



Internews

The *Rooted in Trust* project aims to disrupt and mitigate the flow of misleading, inaccurate or malignant information to vulnerable populations affected by humanitarian crises during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Mali, the *Rooted In Trust* project focuses on listening to and collecting rumors about the virus and the COVID-19 response among displaced populations in the District of Bamako and the regions of Sikasso, Segou, Mopti, and Timbuktu.

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

Internet user on Twitter

"We don't believe it (a second wave of Covid-19). Without containment and without putting much rigor into barrier measures, African countries have managed to resist COVID. Soon, the end".

NO MAJOR RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED TO ITS PEOPLE, AFRICA IS RESISTANT TO COVID-19.

Many false allegations about a possible second wave of COVID-19 in Africa have recently been increasing. They are fuelled by preconceived notions about the pandemic, particularly because of the lesser spread of the virus on the continent compared to the rest of the world.

The rumor is to be taken seriously as it seems to influence people's beliefs about the disease, and could reduce the impact of Coronavirus disease prevention and control campaigns and at the same time expose communities to a potential risk of contracting the virus.

MEDIA TIPS

- **Interview an official** from Mali's Ministry of Health and Social Action to explain the health response, particularly in IDP areas, and reaffirm the importance of applying barrier measures.
- **Develop a new 15-30 minute health section** in the local language, for example, "What's new on COVID-19? ». In Bambara, "Kan Djouma de Bêyé COVID-19 Kan? ». The program will be an opportunity for the reporter/ animator to discuss the rumor with the on-set helper, resource persons (community doctor, humanitarian field worker, representative of vulnerable groups).
- **Conduct street interviews** to understand people's concerns and beliefs and bring to them, through media content, practical solutions to protect themselves on a daily basis.
- **Collect anonymous testimonials** from people who have been healed from COVID-19 and broadcast them on radio programs.
- Given that there are people who have to work in the informal economy, it is essential to **continue to call on people to strengthen hygiene measures and simple barrier gestures** accessible to the whole family to prevent the spread of the virus.

SUGGESTED CONTACTS

- **World Health Organization Office in Mali.**
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- **Mamadou B Traoré / Senior Technical Advisor at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC Mali).**
Tel: +223 76 13 42 02, Bamako-Mali
- **Prof. Akory AG Iknane / National Coordinator of COVID-19 in Mali.**
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FACTS

- In the month of October, cases of COVID-19 increased on average each week by 6% for the entire African continent and nine countries had contamination rates above 10%.
- As of November 10, 2020, Africa has recorded 1,891,583 cases of COVID-19, including 45,605 deaths and more than 1,500,000 cases of recovery.
- As of November 8, 2020, Mali had 3,706 cases of COVID-19, including 576 in Timbuktu, 342 in the Kayes region, 331 cases in Koulikoro, 256 in the Mopti region, 123 in the Sikasso region, 57 cases in the Gao region, 48 cases in Kidal, and 2 cases in the Segou region. The capital Bamako recorded 1948 cases of contamination.
- Containment seems to be more difficult to implement in Africa. Indeed, many people who live in the informal economy must continue their activities to meet their daily needs. They expose themselves to the risks of contamination.
- To date, no vaccine against COVID-19 has yet been fully validated by all health authorities and WHO.

Sources :

- WHO Regional Office for Africa - AFRO.
Facebook page, 10 Nov 2020
- Ministry of Health and Social Action of Mali.
Weekly COVID-19 Situation Report, Issue 127, Nov 8, 2020

PRINCIPLES OF JOURNALISM

The journalist "must respect his/her audience, the people (s)he addresses and, of course, work in search of accuracy, truthfulness and in the public interest...", (*Pierre Ganz, Vice-President of the Observatoire de la Déontologie de l'Information- France*).

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

Résidente de Keniéba
(Région de Kayes)

"Vaccination programs are initiated to administer the COVID-19 virus to our children in Mali".

DOUBTS ABOUT ROUTINE VACCINATION CHILDREN IN MALI DURING THE COVID-19 PERIOD.

For the past few months, audio recordings have been circulating on social networks in Mali stating that no African should agree to have their children vaccinated against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, influenza, or measles because these vaccines would contain the COVID-19 virus.

Although these messages are disappearing, entire families are still refusing to vaccinate their children, with the risk of an increase in vaccine-preventable childhood diseases.

MEDIA TIPS

- **Contact** the Mali Vaccine Development Center office to find out if the country has or should conduct vaccination campaigns against VIDC-19.
- **Interview** a public health official (if possible, among vulnerable groups identified at IDP sites) to remind them of the importance of routine immunization and that rumors are unfounded.
- **Host radio programs**, for example, by inviting a health officer for immunization programs who will explain immunization and its benefits in plain language.

SUGGESTED CONTACTS

- **Center for Vaccine Development in Mali**
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We welcome your comments and suggestions to help local media produce reliable information and reporting on COVID-19. Please contact **Maimouna Sidibe**, Media Liaison Officer, Rooted In Trust, Mali at msidibe@internews.org.

HOW WE DO IT?

Feedback collection is done in the field with AMSODE field workers and volunteers, through community radio stations and by monitoring various information platforms and sites (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, publications, commentaries, stories, etc.).

During the period from October 28 to November 10, 2020, we collected 63 rumors of which **16 were tagged as high risk, 30 as medium risk and 17 as low risk.**

In addition, **39 of these rumours came from Facebook, 16 from Twitter, 4 from websites, 1 from WhatsApp, 1 from YouTube, 1 from a telephone interview and 1 from face-to-face discussions.**

The two rumours selected for this newsletter have a fairly high risk potential for the populations; this newsletter proposes possible solutions to the media to address them in their programming and prepare an adequate and useful informative response to the communities.

FACTS

- According to the WHO, vaccination prevents 2 to 3 million deaths from childhood diseases each year.
- More than 169 candidate vaccines against COVID-19 are currently under development, 26 of which are in human trials with promising initial results but have yet to be validated.
- South Africa is the only African country conducting clinical trials with the NVX-CoV2373 coronavirus vaccine in 2,900 volunteers.
- Vaccines against COVID-19 are not yet ready. However, WHO projects that more than 2 billion doses could be distributed equitably by the end of 2021.

Sources :

- WHO. Vaccines and vaccination: What is vaccination? Nov. 3, 2020.
- WHO. COVAX: Collaborating for global and equitable access to vaccines against COVID-19. Nov. 4, 2020.
- WHO. The push for vaccines. Nov. 4, 2020.

PRINCIPLES OF JOURNALISM

The journalist, in his daily mission of research and verification of information, can deal with a rumour, current or not, if it has a harmful potential. He must try to disarm it, while responding to people's fears and concerns.



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