

## COMMUNITY FEEDBACK SUB-WORKING GROUP – EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

### COVID-19 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK TRENDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

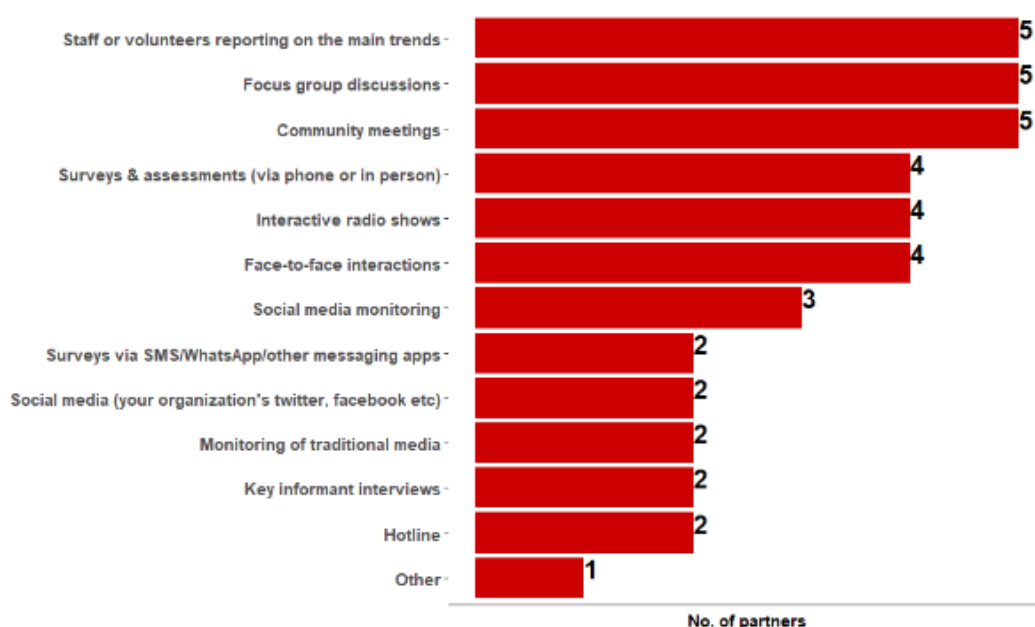
August 2020

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 August. It was prepared by the community feedback sub-working group, which is part of the COVID-19 Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) Interagency Technical Working Group.

**10 partners** have shared their priorities (*Africa's Voices Foundation, CORE Group Polio, IFRC, Internews, Mercy Corps, Novetta/CDC Africa, Save the Children, SMDC, UNICEF, WHO*).

Feedback trends have been heard in **17 countries** in the East and Southern Africa region. (*Most of feedback shared were for Kenya (21 feedback topics), Malawi (10 feedback topics), Somalia and Zimbabwe (9 feedback topics each).*

#### Feedback channels used by different partners:



#### Non-compliance with public health measures

(heard in 12 countries by 7 partners)

To address the reported **increase in complacency**:

- **RCCE ACTIONS ON COUNTRY LEVEL:** Share updates on epidemiological data in traditional and social media, as well as through influencers such as religious and community leaders, and let people know whether the situation is improving or not. Congratulate the population if the trend is good and reinforce messages of greater commitment if the numbers increase.
- **RCCE ACTIONS ON COUNTRY LEVEL:** Explain that asymptomatic people can be (and are) the main vector of transmission of the virus in communities. Include messages targeting asymptomatic people and their responsibility to curb the transmission of Covid-19.
- **RCCE ACTIONS ON REGIONAL LEVEL:** Develop a factsheet explaining the risk of transmission through asymptomatic people and providing practical advice for RCCE practitioners to tackle the issue.
- **RCCE ACTIONS ON REGIONAL LEVEL:** Conduct a media dialogue session on the risk of

asymptomatic youth spreading Covid-19 in schools and the need to adhere to preventative guidelines

To address the fact that people **escape from quarantine facilities** and **do not follow guidelines for home-based isolation and care**:

- **RCCE AND CASE MANAGEMENT ACTIONS ON COUNTRY LEVEL:** Ensure better information and engagement of people in quarantine and isolation centers, informing them of the risks associated with breaking quarantine and isolation rules and their responsibility of avoiding the spread of the disease to their loved ones and community.
- **RCCE AND CASE MANAGEMENT ACTIONS ON COUNTRY LEVEL:** Share the CORE Group's Home-Based Care Guidance (available in English, French, Portuguese and Arabic) resources available [here](#).

To address **political statements calling for the disregard of public health measures** and **non-compliance during religious and cultural events**:

- **RCCE AND CASE MANAGEMENT ACTIONS ON COUNTRY LEVEL:** Discuss the issue of complacency, the impact of statements of politicians as well as non-compliance during religious and cultural events with political parties, civic and religious leaders, pointing out the impact of their utterances and their responsibility as role models. Work with religious leaders to highlight the need to adhere to social distancing during religious events, including weddings and funerals.

## **Rumours and concerns about face masks** *(heard in 9 countries by 4 partners)*

To answer **questions about face masks**:

- **RCCE ACTIONS ON COUNTRY LEVEL:** More information and demonstrations should be provided to demonstrate the efficacy of masks in reducing community transmission of the virus. Community members need to understand where and when face masks are most crucial and how they help to protect themselves.
- **RCCE ACTIONS ON COUNTRY LEVEL:** Share the resources available on UNICEF's Internet of Good Things on how to make a cloth face mask that doesn't require sewing or elastic. Further content on face masks can be accessed [here](#).
- **RCCE ACTIONS ON REGIONAL LEVEL:** Develop a factsheet on face masks to share accurate and clear information on the effectiveness of masks (as part of other preventive measures), address concerns about negative side effects and provide practical tips on the correct use and production of face masks.

To address **rumours and concerns about face masks**:

- **CASE MANAGEMENT AND RCCE ACTIONS ON COUNTRY LEVEL:** Plan a campaign on face masks tailored to the country, working with influencers such as celebrities, religious leaders and other influencers to advocate for the use of face masks. This campaign should also target important figures such as politicians and police to highlight their responsibility as role models. Available content on face masks can be accessed [here](#).
- **CASE MANAGEMENT AND RCCE ACTIONS ON COUNTRY LEVEL:** Use breaks during football matches or other sport events for moderators and celebrities to discuss the importance of face masks and how to use them safely.

## **Concerns about the consequences of the pandemic** *(heard in 6 countries by 4 partners)*

To address **concerns about the economic impact:**

- **RCCE ACTIONS ON REGIONAL AND COUNTRY LEVEL:** Share this feedback with partners working on food security and livelihoods and discuss how to best advocate for government support for businesses and job loss as well as food assistance for those most vulnerable.

To address **concerns about the impact on education:**

- **RCCE AND ACTIONS ON COUNTRY AND REGIONAL LEVEL:** Share this feedback with coordination groups and partners on the regional and country level to discuss and promote the safe re-opening of schools (including religious and informal schools), as well as discuss issues of school closures on a range of issues including protection issues of children and youth. [This UNICEF guidance note](#) can be used for building consensus on school re-opening.

To address the reported **increase in psychological violence:**

- **MHPSS AND CASE MANAGEMENT ACTIONS ON COUNTRY LEVEL:** Discuss how to increase access to protection-sensitive quarantine facilities, increase sensitivity among community members about GBV and decrease movement restrictions for GBV survivors.

## **Fear of quarantine and health centres and related stigma**

*(heard in 6 countries by 5 partners)*

To address **fear of quarantine and health care facilities:**

- **RCCE AND CASE MANAGEMENT ACTIONS ON COUNTRY LEVEL:** Ensure community members are aware of what the processes are at quarantine and health care centres.
- **RCCE ACTIONS ON COUNTRY LEVEL:** Use the [factsheet on addressing stigma](#) to address stigma of those who have recovered from COVID-19 and are returning from isolation.
- **RCCE ACTIONS ON REGIONAL LEVEL:** Organise a media dialogue on this topic to ask national and local media to help explain the importance of quarantine and isolation in their reporting. Are there positive stories of people who have been through quarantine or isolation they could cover? Discuss negative coverage resulting in people avoiding or escaping from government quarantine or isolation facilities, avoiding health facilities and hampering contact tracing efforts.

To address people's **reliance on traditional medicine:**

- **CASE MANAGEMENT AND RCCE ACTIONS ON COUNTRY LEVEL:** Collaborate with traditional healers - train them on when to refer people and when herbal remedies can help.

## **Mistrust in the response** *(heard in 3 countries by 4 partners)*

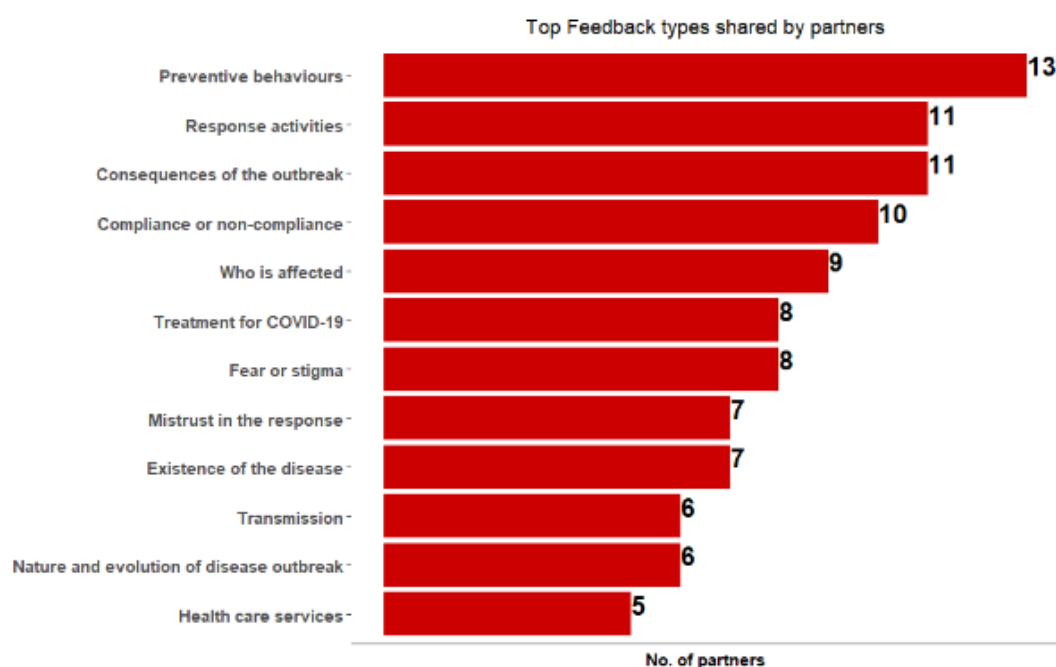
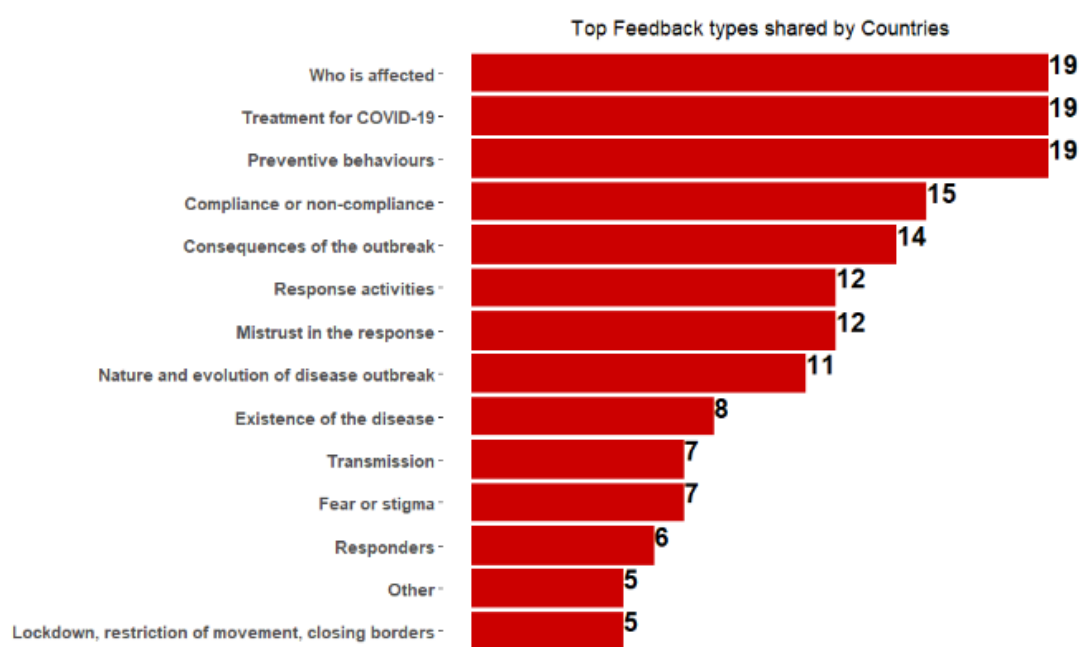
To address **rumours about vaccines:**

- **CASE MANAGEMENT AND RCCE ACTIONS ON REGIONAL LEVEL:** Discuss and take these rumours into account when developing RCCE strategies for mitigating vaccine hesitancy and ensure a coordinated approach between regional level partners on this area.
- **RCCE ACTIONS ON COUNTRY LEVEL:** Ensure social mobilizers know how to address rumours and concerns about vaccines. [This](#) factsheet provides useful information.

To address **concerns about communication of wrong numbers and misuse of COVID-19 funds in Kenya:**

- **RCCE ACTIONS ON COUNTRY LEVEL:** Share community feedback with the broader coordination and support the discussion on a strategy to regain trust in the response.
- **RCCE ACTIONS ON COUNTRY LEVEL:** Ensure that healthcare workers have the most up-to-date information about the country's epidemiological curve, as they are often considered one of the most trustworthy sources of information on the virus.

## Overview of feedback topics shared since April



For more information on the work of the RCCE community feedback sub-working group, please contact Eva Erlach at [eva.erlach@ifrc.org](mailto:eva.erlach@ifrc.org).

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