

Beliefs and Behaviours towards COVID-19 in Mozambique

Project Info

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About this Project

There is considerable uncertainty around the current state and future developments of the COVID-19 crisis in Mozambique, both for health outcomes as well as economic and social outcomes. As in many Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries, measures such as imposed lockdowns are likely to be particularly challenging and even counterproductive in the face of fragile livelihoods. In these contexts, it is of utmost importance to make sure that the population correctly understands, internalizes, and adopts the best practices to prevent and limit contagion, while minimizing impacts on economic activity.

We will survey by phone, in two separate waves, two samples from previous large-scale randomized field experiments: a) household heads from 206 communities in the province of Cabo Delgado, from [Armand et al. \(2019\)](#); b) microentrepreneurs from 13 formal and informal urban markets in the greater Maputo, from [Batista et al. \(2020\)](#).

The survey will be the same for both samples and will collect information on employment and food security; general awareness and beliefs towards COVID-19; individual and collective behaviours, exposure to conflict; COVID-19 symptoms.

To mitigate the bias due to the taboo surrounding traditional beliefs, when eliciting beliefs towards COVID-19 we will include questions composing a list experiment. In the absence of an effective treatment or vaccine, a key element in the fight against COVID-19 is to ensure compliance with the recommended behaviours by public health authorities. Pre-existing beliefs and mental models are likely to influence the way individuals perceive these recommendations (Kremer et al. 2019). Traditional medicine and spiritual healing are relevant and widespread in Mozambique.

As of today, there are more than 75,000 traditional healers in Mozambique, compared with about 1,500 physicians. In this context, it is plausible that traditional beliefs might play a role in the way recommended behaviours by public health authorities spread and

are adopted. Between the two survey waves, we aim to implement a targeted information campaign to inform the respondents about the best practices to prevent and limit contagion of COVID-19.

We will evaluate the impact of the different communication approaches on key outcome measures such as awareness and beliefs towards COVID-19 and behaviours adopted. In this way, we aim to reach a better understanding of ways to consider and integrate traditional health beliefs in the policies related to the COVID-19 emergency, thus providing relevant insights to design policies with which the population is most likely to comply.

Read information about the project on the NOVAFRICA website:

<https://novafrika.org/research/beliefs-and-behaviours-towards-covid-19-in-mozambique/>