

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK SUB-WORKING GROUP – EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

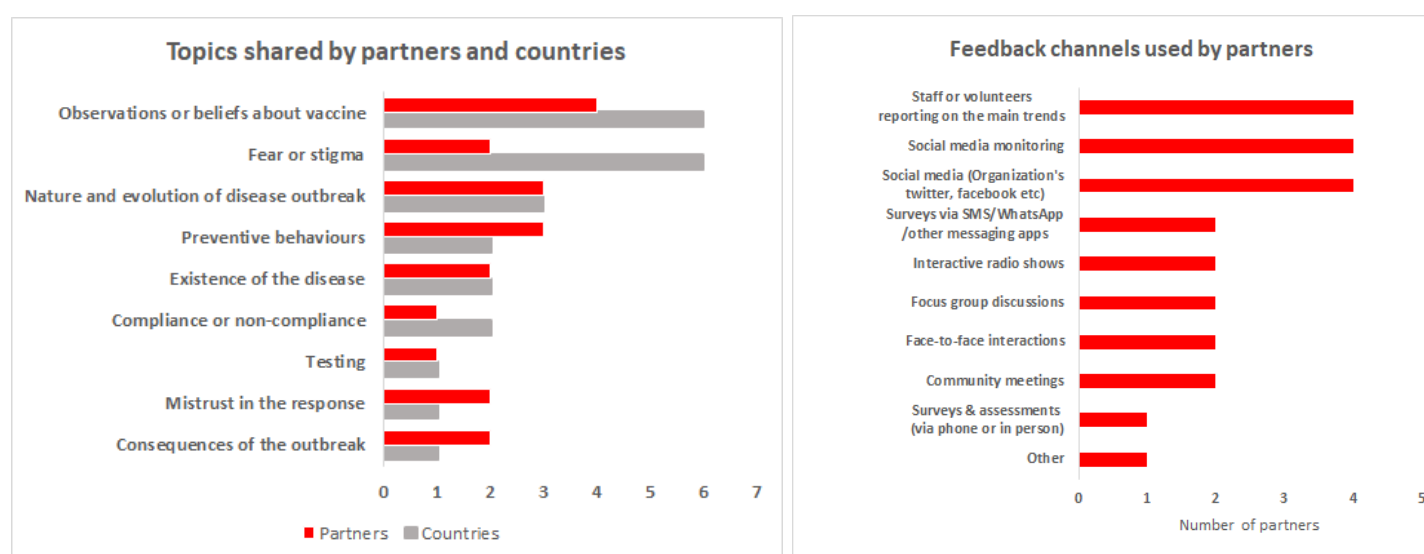
COVID-19 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK TRENDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

December 2020

This report documents the main trends in community feedback reported by agencies responding to COVID-19 across East and Southern Africa for the month of November. It was prepared by the community feedback sub-working group, which is part of the COVID-19 Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) Interagency Working Group.

7 partners have shared their priorities (*Africa's Voices Foundation, CORE Group Polio Project, IFRC, Novetta, Shujaaz Inc, UNICEF and WHO*)

Feedback trends have been heard in **12 countries** in the East and Southern Africa region (*Botswana, Burundi, Eswatini, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe*)



Observations or beliefs about vaccines *(heard in 6 countries by 4 partners)*

To address **questions and concerns about the COVID-19 vaccine**:

- **RCCE RECOMMENDATIONS AT COUNTRY LEVEL:** Start to engage with national MoH leadership to plan for political leaders and senior officials to be vaccinated publicly once the vaccine is available at country level.
- **RCCE RECOMMENDATIONS AT REGIONAL LEVEL:** Use the feedback data to compile and regularly update a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and key messages on the vaccine which can be translated and used by country teams. Use IFRC's [global vaccine FAQs](#) and adapt for the ESAR region.
- **RCCE RECOMMENDATIONS AT REGIONAL LEVEL:** Compile a list of inter-agency resources, training materials and tools to support country level teams to easily access the materials they need to plan for vaccine demand creation activities and mitigate vaccine hesitancy.

- **RCCE RECOMMENDATIONS AT REGIONAL LEVEL:** Collaborate with AIRA network to develop a regional Wiki on COVID-19 rumours and debunks which can be accessed by country teams
- **RCCE RECOMMENDATIONS AT REGIONAL LEVEL:** Continue the webinar series on collecting, analysing, coding and acting on community feedback - including rumours, misinformation and beliefs about COVID-19 and the vaccine - to support country teams to set up their own mechanisms
- **RCCE RECOMMENDATIONS AT REGIONAL LEVEL:** Plan a series of media dialogue webinars on topics relating specifically to addressing rumours around the vaccine, in collaboration with WHO, Gavi and UNESCO.

Fear and stigma *(heard in 6 countries by 2 partners)*

To address **fear of contracting COVID-19 as schools re-open:**

- **RCCE AND CASE MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AT COUNTRY LEVEL:** Collaborate with MoH and MoE to produce country specific guidance on how schools should ensure they are Covid-19 secure. Use and adapt UNICEF's guidance on [classroom precautions during Covid-19](#) and WHO's [considerations for school-related public health measures in the context of COVID-19](#).
- **RCCE RECOMMENDATIONS AT REGIONAL LEVEL:** Organise a media dialogue around fear of transmission as schools re-open.

To address **stigma and discrimination affecting willingness to seek testing and treatment services:**

- **RCCE AND CASE MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AT COUNTRY LEVEL:** Create friendly, engaging videos of inside treatment centres and Covid-19 hospital wards, including interviews with patients (based on their consent), doctors and nurses talking about the treatment provided to Covid-19 patients in order to address fears and concerns - examples?.
- **RCCE AND CASE MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AT COUNTRY LEVEL:** Encourage people who have recovered from Covid-19 to speak about their experience on the radio (anonymously if they do not wish to be identified) and have health professionals answer questions from listeners about the treatment options available to Covid-19 patients.
- **RCCE ACTIONS AT REGIONAL LEVEL:** Continue the fear and mistrust webinar series and invite partners from country level to share their experiences and best practice of engaging with communities to tackle stigma of those seeking testing and treatment for Covid-19.

Disease existence, nature and evolution *(heard in 3 countries by 4 partners)*

To address **misinformation about the existence of Covid-19:**

- **RCCE RECOMMENDATION AT COUNTRY LEVEL:** Continue encouraging people who have recovered from the disease to share their stories. It may be easier if organisations lead by example - encourage their own staff and volunteers who have recovered from COVID-19 or have been affected by the disease to and write and share stories of their experiences (based on informed consent) such as this example from a [WHO staff member](#). Use the tip sheet for sharing testimonials for guidance.

To address **misinformation that the virus cannot survive in hot countries:**

- **RCCE RECOMMENDATIONS AT COUNTRY LEVEL:** Continue to share accessible information about the number of cases at country level, including data showing the rise in cases during the second wave across many countries in Africa, with community and religious leaders, teachers, health care workers, social media influencers and journalists so highlight that Covid-19 can still be transmitted in hot countries and remains a serious issue.

Preventative behaviours *(heard in 2 countries by 3 partners)*

To address **requests for personal protective equipment and targeting:**

- **RCCE AND CASE MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AT REGIONAL LEVEL:** Update the inter-agency face mask resource pack for country teams with existing resources on how to make face masks using local materials, including the inter-agency fact sheet and videos showing the step-by-step process. Country team should translate and dub the content in to local languages and share widely with partners within national RCCE task forces.
- **RCCE AND CASE MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AT COUNTRY LEVEL:** Advocate with partners distributing NFIs, such as Shelter, WASH, Health or Protection clusters, to include face masks (or local materials and instructions to make face masks) into NFI kits during planned distributions.

For more information on the work of the RCCE community feedback sub-working group, please contact Sophie Everest at sophie.everest@ifrc.org.

For information on how these topics and previously highlighted topics are addressed, please visit our [online tracking table](#).