

Community feedback considered in this report was collected through information received from Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) focal points, as well as through primary data collection, in 10 African countries.

Red Cross and Red Crescent National Society CEA focal points were asked to share the main rumours, observation, beliefs, questions or suggestions they are hearing in their countries and to grade them according to their frequency. Focal points from the following countries provided information this way: Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Niger, South Africa.

Community feedback was also collected during social mobilization activities in North Kivu/DRC, Nampula/Mozambique and Lagos/Nigeria. Information was not

gathered through structured surveys, but volunteers documented comments relating to coronavirus they heard during their interactions with community members. A total of 15 community comments were recorded in Mozambique, 57 community comments were recorded in Nigeria and a total of 4261 in DRC.

Two countries, Burkina Faso and Niger also shared community feedback shared through social media.

Information included in this report was collected between 22 and 31 March.

These highlights are not representative for the countries mentioned in the update but indicate broad trends in community perceptions of COVID-19.

RUMOURS - OBSERVATIONS - BELIEFS

Beliefs about who can be affected

Heard in: Botswana, DRC, Kenya, Niger, South Africa

"Corona disease can only kill the elderly" – Kenya, 26 March 2020

"It is a disease for the rich people" – South Africa, 24 March 2020

"A Muslim is less exposed, as his hands are always clean because he does his ablutions 5 times a day" – Niger, 26 March 2020

"Coronavirus does not kill black people" – Botswana, 28 March 2020

"Corona virus is for white people" – DRC, 23 March 2020

Beliefs about coronavirus prevention and treatment

Heard in: Burundi, DRC, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, South Africa

"Someone who consumes a lot of salt and hard liquor will not get the coronavirus" – DRC, 23 March 2020.

"Drink lot of alcohol to cure the COVID-19" – South Africa, 24 March 2020

Beliefs about coronavirus prevention and treatment

- "The contaminated person must be very exposed to the sun to heal"* – Mozambique, 26 March 2020
- "Neem and lemon or gargle your mouth with salt water are an effective preventive remedy against the disease. All Western medicines are made from African plants."* – Niger, 26 March 2020
- "Hot water with salt prevents coronavirus from getting into the body through the throat"* – Benin, 17 March 2020
- "Eating bitter cola can cure the virus"* – Nigeria, 23 March 2020
- "I heard chloroquine can cure coronavirus"* – Nigeria, 23 March 2020
- "Medicine against coronavirus is available"* – Burundi, 26 March 2020
- "I was in contact with the pastor who tested positive for COVID-19, but Jesus will heal me"* – South Africa, 24 March 2020

Coronavirus is a man-made disease

Heard in: Botswana, DRC, Mozambique, Niger

- "Coronavirus is a pure invention of the Chinese...."* - Niger, 26 March 2020
- "Covid 19 is the disease of the century, has no difference with HIV-AIDS and has been produced in the laboratory as they have discovered HIV treatment now produced Coronavirus"* – Mozambique, 26 March 2020
- "Coronavirus is a disease created by the white people."* – DRC, 23 March 2020
- "Ebola is over, the ministry of health has created coronavirus to protect their services"* – DRC, 23 March 2020

Beliefs about how coronavirus spreads or does not spread

Heard in: Botswana, DRC, Cameroon, Niger

- "COVID19 cannot withstand hot climates"* – Burkina Faso, 16 March 2020
- "Coronavirus will not survive in the house of God."* - Niger, 26 March 2020
- "They said coronavirus is an airborne disease, that is why it's spreading so fast."* – Nigeria, 2 March 2020
- "The corona virus is airborne."* – DRC, 27 March 2020
- "Corona virus can only infect those where there are more than 20 people."* – DRC, 23 March 2020

QUESTIONS

Questions about how the disease spreads

Heard in: DRC, Kenya, Mozambique

"Is Coronavirus an airborne disease?" – Kenya, 26 January 2020

"How should women breastfeed their babies? Does the virus spread through the milk?" - Mozambique, 26 January 2020

"Is the coronavirus transmitted by contact?" – DRC, 23 March 2020

"Can money also infect someone with corona?" – DRC, 27 March 2020

"If I stand next to a corona patient who does not cough, can I get infected?" – DRC, 25 March 2020

Protective behavior

Heard in: Burkina Faso, DRC, Kenya, Nigeria

"How often should hands be washed?" - Nigeria, 23 March 2020

"What can we use apart from hand sanitizer?" - Nigeria, 23 March 2020

"Where can we get the sanitizer?" - Nigeria, 23 March 2020

"As far as Corona virus is concerned, hand washing is optional because this virus is transmitted in the air, i.e. through respiration." – DRC, 23 March 2020

"How can I protect myself against corona on public transit?" – DRC, 27 March 2020

"What measure will we motorcyclists (taxi-motorcyclists) take for the distance of one meter because on a motorcycle it will not be possible to avoid the corona virus?" – DRC, 23 March 2020

"Don't buy paper face masks from China." – Burkina Faso, 31 March 2020

Questions about preparedness or response activities

Heard in: Mozambique

"Why don't you distribute the disinfectant Certeza in the communities?" – Mozambique, 26 March 2020

"Why doesn't the government distribute masks in the communities?" – Mozambique, 26 March 2020

"How are we going to live in quarantine if in our rural communities we live in houses with more than 10 people?" – Mozambique, 26 March 2020

"Why aren't the markets closed when there are many people frequenting them during this coronavirus epidemic period?" – DRC, 23 March 2020

"Why do you close the churches, schools and others when Corona is not yet here with us?" – DRC, 25 March 2020

SUGGESTIONS

Provide community health promotion

Heard in: DRC, Nigeria

"I suggested if you can move around to all local governments in this state, it will be fine because there is nowhere the virus cannot get." – Nigeria, 23 March 2020

"Bring us all the information you can about coronavirus instead of EVD because it is corona that we are now afraid of." – DRC, 23 March 2020

"We beg and plead with you, as health care personnel, to inform us about corona prevention." – DRC, 23 March 2020

Request for responsive government action against the disease

Heard in: DRC, Nigeria

"Government should help us to put an end to this Corona virus" – Nigeria, 23 March 2020

"That the government fights hard against the CORONA virus as it did against the EBOLA virus..." – DRC, 23 March 2020

"Stop the movement of people in areas affected by corona virus" – DRC, 23 March 2020

Provide vaccines and face masks

Heard in: DRC

"Please distribute masks for those with flu symptoms." – DRC, 23 March 2020

"Give us face masks to protect us from the corona." – DRC, 27 March 2020

"Bring us the vaccine for the protection of the corona virus" – DRC, 23 March 2020

"We need to get the corona vaccine to us before it gets here." – DRC, 23 March 2020

NEXT STEPS

How should we respond to community feedback? Update your messages and activities to;

- share this factsheet with staff and volunteers
- address rumours and misinformation, you hear in communities by providing the correct information,
- answer questions communities have about COVID-19, and
- use community suggestions to improve the response where possible.

To support this process, the IFRC CEA team will;

- support more National Societies to collect, use and act on community feedback,
- produce weekly fact sheets addressing the most commonly asked questions, rumours and fears, collected that week from communities across Africa,
- produce weekly videos with a health expert answering most relevant questions from community members and providing the needed facts, the videos will be shared through IFRC Africa's Twitter platform.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON IFRC RISK COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS ON COVID-19 IN AFRICA, PLEASE CONTACT SHARON READER AT SHARON.READER@IFRC.ORG.