



# ESAR Collective Service GOARN Weekly Operations Call September 12, 2024

# Rapid qualitative assessment on Mpox in Bujumbura Hotspots Kamenge and Kanyosha 6-12 Sept 2024

## Methodology

- Observations in hotspots, indepth interviews with survivor families and sex workers
- Focus group discussions organized by Burundi Red Cross and the COUSP (MOH-PHEOC) in Kamenge (Bujumbura North, highest case load) and Kanyosha (Bujumbura South).
- Participants include: Red Cross Volunteers, Community Health Workers (ACS), community and religious leaders, Adolescents/Youth, taxi drivers, sex workers, vendors
- Semi-structured questionnaire on mpox symptoms, transmission, prevention, health seeking, vaccine willingness, stigma, trust. Data collection tools available [here](#), developed using [Mpox Questions Bank](#)
- Interim findings shared with Burundi WHO Partners Group (data collection ongoing), updated during ongoing data collection.



# Rapid qualitative assessment on Mpox in Bujumbura Hotspots

## Preliminary Findings (data collection ongoing)

### Knowledge

- High knowledge of symptoms (especially lesions)
- Transmission routes: mix of routes mentioned including shaking hands, touching surfaces, droplets as well as close contact, sexual transmission.
- Questions about treatment, complications, transmissibility duration

### Prevention

- **Handwashing** (soap not mentioned, unavailable/ \$\$),
- Not touching/shaking hands, PPE incl masks request
- Banning sex work, abstinence

### Risk perception

- Very high (belief mpox is very dangerous, transmissible, that anyone can get it)
- Risk groups differed by location
  - Kamenge (sex workers at high risk, household T/M, “anyone who is having sex”)
  - Kanyosha (young people, followed by old people, children u-5, PLW, PLHIV due to low immunity)

### Continuity of services

- Concerns about children going back to school,
- Expressed need for water in schools to reduce T/M
- Household disinfection positively considered

### Health seeking

- High intentions of going to health centre if have lesions, concerns about potential costs
- Suspected cases observed by interviewer amongst unsupervised children under-5 in the community  
Lack of food for parents and accompanying children

### Vaccines

- Overwhelming willingness to take vaccines-recs to prioritise vulnerable groups (child, elderly, PLHIV)

### Trust

- Administration most trusted (President/Prime Minister, church announcements, local authorities),
- Red Cross Volunteers/CHVs
- Radio, megaphone., social media

# Rapid qualitative assessment on Mpox in Bujumbura Hotspots

## Key Concerns for Implementation

- *Too many transmission/prevention messages, not prioritized from most to least likely/most relevant at this point in the outbreak: respiratory, animals, surfaces*
- *Focus on handwashing in areas with poor water access*
- *Extremely difficult to reduce close contact amongst children, esp in high density settings*

## Preliminary Recommendations: RCCE

- Significant investment in RCCE **NOW** to cut transmission
- Develop a **2 pronged approach** to RCCE focusing on 1) sexual transmission amongst adolescents/ adults; 2) household transmission targeting families and children.
- Increase **awareness raising** through positive messaging to reduce fear & stigma
  - Door to door, through official messages (President, churches, local authorities)
  - Develop engaging social media content (WhatsApp, Tiktok, Facebook)
  - Train teachers to ID symptoms. Develop fun child-facing RCCE (close contact)
- **Prioritise messaging:** Emphasise transmission through sex and close contact
- Engage partners working with **key populations** to understand challenges and opportunities
- Continue **collecting insights.** Package to share with response actors. Develop actions tracker for recommendations
- **Track impacts** of RCCE activities on caseloads to demonstrate effectiveness





# AIRA Social Listening September 2-9, 2024

## Key concerns

### Vaccinations (DRC, Uganda, South Africa)

- **Mistrust and frustration**, related to concerns about “Western agendas” pushing vaccines
- Belief **vaccine is a distraction** from more urgent issues like insecurity, poverty, and mismanagement of resources and **secondary to basic needs**.
- Concerns about **potential risks of vaccination on children** and need to be vigilant (UGA)
- Belief **mpox is linked to side effects from COVID-19 vaccines**, express skepticism about the unknown nature of the strain and concerns about vaccine.

### Kenya

- Speculations about **public health and social measures** (potential lockdown, school closure, social distancing, curfew, masks) have been monitored on Kenyan online posts.

## Recommendations

- Work with national and local health experts to explain why vaccines have been imported and create trust
- Couple messages on mpox and vaccines with other information that recognizes the difficult living conditions of people
- Work with schools to provide specific guidance to parents and caretakers on how to protect their children while reassuring them on the plans for school continuation.
- Prebunk/debunk harmful disinformation about vaccine side effects, or conspiracy theories about depopulation through collaboration with fact-checkers as well as trusted actors from the community.
- Using culturally appropriate health communication materials and mobile health units in local food markets can improve strengthened knowledge and awareness about the disease.

# ESAR RCCE TWG Activities: Subworking Groups

## Community Feedback and Social Science SWG

*Next meeting: Wednesday 18 September*

### Webinar series on Community Feedback:

RCCE in mpox – ENG Sept 3<sup>rd</sup>, FRE Sept 10<sup>th</sup>  
Following drop-in technical sessions.

Developing **joint regional report** on community feedback:  
requesting partners to submit date

**Harmonising data codebooks/taxonomies** among  
partners to ensure integrated data analysis (social  
listening/community feedback)

**Mpox Question Bank** currently being finalized and already  
piloting in Burundi and South Africa

Developing **actions tracker** for community feedback

Priority: Strengthening community feedback systems in  
affected countries

## RCCE Thematic Kits

- Collection and mapping of tools, guidance and RCCE materials across partners
- Active sharing of resources across countries and co-development to meet needs
- Please continue to share new tools and updates on how they are being used

## Media Taskforce

- Organizing media dialogue to update journalists on the latest concerns from community feedback and support accurate reporting