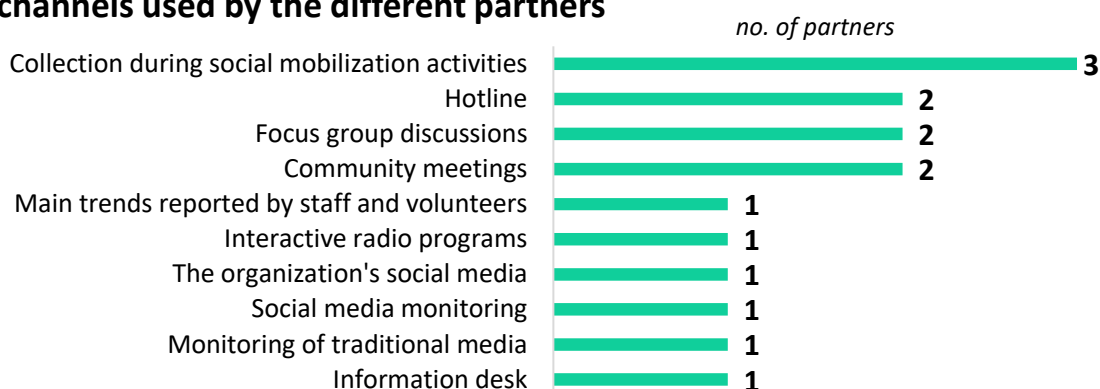


COVID-19: COMMUNITY FEEDBACK PRIORITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS*22 July – 15 August 2020*

This report documents the main trends in community feedback reported by agencies responding to COVID-19 in West and Central Africa. It was prepared by the Community Feedback Sub-Working Group, which is part of COVID-19's Interagency Working Group on Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE).

Five partners shared their priorities (IFRC, Internews, Oxfam, Novetta/Africa CDC, UNICEF)

Feedback was received from **9 countries** in the Central West Africa region (DRC, Cameroon, CAR, Ghana, Nigeria, Gabon, Sierra Leone, Chad, Ivory Coast).

Feedback channels used by the different partners**1.1 Mistrust in the response***(documented in 4 countries by 3 partners)*

Recommendations to address this on the **national level – RCCE actions:**

1. Discuss this recurring issue in coordination meetings at the national level and develop a plan to address the topic across the different pillars. The resources provided [here](#) can serve as a guide.
2. Communicate clear, digestible, evidence-based facts about the purpose of a COVID-19 vaccine.
3. Conduct discussion/working sessions between the government and influencers to decide on specific activities to strengthen people's confidence in public authorities.
4. Chad: Clarify that COVID-19 and the clinical trials are not transmitted through food and is not a foodborne disease.
5. Nigeria: Elucidate the actions undertaken by CDC in Nigeria to help citizens.

Recommendations to address this on the **regional level – RCCE actions:**

1. Translate the [new inter-institutional fact sheet on mistrust and denial](#) and adapt it for West and Central Africa.
2. Compile key messages on the theme of vaccines and enable stakeholders with regional impact to promote messages aimed at increasing confidence in vaccines.

1.2 Challenges in complying with Covid-19 prevention measures *((documented in 3 countries by 3 partners))*

Recommendations to address this on the **national level** – RCCE actions:

1. Strengthen the capacity of community members including churches and political parties on prevention measures and their role as role models in adopting the promoted behaviors.
2. Provide practical guidance on how to address challenges in adopting protective behaviors, such as how to use limited amounts of water when washing your hands or how to make your own mask and use it safely. You can access useful resources [here](#).
3. Use positive examples from Sahelian countries (turban/scarf vs. mask) to demystify the use of the mask by turning it into a cultural object.
4. Organize discussions with local media, influential groups such as churches and mosques, and political parties to share community concerns and discuss how best to cover issues related to prevention measures to provide information on how to monitor the measures in daily life, how to use masks safely, and how to address the stigmatization of people wearing masks and the belief that prevention measures do not work.
5. Share epidemiological data from the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 in the media, and in churches and mosques 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.
6. Conduct studies to better understand the reasons for not using masks and other protective gestures.

Recommendations to address this on the **regional level** – RCCE actions:

1. Organize a media dialogue on the subject and specifically address the issue of wearing masks.
2. Create a list of tips and practical solutions that can be shared by community mobilizers on how to arrange space to allow for self-isolation and physical distance (and why it is important).

1.3 Doubts and denial of the existence of COVID-19

(documented in 3 countries by 3 partners)

Recommendations to address this on the **national level** – RCCE actions:

1. Actively address the perception of people who think that the danger of being contaminated by COVID-19 does not exist. [These documents](#) can help you to do so. Possible solutions include mobilizing and engaging youth groups to stop the spread of misinformation, engaging reliable community leaders and the most influential personalities, explaining more clearly the proportion of cases in your country and what to expect in the future, and developing radio or television programs about COVID-19.
2. Find ways to share the stories of people who have recovered from COVID-19 or have tested negative, including famous and influential people, through the media or at the community level, to show that the disease is real and that everyone can be affected. Be sure to assess the risks in advance to avoid endangering people who have recovered because of stigma and it is important that they are portrayed positively. It is important that this is adapted in each intervention zone (e.g., do not project spots with the Bangui experiences in rural areas). Examples can be found [here](#).

Recommendations to address this on the **regional level – RCCE actions:**

1. Translate the [new inter-institutional fact sheet on mistrust and denial](#) and adapt it for West and Central Africa.
2. Collect testimonials of people recovered from COVID-19 that have already been produced by different partners and make them available to all.
3. Develop a short guide providing tips and considerations when producing testimonies of people recovered from COVID-19.

2.1 Questions and rumours about treatment

(documented in 3 countries by 2 partners)

Recommendations to address this on the **national level – case management and RCCE actions:**

1. Ensure that health care staff and community mobilizers know the answers to treatment-related questions, and consider organizing a radio or television program to explain this topic more clearly.
2. Establish a national roster of health experts who are willing to speak on COVID-19 issues during RCCE activities.
3. Create materials to distinguish between the treatment that can be used for COVID-19 symptoms and the treatment of the virus itself that is not yet available. This [Ask Dr Ben factsheet](#) sheet can help to provide useful information.

Recommendations to address this on the **regional level – case management and RCCE actions:**

1. Translate the new [inter-agency fact sheet on treatment](#) and adapt it for West and Central Africa.
2. Consider the issue of treatment as a topic to be addressed in media webinars.
3. Establish a roster of health experts who are willing to speak on COVID-19 issues during RCCE activities.

For more information on the work of the RCCE Community Feedback Sub-Working Group, please contact Eva Erlach at <mailto:eva.erlach@ifrc.org>. To find out how these and previously highlighted topics are being addressed, please consult our [online tracking table](#).