

COVID-19

ZIMBABWE FACT SHEET



ABOUT ROOTED IN TRUST

Covid-19 has created chaos and confusion around the world and put vulnerable communities in more danger. Providing accurate and relevant information about COVID-19 prevention, vaccines and new strains is imperative to protect lives of communities around the world that are already suffering from marginalisation, displacements, and insecurity. Rooted in Trust 2.0 is a global pandemic information response program countering the unprecedented scale and speed of the spread of rumours and misinformation. In Zimbabwe Rooted in Trust is working with media, health and humanitarian actors in ensuring that information disseminated is responsive to needs of communities in Southern Zimbabwe provinces of Matabeleland North, Matabeleland South, Midlands, Masvingo and Bulawayo. Focus is on marginalised communities usually excluded in mainstream media.

RUMOUR

WHAT PEOPLE SAYING ABOUT OMICRON VARIANT

“Funny how cases were stable until that omicron announcement, this whole thing is a well-coordinated scam” (Twitter, 20 December 2021)

“Others are busy making money while we are trying hard to make ends meet. The formula is simple, you create your own virus, spread it, scare people and come up with a solution. Simple Mathematics” (WhatsApp, 19 December 2021)

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT OMICRON

- **World Health Organization (WHO)** noted that the new variant was first detected in specimens collected on November 11, 2021 in Botswana and on November 14, 2021 in South Africa.
- **November 26, 2021:** WHO named the B.1.1.529 Omicron and classified it as a Variant of Concern (VOC).

COMMUNITY INFORMATION NEEDS

- Communities need to know more about the Omicron variant and how vaccines can protect them.
- Media may conduct radio programs, write stories in local languages to discuss the impact of the Omicron variant, and explain the emergence and the rise in cases.
- The media may share with communities relevant Covid-19 safety measures as explained by the WHO and Ministry of Health and Child Care (MoHCC).

OMICRON EFFECTS IN ZIMBABWE

- Believed to have contributed to the highest number of infections per day recorded since pandemic onset. (6181 cases recorded on the 10th of December 2021)
 - 436 Hospital Staff members on isolation at Parirenyatwa hospital (Herald, 19.12. 2021)
 - More than 100 schools hit by new infections (Chronicle, 20.12.2021)
 - School children who tested positive still at school in isolation (Chronicle, 19.12.2021)
- NB: WHO has warned that the omicron variant should not be dismissed as having “mild effects” although early findings suggest that it might be less severe. (WHO, 2021)**