices to shape radio programs discussing different aspects of the pandemic. The result of the experience was that feedback allowed the National Society to identify a way to keep supporting communities at unprecedented challenging times brought about by the pandemic, rolling out activities that were relevant and timely.

THE METHODS

Feedback collection methods used by the Cameroon Red Cross:

- Community Radios
- Social Media (Twitter and Facebook)
- National Society Hotline
- Focus group discussions and key informant interviews
- Volunteers delivering messages in communities
- Whatsapp groups with volunteers

THE TEAM

The team behind the programme:

- 1 National head of CEA
- 4 Field officers
- 50 volunteers working with
- 10 community radios

CAMEROON RED CROSS

All Against COVID-19: A Case Study



Getting a Response

The Cameroon Red Cross worked across five of the most affected regions of the country to implement a strengthened community listening approach that would inform their strategy and response to the COVID19 pandemic. Community feedback was collected through different channels to ensure an inclusive process that would allow community members of all ages, with different access to technology or communication preferences to ask questions and contact the Red Cross.

Once collected, the National Society analyzed feedback to highlight emerging themes and trends and, with this information, work on their strategies to ensure they could implement an integrated response to the pandemic.

TOOLS AND SUPPORTS

The Cameroon Red Cross created their successful community activity based on existing IFRC Community Feedback Tools

IFRC provided technical support day-to-day to strengthen capacities of the National Society in participatory approaches.

Feedback was collected using the IFRC Feedback Collection form

Tools, messages and graphics designed specifically for the COVID-19 pandemic supported the National Society in the dissemination of messages

CAMEROON RED CROSS

All Against COVID-19: A Case Study



Using the Feedback

Feedback significantly helped to craft compelling and understandable messages, highlighted vulnerable communities, and formed the basis to build a communication strategy.

By analysing feedback the National Society realized the need to have messages in over 20 local languages to ensure that everyone could understand them. Volunteers tested imagery to determine the best way to communicate about COVID-19. By following trends in feedback, it was possible to identify themes that needed new messages to be developed. For example, feedback highlighted some people did not believe in COVID-19 -- knowing this helped the National Society brief the volunteers on the best ways to engage.

Feedback helped identify communities that lacked access to safe water. During the dissemination of influencer led hand washing messages, the National Society had people respond with comments a lack of water reducing their hand washing ability. A geographical analysis of the feedback supported identification of communities to be prioritized for the construction of new water points and water storage equipment.

The Cameroon Red Cross risk communication strategy is based on what they heard from the community. The belief that COVID-19 is a disease of the elderly helped them realize the importance of engaging young audiences to ensure they would adopt safe behaviour and help mitigate infection rates in their communities. So, the National Society worked with a young influencer to engage with younger audiences, for example about how to properly wear a mask and the fact that everyone can be vulnerable to COVID-19. Previous assessments and feedback highlighted community radios as a trusted information source. For this reason, the Cameroon Red Cross engaged communities an air, producing talk shows to engage experts and discuss different COVID-19 aspects. Feedback helped identify priority themes, and the talk shows served as a platform to collect feedback further in the form of incoming comments and questions.



CAMEROON RED CROSS

All Against COVID-19: A Case Study



Successes and Challenges

Community listening is successful at the Cameroon Red Cross due to a few elements: CEA activities were given priority by leadership as part of the COVID-19 response, volunteers trained in CEA and ready to support RCCE approaches, and pre-existing partnerships including with community radio stations. These components allowed the Cameroon Red Cross to use CEA quickly and effectively in their response to COVID-19.

The response supported by IFRC and the implementation of the community listening activity focused on only five of the 10 regions of Cameroon. While targeting prevents the dilution of resources, having the chance to analyze real-time feedback of ten regions would have allowed to have a more comprehensive perspective of what was happening in different communities across the country and have a more significant impact overall.

The Cameroon Red Cross implemented a very successful programme and demonstrated that feedback can strengthen emergency response by facilitating the development of a community-centric strategy which allows implementing relevant action for the affected community. Like with all activities some parts of the process have been challenging, but these are an opportunity to reflect on how the activity could reach even farther.

THE IMPACT

By understanding the community's concerns and priorities the Cameroon Red Cross was able to develop an integrated action promoting prevention and mitigation of COVID-19, and enabling people to adopt them with key resources such as clean water.

The Cameroon Red Cross saw positive effect of feedback collection in real-time and its value in shaping the response. The National Society is now looking at investing increasing resources in CEA. A roadmap is being worked on for the next two years that will gradually lead to the institutionalization of CEA approaches in the National Society.