



Outcome Statement: Access to COVID-19 Vaccine by Vulnerable Groups Advocacy Video

Introduction

The Poverty Reduction Forum Trust collaborated with Bustop TV on the Access to COVID-19 Vaccine advocacy video skit. The advocacy video focused on the roll out plan of the vaccine and in particular paid attention to issues such as corruption, transparency, accountability and prioritization of vulnerable groups. The advocacy video was shared on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube of the Bustop TV. The video was uploaded on 11 February 2021 and received 15 000 [Facebook](#) and 22 000 [YouTube](#) views in one week.

Key Issues from Public Reactions

- There is a general public fear and scepticism around Chinese vaccines (Sinopharm and Sinovac). One comment read, '*Dont trust that vaccine arikubva ku china and Russia munofa*', translated '*Do not trust that vaccine from china and Russia, you will die*'. The negative 'warning' against the vaccines stems from the negative perception of Chinese products by some Zimbabweans. More so, the vaccine is still in its third trial, heightening the fear among the public. Another comment read, '*Haa iyo nyorana henyu imwe muite yekunwa ikasire kupera*', translated '*you can have it and if you have left overs you can drink it so that it is quickly finished*'.
- There is general belief among the public that the vaccination programme will not succeed because of corruption. The general reaction to the advocacy video suggests that a lot of people believe that the vaccine is never going to reach the majority of the population because of the well-known and rampant corruption in the country. They suggested that the vaccine was going to be used by the powerful elites and their families and some of the remaining doses were going to be sold at a high price, beyond the reach of many. These comments show the mistrust that is in the citizens over the Government. One comment noted that, '*Stopping corruption should not be an opposition thing*'. The government has the responsibility to ensure that the COVID-19 vaccination programme is devoid of corruption which usually shrouds public programmes.
- The video proved to be a voice of the voiceless, questioning corruption and transparency around the prioritization of beneficiaries. A comment read '*These tough questions need to be asked just that we are afraid that our houses will be raided because our government is ruthless*'. Citizens still trust the space for sharing their concerns on national developmental issues but fear victimization if they speak out. One comment

read, *‘Always delivering ma topics ari necessary and asking the right qxns, mari dzobirwa vanhu vabotambura vakushaya basic necessities. A whole country inonyorwa mubook’*, translated *‘Always delivering necessary topics and asking the right questions. Poor people are lacking basic necessities because their money is stolen by authorities’*. The advocacy video managed to convey messages that addressed people’s concerns on the COVID-19 vaccination roll out programme

- There were concerns over the price the public was going to pay to get vaccinated against COVID-19. The people will pay either directly or indirectly noted some of the comments. One of the comments read, *‘Kana wakambogara kumusha you have to know this language of “toda mari ye transport” yes zvinhu tikukupai mahara but parikudiwa mari yekutakurisa’*, translated *‘if you have ever stayed in the rural areas you know that there is that language which is usually used when free goods are delivered which says “we know these things are for free but we need transport money to get the goods delivered to you”*. Other subsequent reactions alluded that the COVID-19 vaccine should be free for everyone.

Recommendations

- PRFT aligns its recommendations with the WHO guidelines which suggest that health front line workers, the elders and people with underlying conditions should be prioritised in the roll out of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- The vaccine should be free, made available to the general public and distributed even to the furthest of communities. The government noted that the vaccine will be administered on voluntary basis and as such beneficiaries of the vaccine should not be determined by political affiliation, ethnicity, social status or standing etc.
- The government should ensure that information on the vaccine, including scientific explanations in simplified language should be disseminated country-wide in order for everyone to make informed decision.
- Accountability and transparency in the distribution of the vaccines (both those donated by well-wishers or purchased by government) remains very fundamental in order to dispel some of the mistrust.
- **No one is safe until everyone is safe** is what the COVID-19 has shown to us and this should be the guiding reality that should stop anyone in their tracks, who thinks they can personally benefit or deny anyone access to the vaccine.