

Citizens' views of the Ebola response

Ground Truth survey of general public: Sierra Leone

Round 16 – 06.05.2015

Data analysis for 16th citizen survey

For this survey, we have enlarged our sample size in those districts with most confirmed new cases: Bombali, Kambia, Port Loko, plus Western Area Urban and Rural. The findings, however, show little difference between these areas and those with few or no new cases. The exception relates to people's perceptions of their ability to make a living, with pessimism especially high in Freetown.

Report highlights:

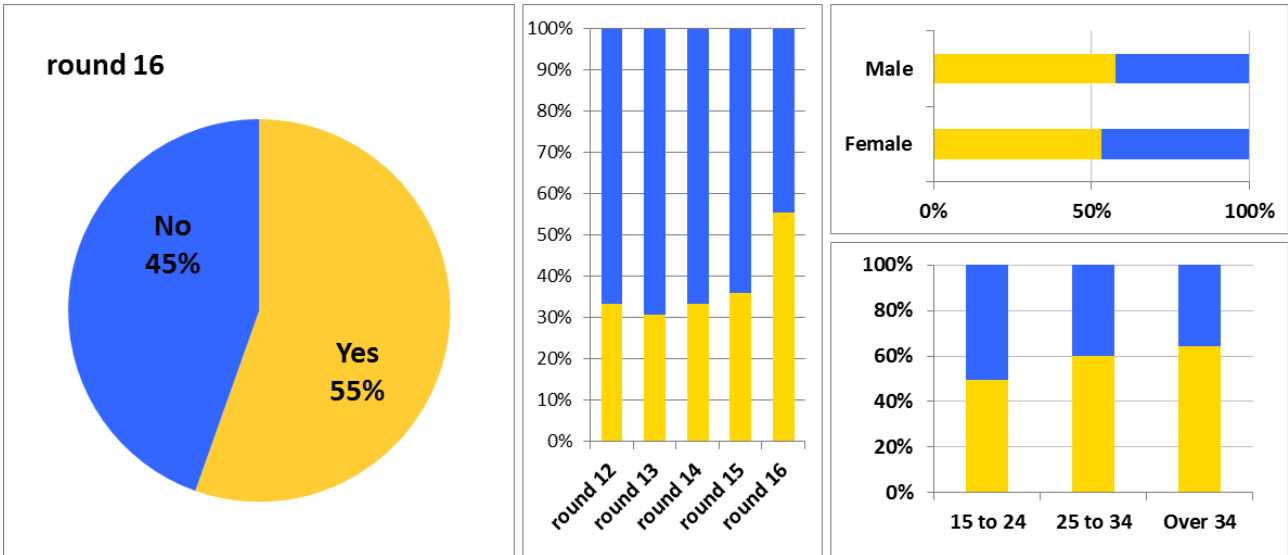
- People are significantly more confident about sending their children back to school.
- There is acute concern about seeking medical health for non-Ebola diseases remains. (This corroborates the data from the frontline worker survey.)¹
- 2/3rds of respondents feel better prepared for a future health crisis – good news...
- More than 40% of respondents say that families can't make a living these days – although the number who say they can is rising. Freetowners are notably pessimistic.
- Overall, there is growing confidence about progress in stemming the spread of the disease.

Recommendations:

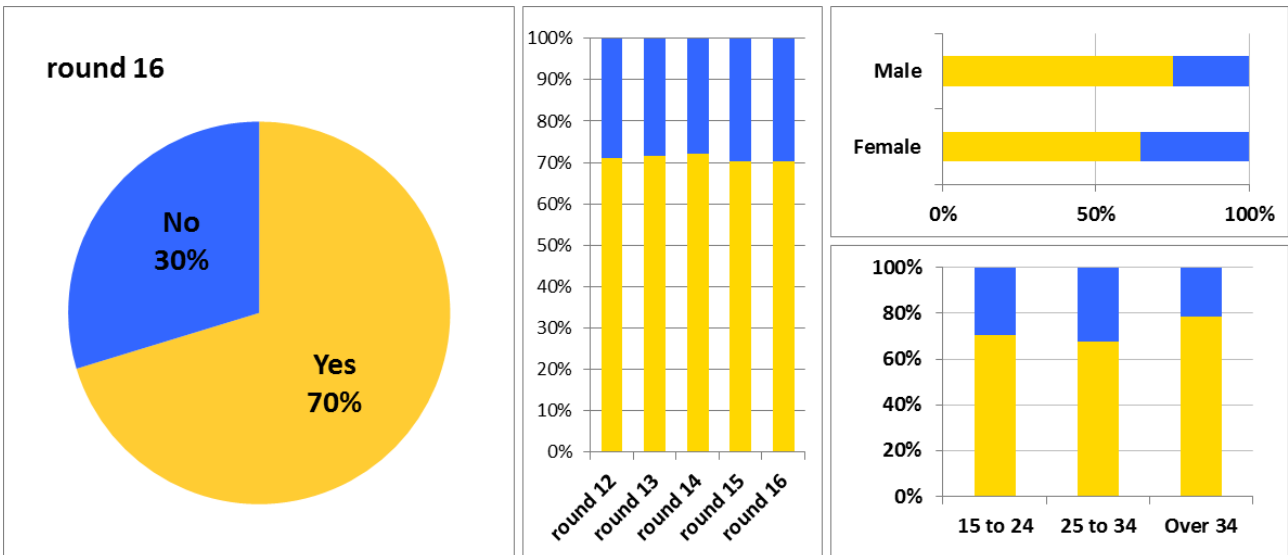
- Investigate the reasons behind more positive attitudes about returning to school - to understand whether this is a sign of complacency or justified optimism.
- It is time to act on concerns related to co-location of treatment for Ebola and non-Ebola diseases. People need reassurance that their concerns have been heard. (The choice is either to provide separate facilities or convince them that health facilities dealing with non-Ebola diseases are safe).
- It is time for the government to explain to the public plans for a post-Ebola recovery to give people some sense of what the future holds for them from an economic perspective.

¹ Ground Truth Frontline Worker Survey Round 12.

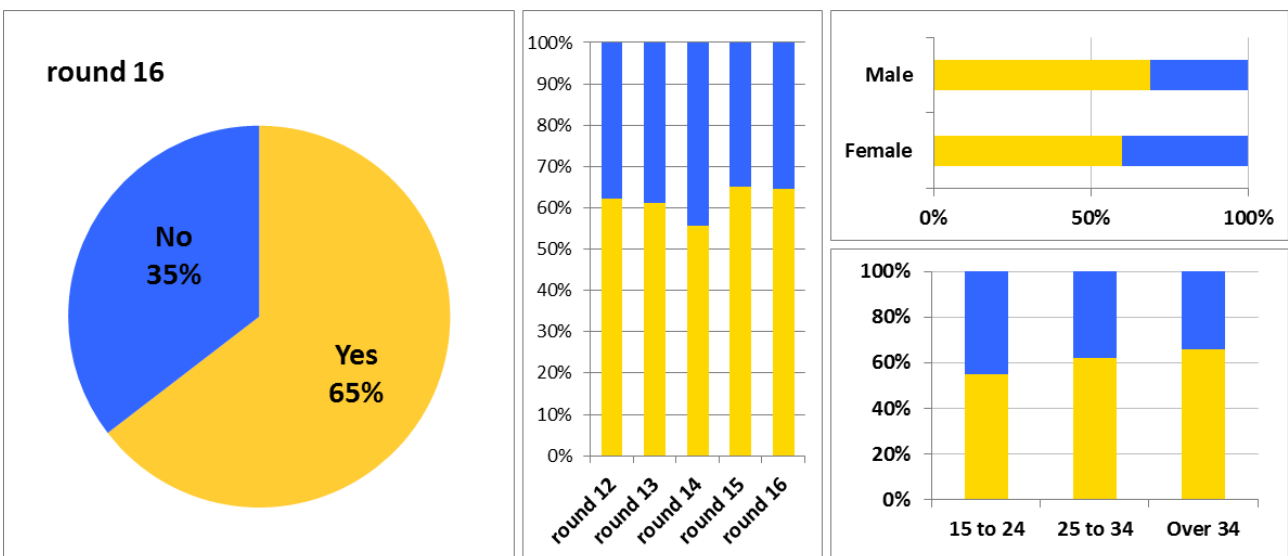
Question 1: Do people feel safe about sending their children back to school?



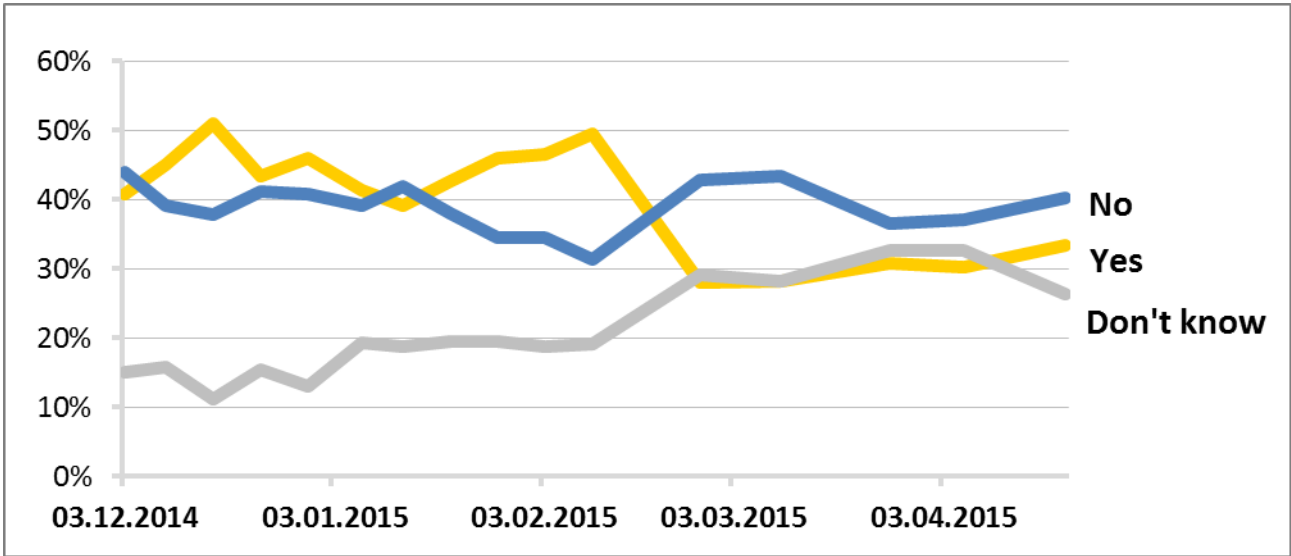
Question 2: Are people scared to visit health facilities for non-Ebola illnesses?



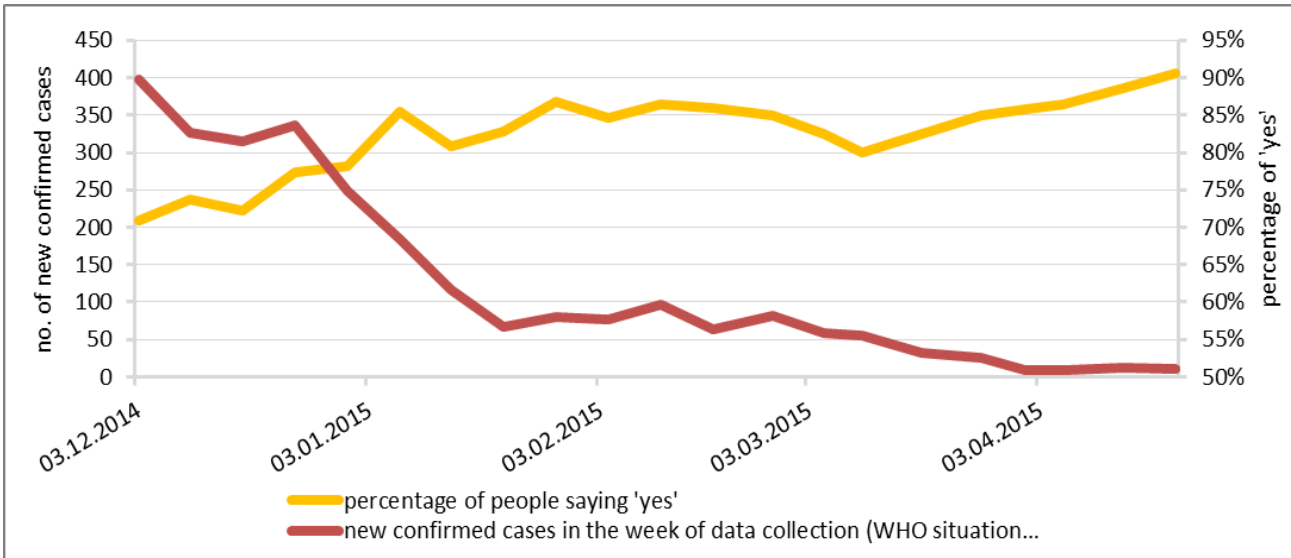
Question 3: Do people feel better prepared for future health crises like Ebola?



Question 4: Are families able to make a living these days?



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



Note on methodology

Sample: 350 people across Sierra Leone responded to the survey using an SMS survey instrument on the GeoPoll platform. Some 47% of respondents this round were female, 53% male. 47% of the respondents are aged between 15 to 24 years, 41% 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 92% 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).