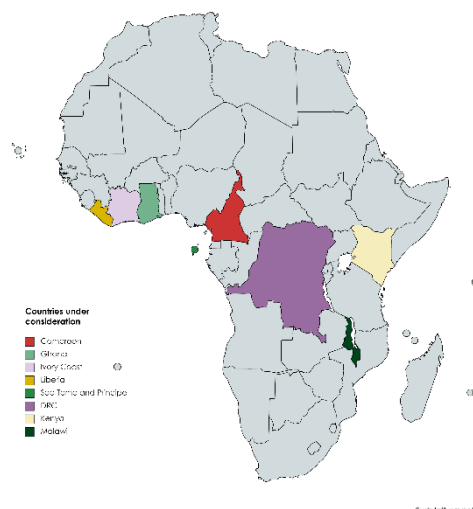The community feedback data under consideration for this Brief was collected between **the 1st of July to 9th November 2021** and shared by Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) focal points **in 8 African countries.**

The community feedback data considered in these brief focuses on the questions, comments, and concerns from community members about the **existence of COVID-19**. The feedback data received during social mobilisation activities such as house-to-house visits, community meetings and focus group discussions with community members in Cote d'Ivoire (6), DRC (1346), Ghana (19), Liberia (4) and Sao Tome (3). Feedback related to the existence of COVID-19 was also received through National Society radio shows and social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) in Cameroon (177), DRC (28), Liberia (2) and Cote d'Ivoire (1). Feedback was also received from National Society volunteers in DRC (2) and Liberia (1).

During the reporting period, a key trend coming from community feedback has been beliefs and concerns around the existence of COVID-19. There are conflicting opinions from community members on this topic with some people believing the disease does exist and is real, and others believing the disease does not exist or is not real.

Countries under consideration:
- Cameroon
- Ghana
- Ivory Coast
- Liberia
- Sao Tome and Principe
- DRC
- Kenya
- Malawi

Many of the reasons for not believing that the outbreak exists is related to not having seen or known of any person who is sick or passed away from COVID-19. In addition, there were also beliefs that the outbreak has already ended due to the lifting of lockdown measures. Other comments indicated that the disease does not exist in certain regions or countries.

Beliefs over the existence of COVID-19 can lead to people not respecting the preventative measures if not addressed in a timely manner, which means that cases can continue to rise across the region and more people will be at risk of contracting the disease.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK QOUTES ACROSS COUNTRIES

Observations and beliefs about the existence of COVID-19

Heard in: Cameroon, DRC, Sao Tome and Principe, Malawi

"Doubts still hang in the minds of many people" – *Cameroon, National Society Radio Show, 31st of July 2021*

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"Corona does not exist"- *DRC, Household visit, 1st of July 2021*

"COVID-19 no longer exists» - *Sao Tome and Principe, 28th of August 2021*

"We want to live the disease before we believe in it"- *Cameroon, National Society radio show, 31st of July 2021*

« This disease is just a lie I have never seen a person sick with COVID-19» - *DRC, Household Visit, 2nd July 2021*

« COVID-19 is a politicized disease that does not exist in Congo » - *DRC, Household Visit, 1st July 2021*

« People are making fun of us by saying COVID-19 is not real and the vaccine is bad» *Malawi Volunteer Helpdesk (Kati Kati) October 2021*

Questions about the existence of COVID-19

Heard in: Kenya, DRC

« Is corona virus real ?» -*Kenya, Face to face visit, October 2021*

« Is corona really still existing? » *Kenya, Face to face visit, October 2021*

« People wonder if this disease really exists » *DRC, Household Visit, 3rd July 2021*

« It is clear that they do not insist on taking the vaccine as it is not mandatory, that is why people ask questions and wonder if the disease really exists » *DRC, Household Visit, 3rd July 2021*

TO ADDRESS THIS FEEDBACK, WE NEED TO:

- 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 measure

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 OR NAPOLEON NYANGHE EGO MEME AT NAPOLEON.NYANGHE@IFRC.ORG