

Citizens' views of the Ebola response

Ground Truth survey of general public: Sierra Leone

Round 15 – 21.04.2015

Data analysis for 15th citizen survey

This week we have started to focus on those regions, which are still most troubled in terms of numbers of new confirmed cases. These districts are Bombali, Kambia, Port Loko, as well as Western Area Urban and Rural. Results have shown that scores for troubled districts do not differ much from those that are less troubled. The only difference can be seen in regards to perceptions on the ability to make a living, which is due to low ratings in Freetown, where this aspect is especially challenging.

Report highlights:

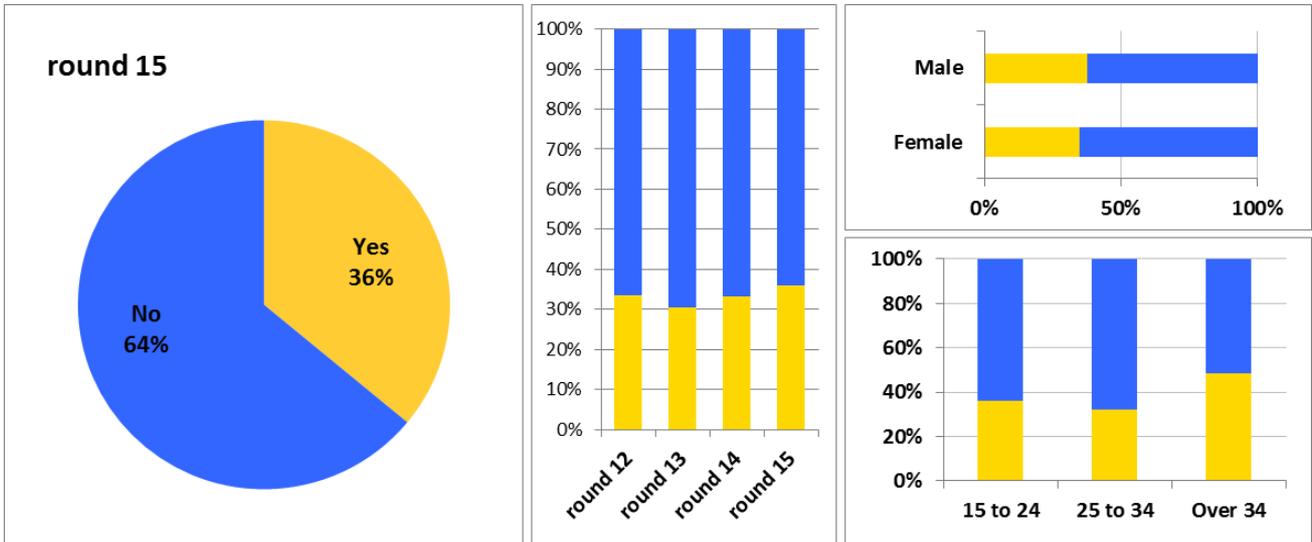
- People are still worried about sending their children back to school.
- People are still fearful of seeking medical health for non-Ebola diseases. This is confirmed by the data of our frontline worker survey.¹
- One third of respondents do not feel better prepared for a future health crisis.
- Less than one third of respondents say that families can make a living these days. It was selected as the main stress factor for people in Sierra Leone by the respondents of our frontline worker survey.

Recommendations:

- Agencies need to revisit their plans for schools opening, and ensure they are total prepared.
- Ensure separate treatment for non-Ebola diseases.
- Find out and address the main reasons for people not feeling better prepared for a future health crisis.
- Explore ways how to support families to make a living, especially those living in the capital.

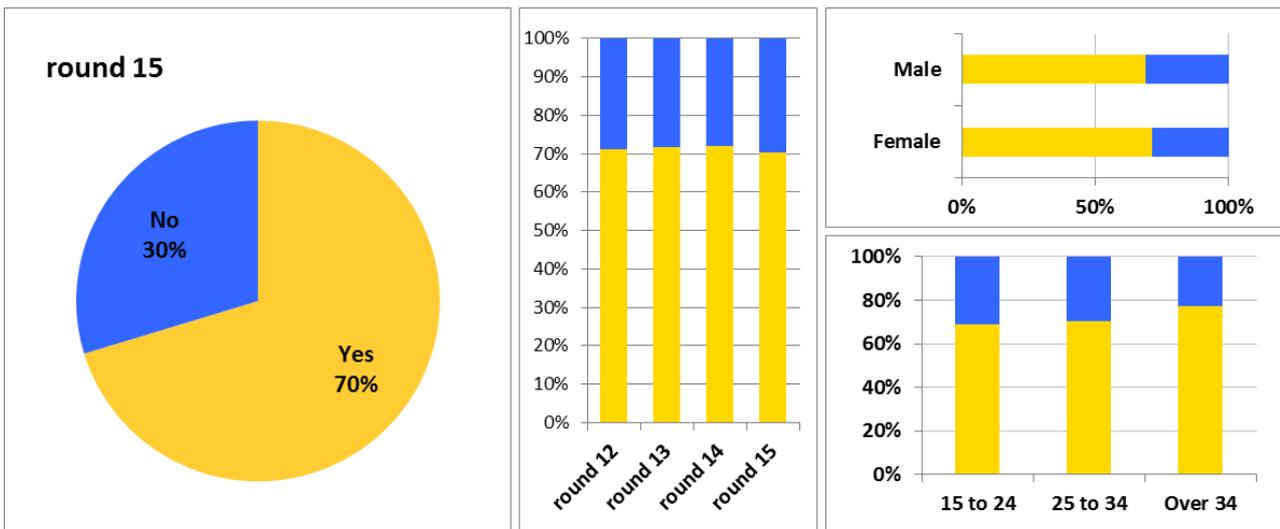
¹ Ground Truth Frontline Worker Survey Round 11.

Question 1: Will people feel safe sending their children to school when they reopen?



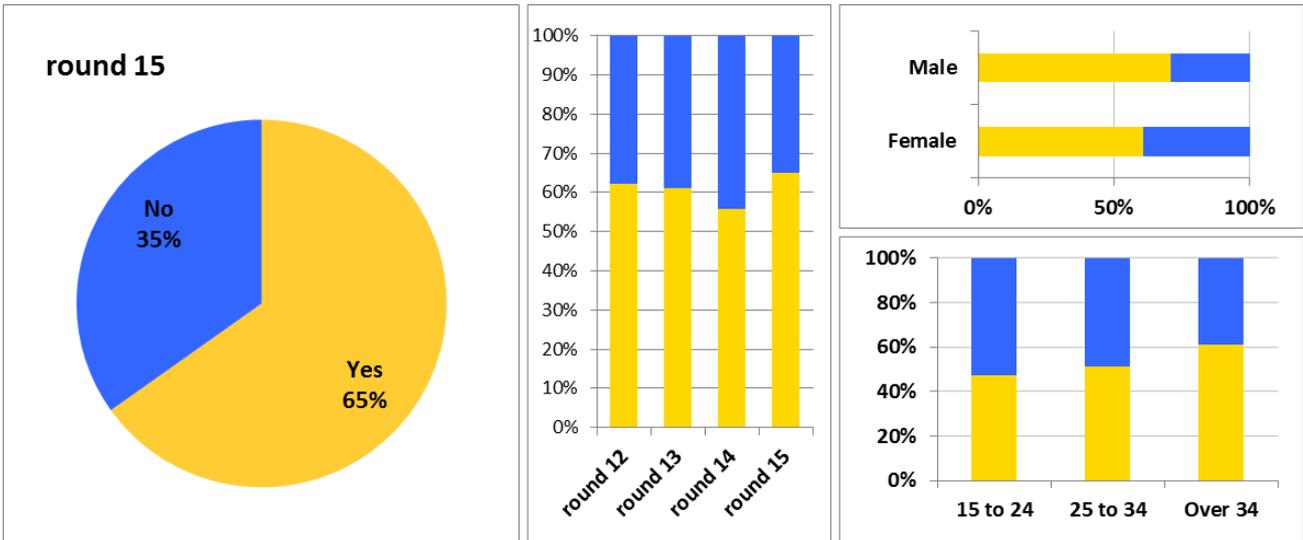
School openings: People’s fear of sending their children back to school stays at a high level. Only one third of respondents report not being concerned.

Question 2: Are people scared to visit health facilities for non-Ebola illnesses?



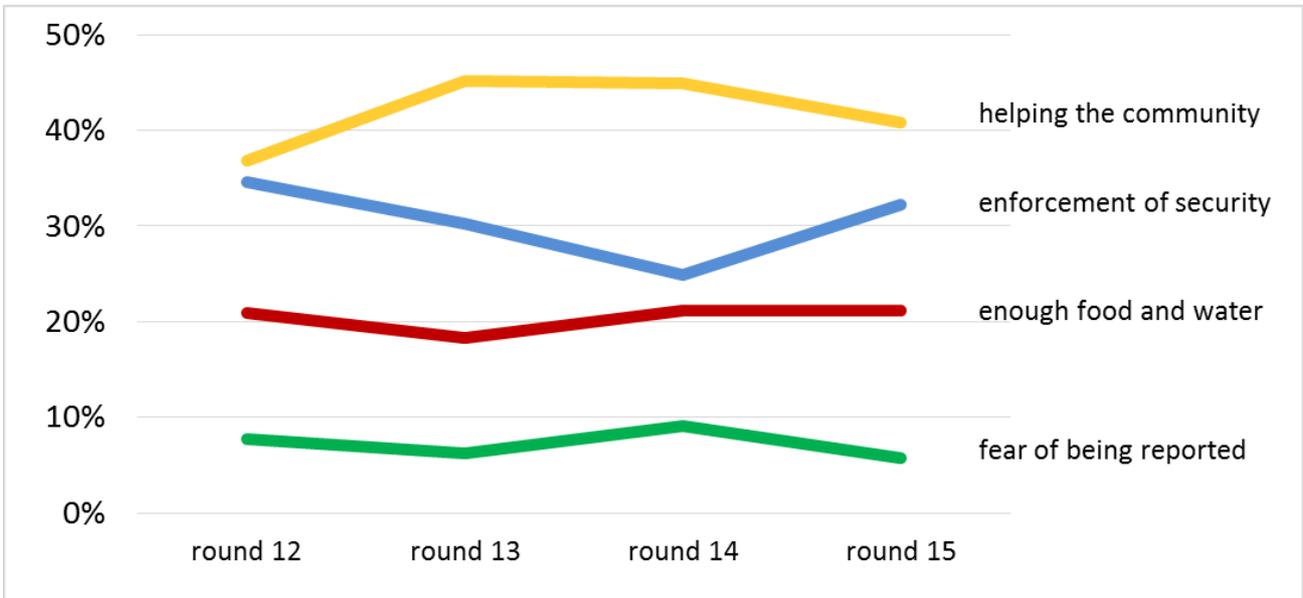
Access to health care for non-Ebola diseases: People are as concerned as in previous rounds.

Question 3: Do people feel better prepared for future health crises like Ebola?



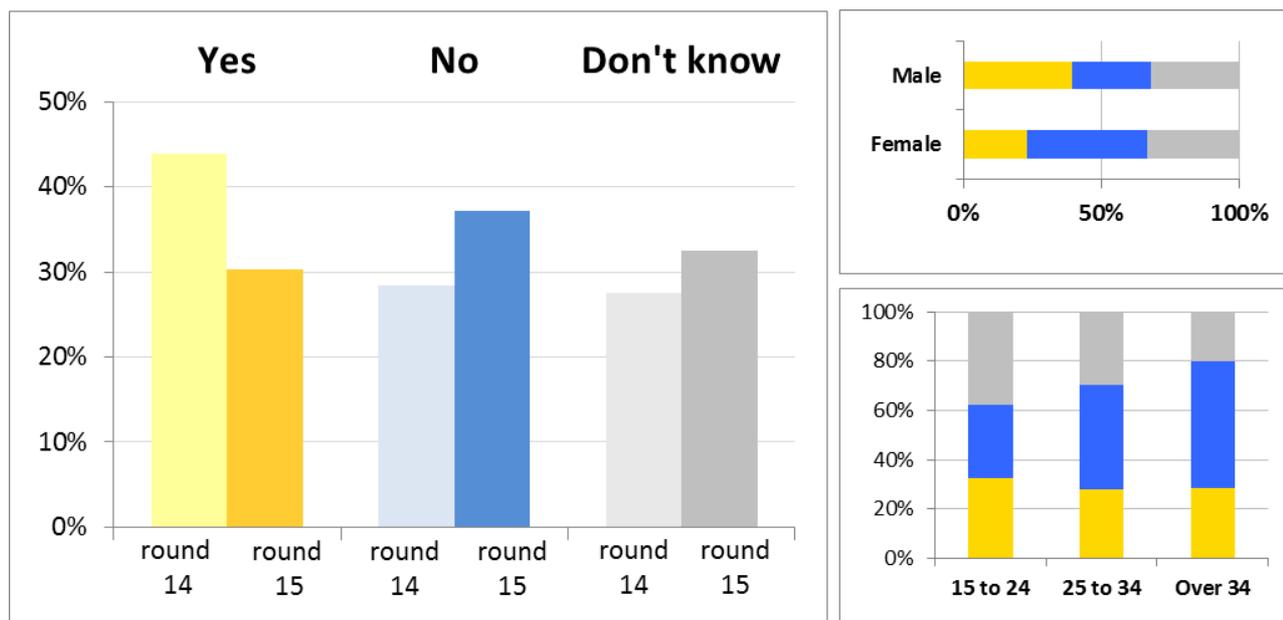
Preparedness: Respondents feel less prepared for a future health crisis. Men remain more positive than women.

Question 4: What makes people stay in quarantine?



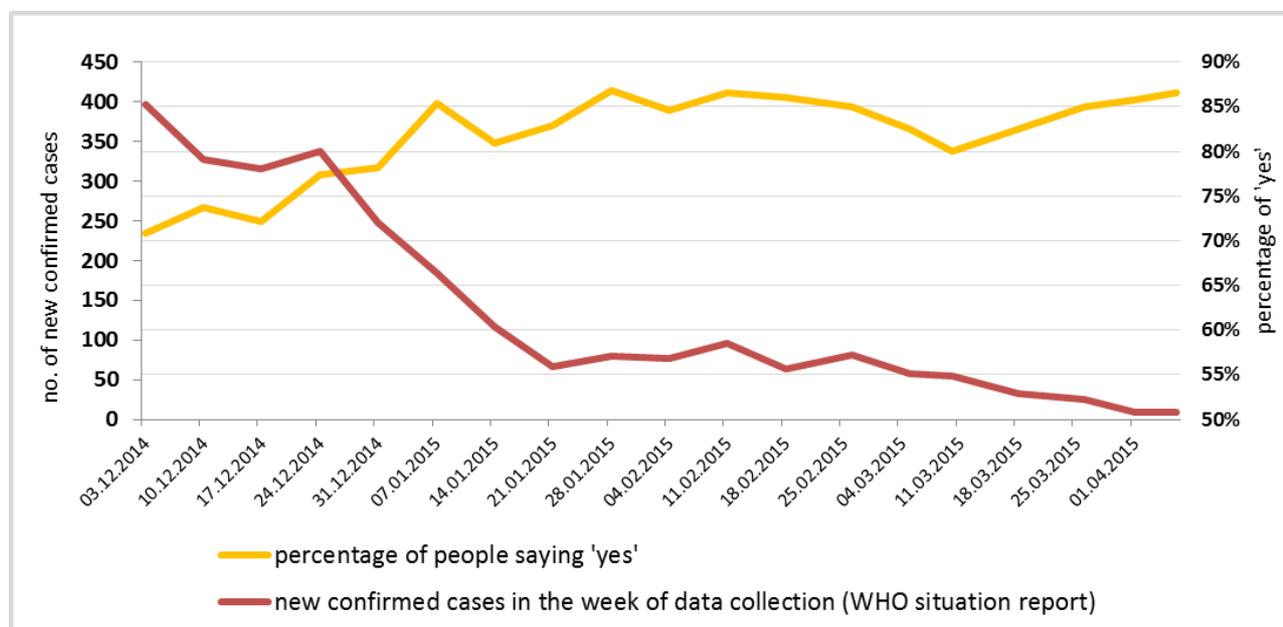
Incentives for staying in quarantine: ‘Helping the community’ is the main reason for people to respect quarantine restrictions. ‘Enforcement of security is more popular this round, while fear of being reported to the authorities was chosen less often.

Question 5: Are families able to make a living these days?



Livelihoods: In this graphs result for troubled areas in round 15 are compared to scores of non-troubled areas in round 14. It can be seen that those districts with no confirmed cases are more positive in regards to their ability to make a living than those districts with ongoing Ebola infections. People in Western Area are the most concerned in this regard, with 27% saying 'yes'.

Question 6: Overall, is the Ebola response making progress against the spread of the disease?



Progress: People’s perceptions on the progress in fighting Ebola are extremely high. This mirrors the number of new confirmed cases going down to 9 cases a week in the 2 weeks preceding the survey.²

² UNMEER: Sierra Leone: Ebola Outbreak – Cumulative cases (as of 15 April 2015)
http://nerc.sl/sites/default/files/UNMEER057_SLE_CaseData_42d21d14d7d_v62.pdf

Note on methodology

Sample: 350 people across Sierra Leone responded to the survey using an SMS survey instrument on the GeoPoll platform. Some 46% of respondents this round were female, 54% male. 48% of the respondents are aged between 15 to 24 years, 39% are between 25 and 34 years old and 12% are aged 35 and above. In this round the districts of Bombali, Kambia, Port Loko and Western Area Urban and Rural were covered. The 2 districts that make up Western Area, which includes Freetown, account for some 89% of the sample.

Respondent selection process: Respondents are selected randomly from a countrywide database and sent an opt-in message.

Margin of error and confidence interval: 5% margin of error at the 95% confidence level.

Costs and incentives for respondents: There are no costs to respondents and they receive a small airtime credit incentive.

Language of the survey: This survey is conducted in English. Although Krio is commonly spoken in Sierra Leone, few people write or read it. Best response rates in SMS surveys are achieved using English.

Background: Ground Truth's surveys in Sierra Leone, which are conducted with support from DFID, provide agencies working on the Ebola response with data on the perceptions of the general public, frontline staff and people in quarantine. The goal is to track how perceptions evolve as the programme moves forward. Ground Truth's perceptual surveys complement epidemiological data and regular programme monitoring and evaluation.

For more information about Ground Truth surveys in Sierra Leone, please contact Kai Hopkins (kai@keystoneaccountability.org) or Eva Erlach (eva@keystoneaccountability.org).