



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK REPORT: COVID-19 Vaccine

Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society, January 2024



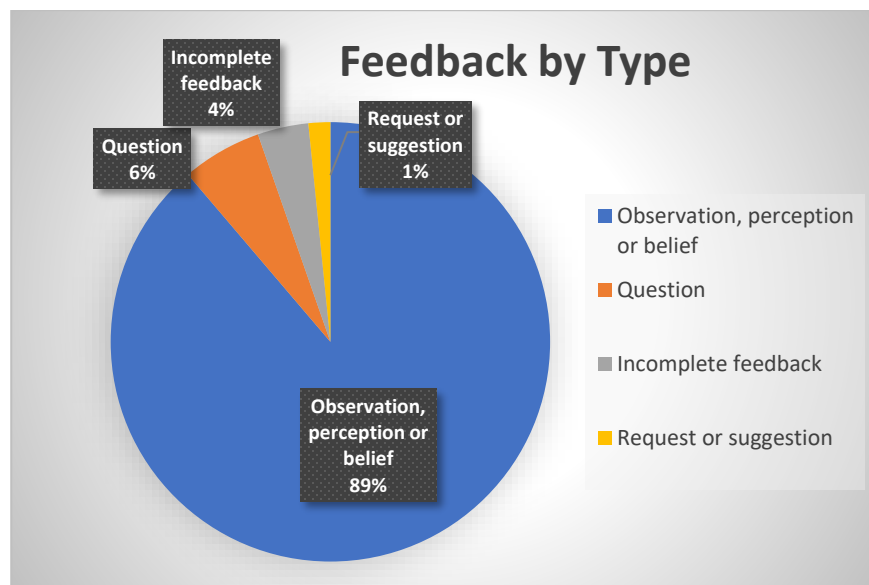
Country context:

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is a country located in the southwestern Pacific Ocean. It occupies the eastern half of the island of New Guinea and numerous smaller islands. It shares the island of New Guinea with Indonesia to the west and is north of Australia.

The country has diverse cultures and languages, with over 800 spoken. Rich in natural resources like gold and oil, the country faces challenges in development, including poverty and limited access to healthcare. Its stunning landscapes, unique wildlife, and traditional customs make it a culturally vibrant yet complex nation.

Community Insights:

Community feedback considered in this report was collected between 29th – 30th of October, 2023 and 09th of January 2024 by Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society, Morobe Branch. All of the feedback were conducted through face-to-face interaction with the community members. Total number of feedback is 188 (101 Male, 85 Female & 1 Unknown data). The data that has been collected represents a limited number of communities in respective districts and should be noted that data is not representative and has limitations.



Total number of feedback (n=188)

In the data collated, 89% of the feedback type received from the interviewees were on; 'Observation, perception or belief'. The other 11% of the feedback data were on; 'Question about Covid-19 – 6%', Incomplete Feedback – 4% and 1% on Request or Suggestion. The

feedback interestingly indicates comments that were quite similar and most related to the COVID-19 vaccine but also on the COVID-19 virus. Some of this feedback were on:

- Concern about the vaccine affecting current and future pregnancy.
- Concerns about employers mandating vaccines against peoples will.
- Fear of side effects if they get vaccinated.
- Belief that they are immune to the COVID-19 virus because not many were affected.

Most of the interviewees were hesitant to get vaccinated as outlined above but there were also a few positive comments, although they were not vaccinated, had identified the importance of getting vaccinated to protect themselves and their families.

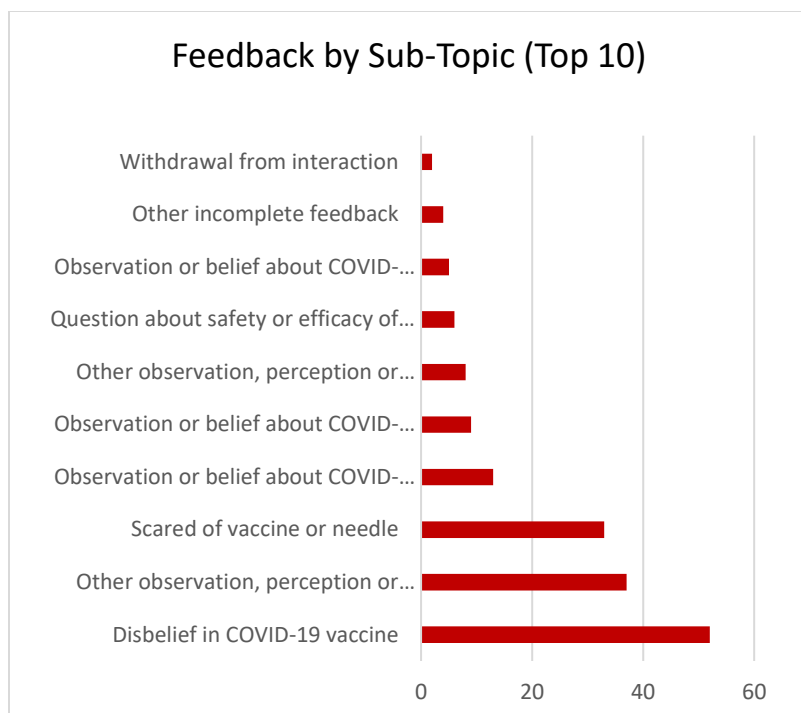
Feedback by sector and topic:

All feedbacks were related to the Health sector, since the survey is related to COVID19. All of the feedback was done through face-to-face interactions. Most of the feedback collected were on the topic, "Observation, perception or belief" which entailed more about people observation, what they heard which had an influence on decision making and another common identified feedback was around the lack of awareness raising especially around the COVID19 vaccine.

Feedback by subtopic:

As the feedback were further analyzed into subtopics, the data showed interesting analysis indicating, each interviewees perception and observations feedback were based on common areas that was mainly on misinformation or rumours that were shared, heard or seen and also the lack of awareness in the communities. That had a greater impact towards vaccine hesitancy amongst people.

Many mentioned that they were scared or afraid to take the vaccine because of the stories they heard and a few alleged deaths related information which many think was caused by the vaccine which were given. And a few related feedbacks were on religious beliefs that discouraged people to take the vaccine.



Total number of feedback (n=188)

Examples of positive and negative feedback received:

Positive feedbacks:

"I can see that COVID-19 vaccination program is very good for protection against the pandemic but it's just that people need to be educated on how dangerous the pandemic is so they can comply. Otherwise, I agree with the vaccine. (Male, age 50-59, Marobe branch, PNG)

Its a good thing to speak with one of the PNGRCS officer about COVID-19. For my view about COVID-19, it is a serious disease that kills many people around the world, so it is good to get vaccinated and protect our lives. COVID-19 is not 666, so get vaccinated and save a life. (Female, age 18-29, Marobe Branch PNG)

" Thinking about it now, I should have gotten the vaccine. Is it still available?" (Female, age 50-59, Marobe branch, PNG)

Negative Feedbacks:

"The vaccine team never reached my community so I never took it." (Female, age 40-49 Marobe branch, PNG)

“I do not know about the vaccine that well. I have heard about it but never believed in it because I never saw it affecting me. I am a village person. I have never been to town where everywhere is polluted.” (Male age 18-29, Marobe branch, PNG)

“I had different sickness in my body and the government forced me to go and get that vaccine and now I lost my job. Then I realized that they haven't done anything good to us.” (Female, age 40-49, Marobe branch, PNG)

“I do not need to take the vaccine to feel safe. My body is built differently and can withstand the most deadly viruses” (Male, age 18-29, Marobe branch PNG)

Recommendations:

These recommendations collectively suggested are based on the analysis of the feedback data:

- Dissemination of information: Vital information is clearly communicated to the communities through awareness during bigger community gatherings and events. And also integration of messaging in collaboration with the health authorities during community health patrols, particularly in relation to pregnancy concerns.
- IEC materials on “Myths & Facts”: Distribution of IEC materials during community events to ensure people have to right information. Materials to be also translated to local language (Pidgin, Motu and etc) so can be easily understood, especially people in the rural communities.
- Engagement and Collaboration with Local Leaders and Community Based Organizations (CBO): Facilitate a Leadership training with the intention to integrate the COVID-19 and Vaccination messaging and awareness. Leaders includes the community leaders, women and youth leaders, church leaders and etc. The training to ensure that the leaders are equipped with the right information and also understanding what their role and responsibility during any emergencies is or in this situation COVID19 pandemic that has an impact on their community members.
- Story telling or Community Conversations: Community members who had been vaccinated sharing their experiences. This will trigger questions and discussions and creating a ‘safe space’ for community members to openly discuss. Part of this concept is also to understand any learnings and how the community to learn from them. Community to initiate their own recommendation on how they can keep their community safe.
- Capture the learning from community engagement for COVID-19 vaccine promotion emphasize the significance of listening, tailored information sharing, and localized accessibility. These lessons, rooted in trust-building and cultural sensitivity, should be used for wider learning.

- Partnership Collaboration: More collaboration with health authorities and other health institutions to ensure that the correct information is disseminated to the communities in both urban and rural areas. And ensure that the medical interpretation of vaccination is clearly communicated and understood at the community level given the low literacy rate of most of the people.

For more information about PNGRCS and its activities please contact, PNGRCS communication and dissemination officer Bradley Asa <basa@redcross.org.pg> and or IFRC head of delegation PNG maki.igarashi@ifrc.org