



Lugara Media Factsheet



South Sudan
AUGUST 2022



Rooted in Trust 2.0 Project Areas

- Central Equatoria
- Eastern Equatoria
- Jonglei State
- Unity State
- Lakes State

Greater Pibor Administrative Area

The Internews Rooted in Trust 2.0 project in South Sudan is funded by USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID-BHA). It aims to respond to rumors, misinformation, and fake news that shape negative public perceptions towards COVID-19 response in the country.

USAID-BHA Rooted in Trust 2.0 South Sudan. If you want to contribute to or provide feedback on this Lugara Media Factsheet or have information to share, please contact:

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About This Lugara Factsheet

This Media Factsheet is a periodic response to rumors and concerns about COVID-19 and provides verified information for journalists and community correspondents reporting on the pandemic. It is meant to provide information that is essential to understand the facts about the virus, vaccines and related issues, to help journalists respond to their audiences' questions, address rumors, and close the feedback loop.

A lot of information is circulating across South Sudan and beyond its borders about COVID-19, vaccinations and related issues. So, it is important to know what's true and what is not.

WHAT PEOPLE SAY?

Rumor #1

COVID-19 vaccination cards



"People claim that COVID-19 vaccination cards/certificates are issued to some people who have not been vaccinated,"



Rumor heard from Juba City, Central Equatoria State.

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"We have noted this issue for the attention of the Ministry of Health especially, the allegations on COVID-19 cards leakage. We shall follow-up and investigate," said John Rumunu, COVID-19 Incident Manager, Ministry of Health, Republic of South Sudan.

"Obtaining a vaccination card is an illegal offense that, if detected, would be a criminal act. Any information regarding such activity needs to be reported with details of the location where such an offense may have occurred. It is important to highlight that the Ministry of Health would not condone any such behavior if indeed obtaining a vaccination card without being vaccinated did take place. Rumors are rumors until there are facts to substantiate such an allegation!"

"Likewise, it merits pointing out there is strict control of the number of vaccination cards that are deployed to the vaccination teams. The quantity of cards is equal to the number of doses provided to vaccination centers and to outreach teams. Daily, vaccine accountability is reported indicating the number of doses that have been administered and how many doses remain. In related manner, there is very close tracking of the vaccination card quantities per vaccination team," explained Dr. Brendan Dineen, COVAX Coordinator, World Health Organization (WHO) in South Sudan.

Rumor #2

Monkeypox and conspiracies

WHAT PEOPLE SAY?

“

“Is monkeypox a conspiracy theory?”

”

Rumor heard from
Western Bahr el Ghazal State,
South Sudan.

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“Such a statement is based on lack of knowledge about the disease known as monkeypox, which was first discovered in 1970. Thousands of cases of monkeypox have occurred in the past three months throughout the world. Cases of this highly transmissible infectious disease have occurred in several countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, including in neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, and Sudan, amongst others. Laboratory samples of suspected monkeypox cases are being investigated presently by the South Sudan Ministry of Health with the results soon to be made available,” said Dr. Brendan Dineen.

“The monkeypox rumors circulating in the community need to be handled before they could spread. This can be debunked through robust education on what Monkeypox disease is, how it is transmitted, signs and symptoms, prevention measures etc.,” said Mary Denis Obat, the Director of Health Education and Promotion in the Ministry of Health, explaining government plans to curb monkeypox rumors circulating in the communities.

Rumor #3

COVID-19 and gender

WHAT PEOPLE SAY?

“

“Some women shy away from COVID-19 vaccination because of the male domination at the vaccination centers,”

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Rumor heard from people at Hai Referendum and Juba Town residential areas in Juba City, Central Equatoria State.

Fact File

“This is the first instance that this is being reported to my knowledge. Generally, the vaccination teams have been attentive to the organization of the vaccination centers to cater to the needs of all persons who have arrived to be vaccinated. Training of crowd control personnel from each vaccination team is provided prior to commencing activities in the field.

“This rumor is curious in its content given that more than half (52%) of the 1.53 million persons fully vaccinated are women. Thus, I have my reservations about how widespread the sentiment that is expressed in this rumor is. Nonetheless, this information will be shared with the implementing partners whose vaccination staff are diligently providing vaccinations to large numbers of women and men throughout South Sudan,” explained Dr. Brendan Dineen.



Tips for Journalists



South Sudan Journalists should note the following facts to improve on their knowledge, reporting techniques, and background checks about COVID-19 and others.

1. Local media should counter monkeypox and monkeypox-related rumors circulating in communities. The public needs to know what they can do to stay safe and reduce their risk of exposure. To sensitize communities about the risk of monkeypox disease, journalists should accurately tell stories on monkeypox global and regional data including mode of infections, signs and symptoms, transmissibility, preventive measures, vaccine, and treatment. They can do thorough Fact Checking of rumors by interviewing local health experts from the Ministry of Health, WHO among others, to ensure rumors are debunked while lifesaving information reach the public in a timely manner.
2. As part of long-term risk reduction, the South Sudan local media should also work on stories that highlight the need for investments in zoonotic disease surveillance in the country. Since some communities in the country are hunters and the fact that South Sudan shares a border with monkeypox endemic countries, the risks associated with eating bush meat and interfaces between humans and animals must be amplified to prevent chances of spillover and community spread of monkeypox.

Key links and resources

- The WHO has declared monkeypox a 'Public Health Emergency of International Concern' (PHEIC). The website found in the following link provides key information about monkeypox. https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/monkeypox?gclid=Cj0KCQjwgO2XBhCaARisANrW2X2vQHymCbo5LNfq6SXnViv0P9RfeWZ3k_buWDDMXvRqNjYI-pgzsAaApXsEALw_wcB
- One health toolkit: reporting on monkeypox: <https://healthjournalism.internews.org/resource/one-health-toolkit-reporting-on-monkeypox/>

The Rooted in Trust 2.0 project works to combat COVID-19 rumors and misinformation, responds to the information challenges faced by vulnerable groups, encourages open dialogue between citizens and stronger collaborative partnerships between information providers.

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