

## COVID-19: Community feedback: Priorities and Recommendations

9 June – 23 June 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). This report is produced biweekly

### 1) Rumours and misinformation about the prevention, treatment, characteristics and origin of the disease

*"You don't breathe well with a mask." FICR-Sierra Leone*

*"The masks come from China, already infected with coronavirus." INTERNEWS DRC*

### Recommendations to address this feedback:

#### ALL AREAS OF THE RESPONSE

- ☐ Make sure staff and volunteers who interact with community members have the correct information and can answer questions
- ☐ Provide simple tools to help people verify for themselves the information and fake news received

#### PARTNERS WORKING ON TREATMENT AND CASE MANAGEMENT

- ☐ Training of health and social services professionals to support families by recalling the risks of contamination.

<https://www.communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/04/IFRC-Ask-Dr.-Ben-15-April-20201.pdf>

- ☐ Participate in social mobilization activities

#### PARTNERS WORKING ON EDUCATION

- ☐ Updating questions and answers concerning the return to school

<https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/06/IFRC-Ask-Dr.-Ben-29-June-2020.pdf>

- ☐ Commitment of teachers / students to be agents of change / Coordinate with all stakeholders in the response, complementary "back to school" actions

[https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/key-messages-and-actions-for-covid-19-prevention-and-control-in-schools-march-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=baf81d52\\_4](https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/key-messages-and-actions-for-covid-19-prevention-and-control-in-schools-march-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=baf81d52_4)

#### PARTNERS WORKING ON RCCE

##### Social mobilization activities

- ☐ Actively discuss prevention of COVID-19 and who can contract the virus during social mobilization activities. Explain the spread of COVID-19 so that people understand why preventive measures work. Alert people to measures that do not work.

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- ❑ Continue to explain the routes of transmission of covid19 disease, who are the most vulnerable, how to prevent it and what care if there is suspicion.

### Use of harmonized, relevant and up-to-date messages

- ❑ Develop clear but empathetic messages with clergy and Islamic leaders to alert and sensitize during preaching / sermons on the need for prudence in the management of bodies.

<https://www.socialscienceinaction.org/resources/key-considerations-dying-bereavement-mortuary-funerary-practices-context-covid-19/>

<https://www.faith4positivechange.org/guidance-documents>

- ❑ Share videos on prevention and motivate colleagues at country level to use and create multimedia content in the local language.
- ❑ Share the stories of people healed from COVID-19. Be sure to assess the risks in advance to avoid endangering those healed due to stigma.

<https://www.afro.who.int/news/social-stigma-threatens-covid-19-response-patients-heal-faster-everyones-support>

- ❑ All countries have a message sub-group and communication tools within the RCCE sub-committees to update messages

### Engage and work with specific groups and individuals

- ❑ Engage with healed patients
- ❑ Strengthen the capacities of traditional healers and religious leaders
- ❑ Work more to ensure access to information for all vulnerable groups, especially people with disabilities or disorders and consider messages in all the languages spoken

### PARTNERS WORKING ON INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL

- ❑ Provide practical guidance on how to counter the challenges of adopting protective behaviours, such as how to use a limited amount of water when washing your hands or how to make your own mask and to use it safely

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-make-cloth-face-covering.html>

## 2) Rumours about the stigmatization of infected people

*"Mixed brigade forces (UPC) arrested a merchant for stigmatizing a pharmaceutical vendor about the Covid-19." RCA, MSF*

### Recommendations to address this feedback

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### PARTNERS WORKING ON TREATMENT AND CASE MANAGEMENT

- ❑ Encourage the role of pharmacists to raise awareness and inform the population more about the dangers of self-medication.
- ❑ More engagement sessions with the association of street vendors regarding non-prescription drugs.

### PARTNERS WORKING ON RCCE

#### Social mobilization activities

- ❑ Encourage bilateral exchanges with neighbourhood delegates and other community sentries to conduct dialogue and not stigma.

### 3) Quarantine, containment, self-isolation

*"Clubs and bistros opened after they were closed because of the Coronavirus, why don't we also want to open the churches?" INTERNEWS DRC*

*"Corona deprives us of resources, we can no longer work properly" Cameroon-UNHCR*

### ALL AREAS OF THE RESPONSE

- ❑ Strengthen the communication capacities of governments by updating messages from communities, based on their fears / feedback / needs
- ❑ Strengthen awareness of compliance with the measures taken by the authorities.

<https://coronawestafrica.info/>

### PARTNERS WORKING ON EDUCATION

- ❑ Ensure compliance with health measures in schools

[https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/key-messages-and-actions-for-covid-19-prevention-and-control-in-schools-march-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=baf81d52\\_4](https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/key-messages-and-actions-for-covid-19-prevention-and-control-in-schools-march-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=baf81d52_4)

### PARTNERS WORKING ON RCCE

#### Social mobilization activities

- ❑ Mobilize communities, especially IDPs, for better participation / inclusion in economic initiatives born from covid-19 and better prevention of the epidemic.

<https://coronawestafrica.info/videos/production-of-washable-and-reusable-face-masks-to-prevent-corona-virus-in-niger/>

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance/humanitarian-operations-camps-and-other-fragile-settings>

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### 4) Treatment and case management

*"Many say that hot water, lemon juice, honey, ginger and traditional herbs are effective remedies for COVID-19." IFRC-Guinea-Conakry.*

#### PARTNERS WORKING ON RCCE

- ❑ Give the opportunity to recovered people to testify (storytelling) to challenge a larger number of people and help to resolve the ambiguities around the treatment centers

<https://en.unesco.org/youth/my-covid19-story>

#### PARTNERS WORKING ON TREATMENT AND CASE MANAGEMENT

- ❑ Provide clear information about health care services, including screening and where<sup>1</sup> patients are treated. Clarify that procedures are in place to protect people from contagion in hospitals.
- ❑ Explore the possibilities of organizing visits to treatment centers or of producing videos on this subject.

### 5) Test, surveillance and surveillance at entry points

*"In Cameroon they use the TDR test which determines the serology, while in the Central African Republic it is the PCR which determines the virology" UNICEF RCA, CAMEROON*

#### PARTNERS WORKING ON CASE MANAGEMENT AND PEC MEASURES

- ❑ Develop Q&A on testing procedures (type of test, duration, reliability, etc.)
- ❑ Disseminate testimonials from test takers and doctors to strengthen the credibility / importance of taking tests

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/testing.html>

<https://www.who.int/about/communications/understandable/story-telling>

- ❑ Sensitize health personnel to respect the withdrawal period for covid-19 tests

*For additional information on any products from Sub-working group community feedback, please contact Thiaba Fame ([ThiabaAnais.Fame@barcelona.msf.org](mailto:ThiabaAnais.Fame@barcelona.msf.org)) or Eva Erlach ([eva.erlach@ifrc.org](mailto:eva.erlach@ifrc.org))*