

# Voices from Congo

Report 18 – June 2019

## Peacebuilding and Reconstruction Polls

(April-May 2019 data)

Vinck P, Pham PN, Sharma M, Zibika JP

- p3. GOVERNANCE: The 2018 presidential election is largely seen as 'not credible'. Few believe authorities represent their interest, but perceptions are improving
- p9. SOCIAL COHESION: Perception of relations across groups is generally positive and communities are supportive, but few expect support beyond friends, family, and healthcare providers when sick

### EBOLA OUTBREAK AND HUMANITARIAN EFFECTIVENESS (p13.)

- p14. ASSISTANCE: Those exposed to Ebola responders are positive about the relevance and timeliness of humanitarian assistance, but the perception is poor among the general population
- p15. ENGAGEMENT: More engagement is needed to demonstrate respect toward the community, involve local authorities, and support meaningful participation and feedback
- p18. INFORMATION: Despite high awareness and exposure to information, many respondents feel insufficiently informed about Ebola
- p20. INFORMATION: Communication must address the perceived risk and lethality of Ebola, which may be driving underreporting of cases
- p21. VACCINATION: Awareness of the vaccine is high, but support for vaccination is declining
- p23. MOBILITY: The current outbreak is limited to relatively low mobility areas but is close to important travel hubs where the population should be prepared for a potential spread of the epidemic



Au service  
des peuples  
et des nations



HARVARD  
HUMANITARIAN  
INITIATIVE



BRIGHAM AND  
WOMEN'S HOSPITAL



MONUSCO

## ABOUT THE POLL

This poll is the eighteenth in a series of surveys to provide reliable data and analysis on peace, security, justice, and reconstruction in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The project is a joint initiative of the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in collaboration with MONUSCO Civil Affairs. HHI is responsible for data collection, independent data analysis, and report writing, in collaboration with the Free University of the Great Lakes Countries, Catholic University of Bukavu, and University of Bunia. HHI is responsible for the data collection, the independent data analysis, and report writing, in partnership with the Université Libre des Pays des Grands Lacs, Université Catholique de Bukavu et Université de Bunia.

Results for this poll are based on 3,017 face-to-face interviews conducted between 20<sup>th</sup> April 2019 and 10<sup>th</sup> May 2019 with randomly selected adults across urban centers in eastern DRC. For this poll, we over-sampled the neighborhood of Katwa in Butembo as it has become a hot spot for the control of the Ebola epidemic.

### North Kivu (n=1,835)

- Goma (440)
- Beni (600)
- Butembo
  - Butembo (579)
  - Katwa (216)

### South Kivu (n=601)

- Bukavu (300)
- Town of Uvira (301)

### Ituri (n=581)

- Bunia (581)

## PREVIOUS PUBLICATIONS

- Baseline, May 2014 (Data from December 2013)
- Poll Report #1, March 2015 (Data from December 2014)
- Poll Report #2, June 2015 (Data from March-May 2015)
- Poll Report #3, August 2015 (Data from June-July 2015)
- Poll Report #4, November 2015 (Data from September - October 2015)
- Poll Report #5, January 2016 (Data from December 2015)
- Poll Report #6, June 2016 (Data from March 2016)
- Poll Report # 7, August 2016 (Data from June 2016)
- Poll Report # 8, November 2016 (Data from September 2016)
- Poll Report # 9, March 2017 (Data from December 2016)
- Poll Report # 10, June 2017 (Data from March April 2017)
- Poll Report # 11 – FOCUS ON SECURITY, September 2017 (Data from July 2017)
- Poll Report # 12 – FOCUS ON GOMA, November 2017 (Data from October 2017)
- Poll Report #13, March 2018 (Data from December 2017)
- Poll Report #14, May 2018 (Data from March-April 2018)
- Poll Report #15, September 2018 (Data from July 2018)
- Ebola Rapid Survey, October 2018 (Data from September 2018)
- Poll Report #16, December 2018 (Data from September-October 2018)
- Poll Report #17, March 2019 (Data from December 2018)

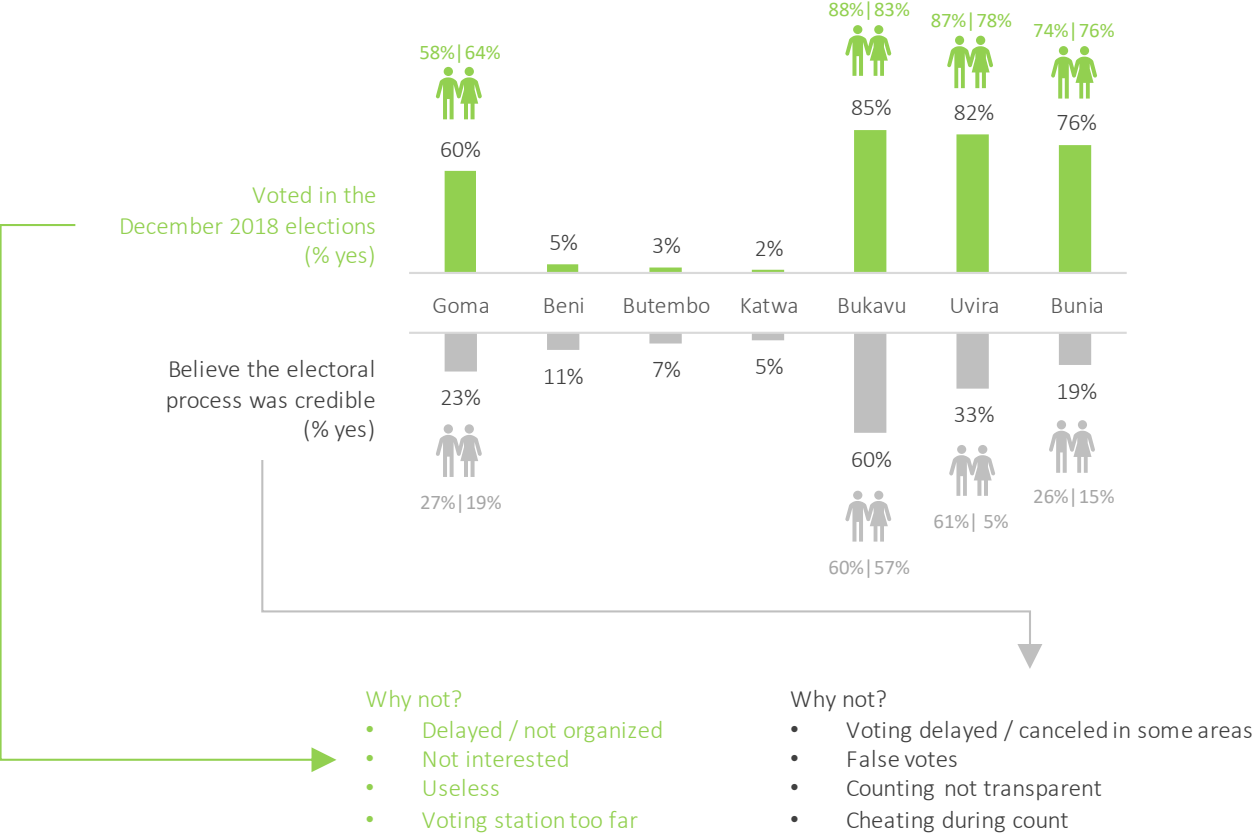
*For more information, visit [www.peacebuildingdata.org/drc](http://www.peacebuildingdata.org/drc) or contact [info@peacebuilding.org](mailto:info@peacebuilding.org)*

# GOVERNANCE: The 2018 presidential elections are largely seen as ‘not credible’. Few believe authorities represent their interests, but perceptions are improving

In December 2018, the DRC held much delayed presidential elections, resulting in the transfer of power from Joseph Kabila to Félix Tshisekedi. The electoral process, however, was marred by controversies including a delayed announcement of the result and conflicting tallies advanced by the national electoral commissions and civil society, leading to speculations that a deal had been brokered between the former and newly elected presidents. Elections were delayed to March, well after the results were announced, in Beni, Butembo, and surrounding areas. The national electoral commission argued that the movement of citizens for voting could raise the risk of spread of the Ebola outbreak and result in violence.

Data from the urban areas covered in Poll 18 suggest a large turnout ranging from 60% in Goma to 85% in Bukavu, except for Beni, Butembo, and Katwa where the elections were delayed. For the latter, small percentages of respondents reported voting, which could be because they voted elsewhere or were confused about the delayed voting process that was held in March. The main reasons for not voting were, logically, that the election was delayed / not organized, but also a lack of interest from citizens, and a general perception that the elections were useless, or due to issues of access (e.g. polling stations were too far).

Figure 1: Participation in - and perception of the December 2018 presidential elections

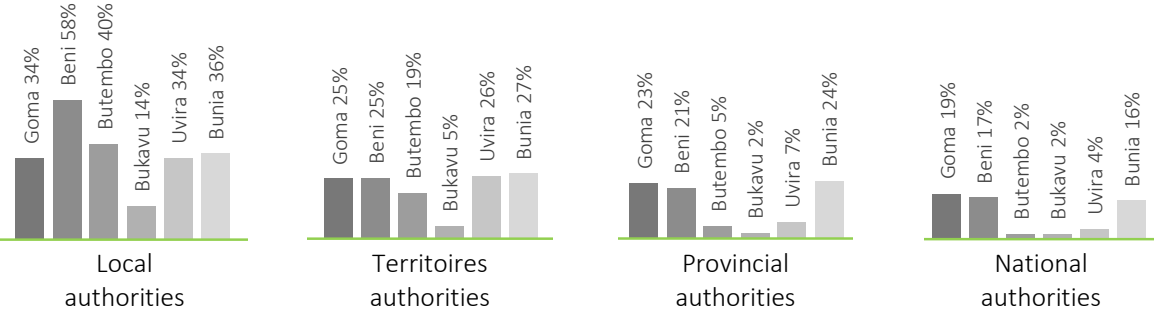


In Goma, participation in the December 2018 presidential election is well below the intention to vote as measured in July 2018, six months before the elections (60% v. 82%). In Bukavu, actual participation (84%) and intention to vote in July 2018 (85%) are similar, while in Uvira and Bunia participation is greater than intention to vote (82% v. 82%; 67% v. 76%, respectively). There are small differences between gender, with women more likely than men to have voted in Goma, and the opposite in Bukavu and Uvira.

The controversies surrounding the elections may explain why such few participants judged the electoral process as credible. As could be expected, in areas where voting was delayed, 11% or less perceived the elections as credible. One in three respondents or less judge the electoral process as credible in Uvira (33%), Goma (23%), and Bunia (19%). Only in Bukavu did over half the respondents perceive the process as credible (60%). In all cities, men perceived the electoral process as credible more frequently than women. This difference is very large in Bukavu and Uvira and should be examined further.

The perceived lack of credibility of the elections could undermine the legitimacy, and ultimately, trust in Congolese elected officials, or at the very least represent a missed opportunity to rebuild relations between the state and its citizens. Indicators assessing how well the elected officials represent the population’s interests, however, suggest a positive trend over the last quarter. Overall, the perception of authorities remains poor – in Goma, for example, 34% believe that local authorities represent their interests well, and the percentages decrease as respondents consider higher levels of authorities, including territoires / city authorities (25%), provincial authorities (23%), and national authorities (19%). Trends are similar for the other cities, with a higher percentage of respondents believing local authorities represent their interests well in Beni (58%) compared to all other cities.

Figure 2: How well do authorities represent the interests of the population (% well – very well)



Despite the relatively poor perception of how well authorities represent the interests of the population, successive poll results suggest a positive trend over time. The perception of local authorities has improved in general over the last two years, except in Bunia where it has been relatively stable and high compared to the other cities, and in Uvira where there was a slight decline between Poll 17 and Poll 18. The promising upward trend, however, is most important to note in Beni (from 10% at Poll 11 to 58% at Poll 18) and Butembo (from 11% at Poll 11 to 40% at Poll 18). In both cities, a change occurred between Poll 17 and Poll 18; it is possible that the involvement of local authorities in the Ebola outbreak response has improved how the population perceives them. Similar trends exist for perceptions of territoire, provincial, and national authorities, although these changes are not statistically significant.

Figure 3: How well do local authorities represent the interest of the population? (% well – very well, over time)



Figure 4: How well do city/territoire authorities represent the interest of the population?  
 (% well – very well, over time)

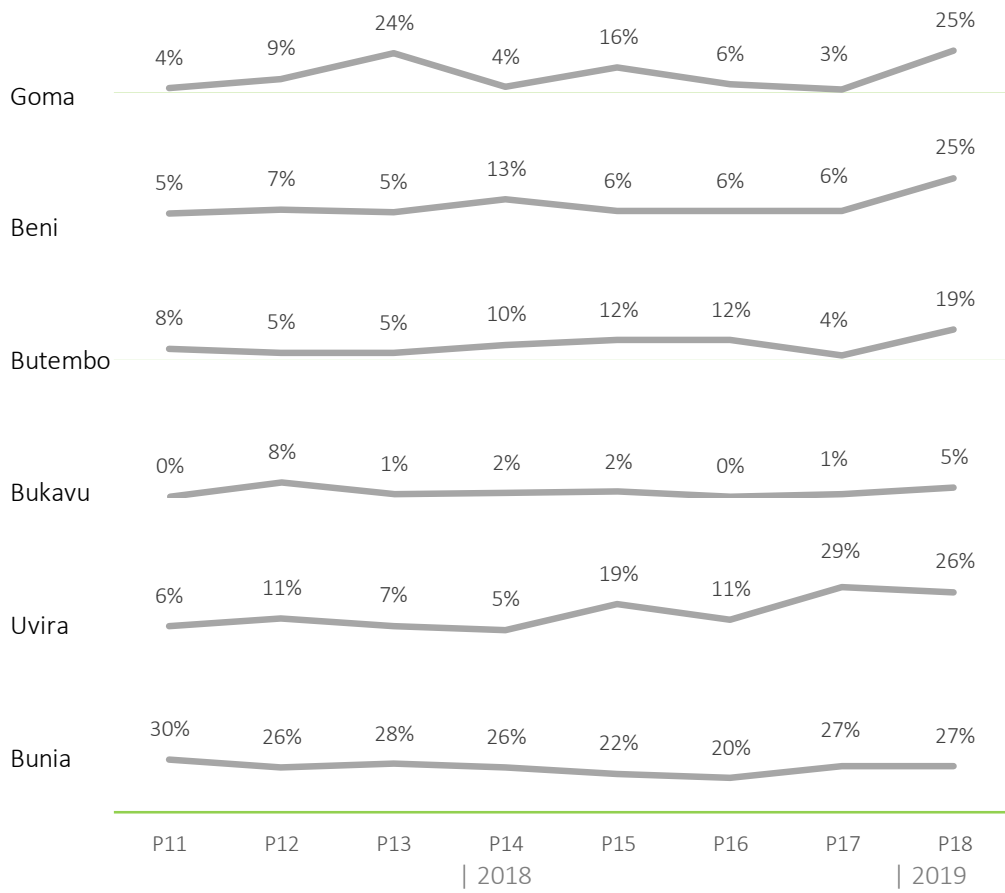


Figure 5: How well do provincial authorities represent the interest of the population?  
 (% well – very well, over time)

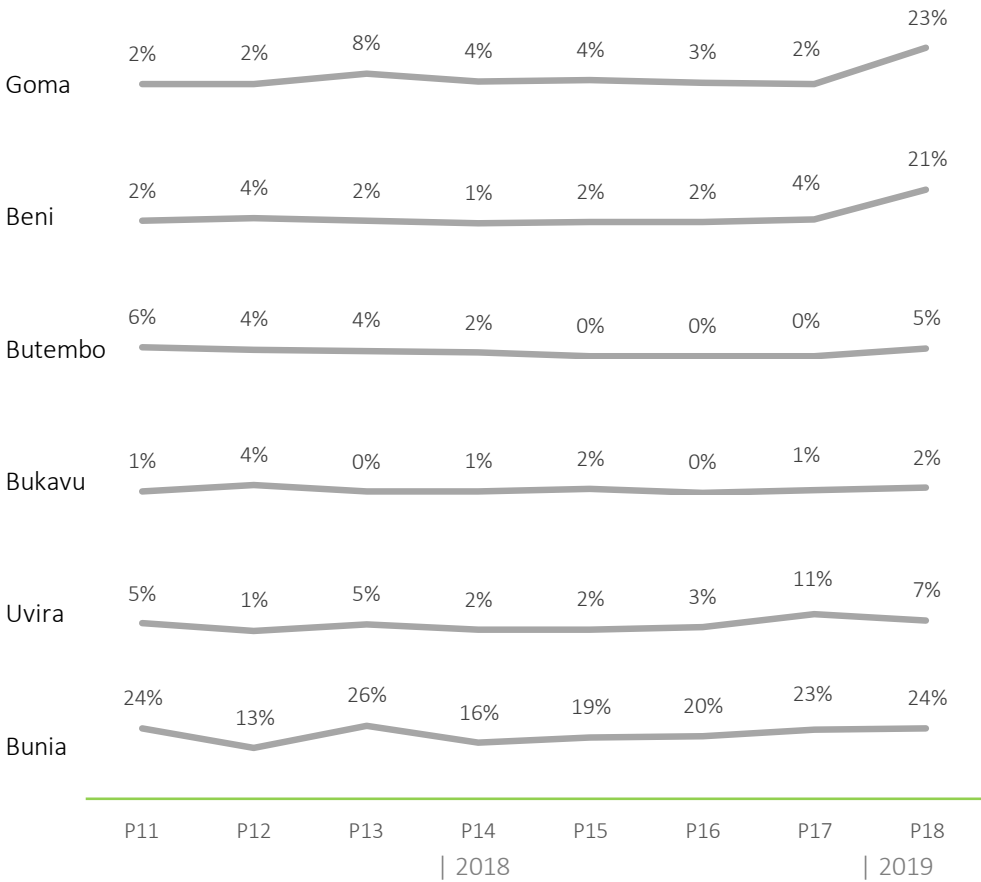
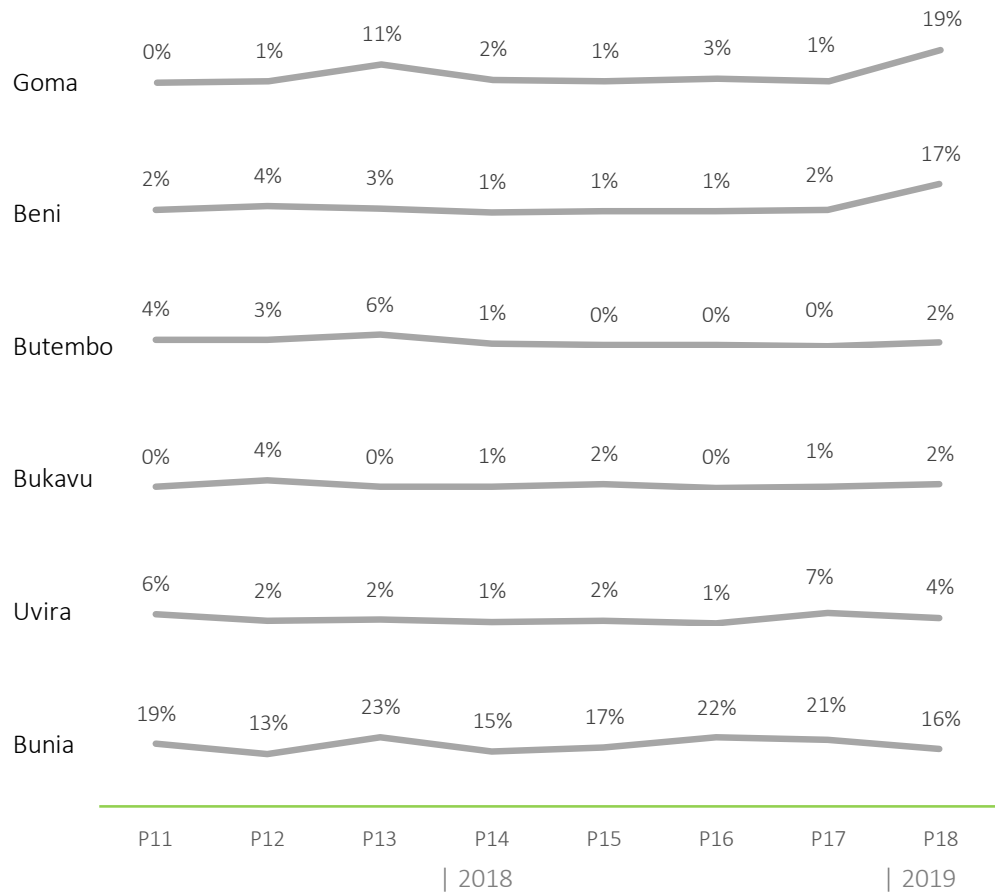


Figure 6: How well do national authorities represent the interest of the population?  
 (% well – very well, over time)

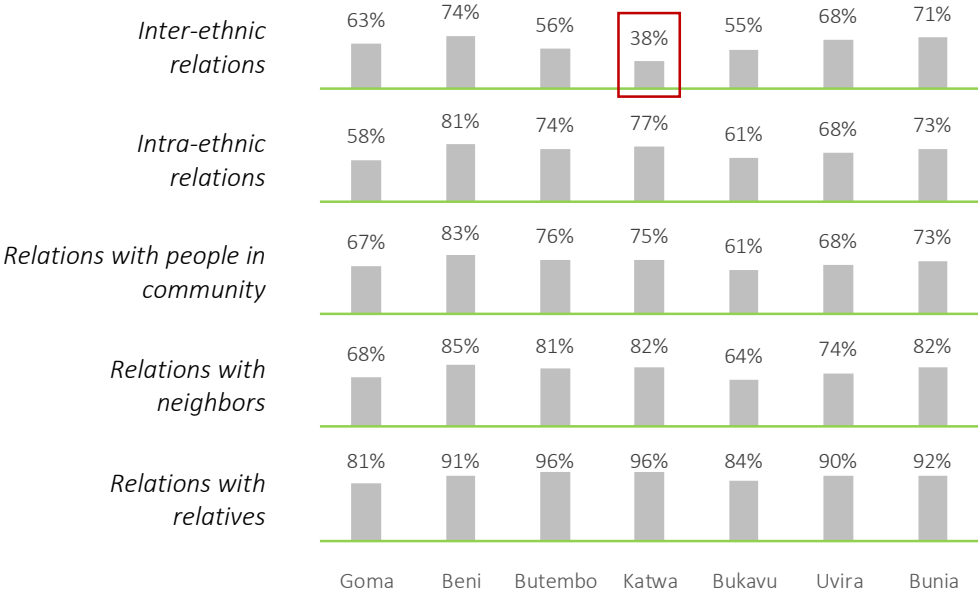




**SOCIAL COHESION:** Perception of relations across groups is generally positive and communities are supportive, but few expect support beyond friends, family, and healthcare providers when sick

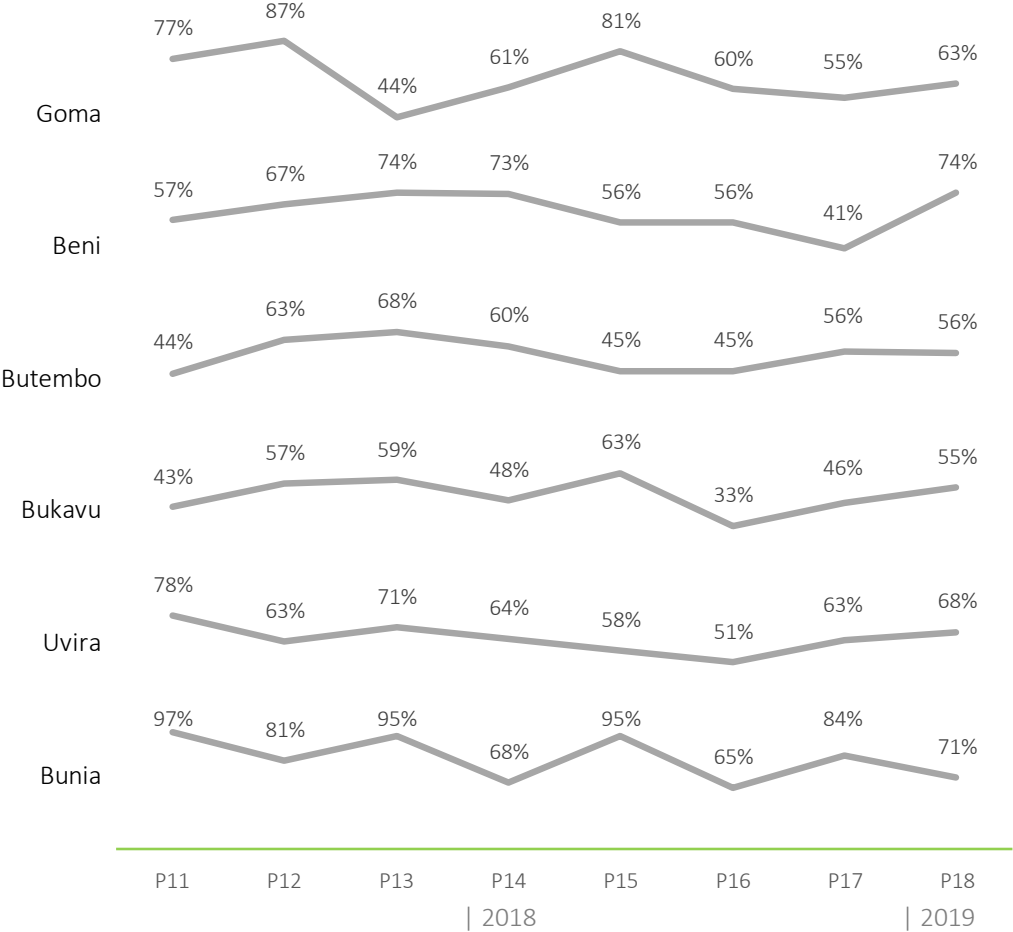
The peace and reconstruction polls include measures of respondents’ perceived quality of relations with selected groups and actors as key indicators of social cohesion. In all the cities, over half the respondents are positive about their relations with the actors considered, with one key exception: in Katwa, just one in three respondents (38%) are positive about their relations with members of other ethnic groups. The percentage is also low, but above 50% in Goma (63%), Butembo (56%), and Bukavu (55%). In Butembo and Katwa, the percentages of respondents positive about inter-ethnic relations is also much lower than the percentage of respondents who are positive about relations with all other groups or actors.

Figure 7: Perception of relations (% good – very good, P18)



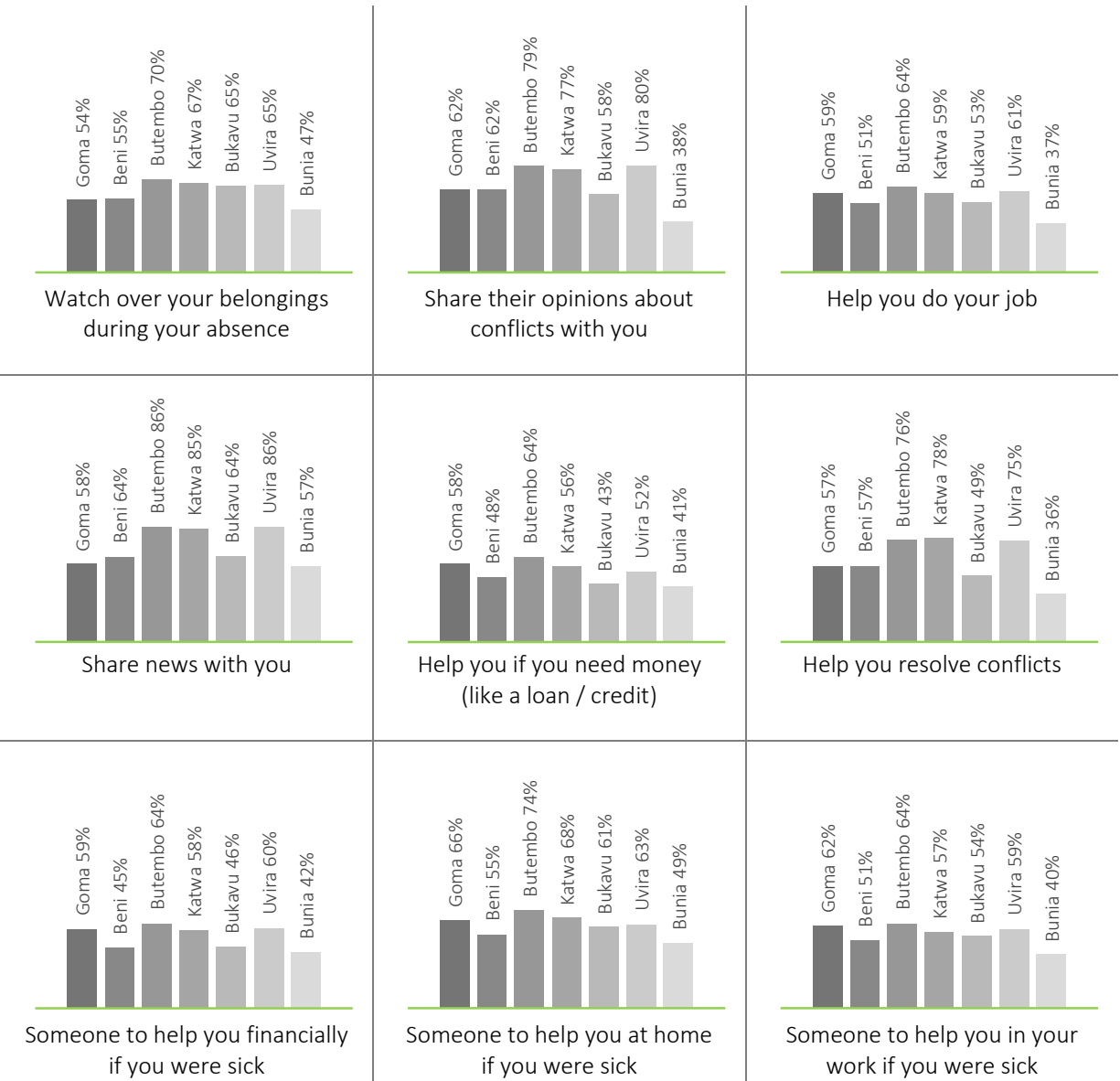
Results from polls conducted over the last two years suggest that the perception of inter-ethnic relations is volatile and differs across locations. Between Poll 11 (July 2017 data) and Poll 16 (October 2018 data), the perception of inter-ethnic relations had decreased in all cities but Beni, Butembo, and Bukavu, where it remained similar over time. Between these polls, patterns were very different across cities, with a high in Poll 15 (June-July 2018) in Goma, Bukavu, and Bunia. Since the low of Poll 16, the perception of inter-ethnic relations has improved as of Poll 18 (December 2018 data) across all cities. The largest gain in percentage of respondents who are positive about inter-ethnic relations is observed in Beni. This may be surprising given the on-going violence in the area but may reflect an increased level of solidarity across ethnic lines in the context of the Ebola outbreak. Such a change is not observed in Butembo which may reflect the difficulty to manage the outbreak, especially in Katwa.

Figure 8: Perception of inter-ethnic relations over time (% good – very good, P18)



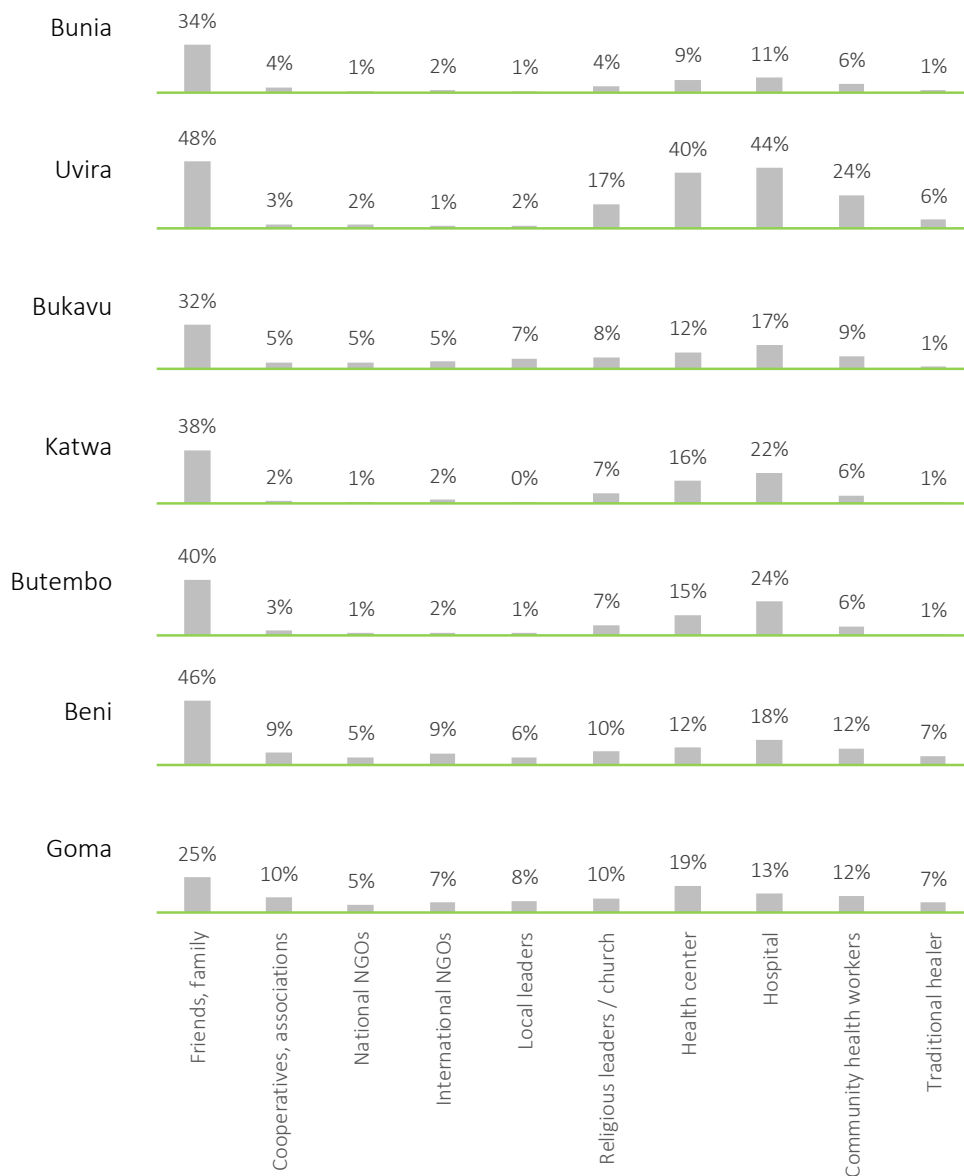
This poll also explored more concrete examples of social support that may exist among the population, specifically support from sources other than relatives. This includes a range of situations in which support may be needed, for example, help watching over the respondents' belongings when they are away, or help with their job. Overall, a relatively high percentage of respondents indicate that support would be available to them if needed. However, respondents were less positive about the availability of financial support, either in general or specifically if the respondents were to be sick. Even so, more than half the population in Goma, Butembo, Katwa and Uvira indicated they would have financial support from sources other than relatives, and fewer but more than 40% said so in Beni, Bukavu and Bunia. Across all situations, respondents in Butembo and Katwa appear to be most frequently positive about the availability of various forms of support. This suggests more highly cohesive communities in these areas, but possibly only within groups, as few respondents were positive about inter-ethnic relations. Nevertheless, it is worth exploring social support and community connectedness in Butembo and Katwa, especially while designing interventions for Ebola and conflict-related response efforts.

Figure 9: Availability of support outside of relatives in selected situations (% yes)



Participants were also asked about the specific level of support anticipated from different sources if they were sick and needed care. Across all cities, respondents are most frequently positive about receiving high levels of support from relatives and / or friends. It should be noted that while support from family and friends is anticipated higher than other selected actors; it is still less than 50% across all cities. Even fewer expected support from civil society organizations, including international NGOs. Less than one in four respondents expected high levels of support from healthcare providers, except in Uvira. Perceived levels of support from healthcare facilities was low in Beni, Butembo, and Katwa, where the Ebola outbreak is unfolding.

Figure 10: Level of support anticipated when sick from selected actors (% a lot – extreme)



## EBOLA OUTBREAK & HUMANITARIAN EFFECTIVENESS

The world's second deadliest outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) is underway in eastern Congo. As of 19 May 2019, when the present survey was completed, there were 1826 Ebola cases, including 1738 confirmed and a total of 1218 deaths (1139 deaths among confirmed cases). Since then, the number of total cases surpassed the two thousand mark to 2230 (2145 confirmed and 94 probable cases) with 1506 deaths (1412 among confirmed and 94 among probable cases). More than half of the newly identified cases found are considered "community deaths" which means that these cases are found already dead outside of the Ebola treatment centers, in the community, or at community health facilities.

Poll 18 included a section about the current epidemic. Drawing on the work of the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS), we developed a series of questions to assess the perception of respondents about the humanitarian response to Ebola in the DRC. The nine CHS commitments are that:

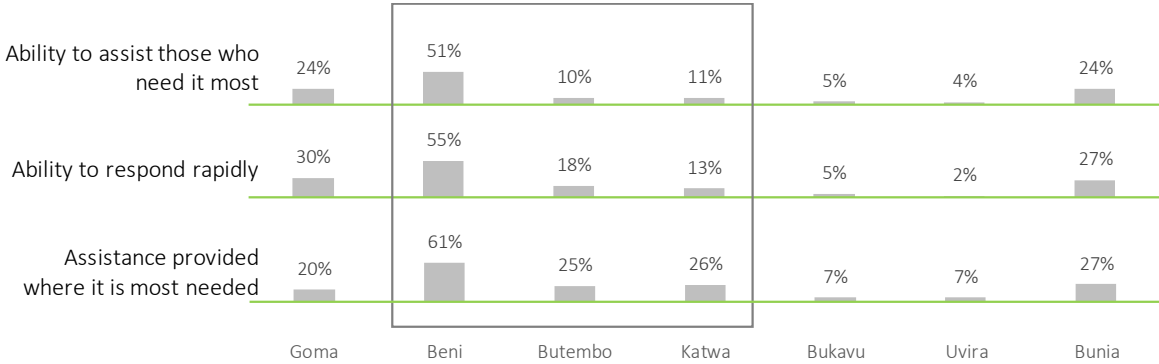
1. Communities and people affected by crisis receive assistance appropriate and relevant to their needs.
2. Communities and people affected by crisis have access to the humanitarian assistance they need at the right time.
3. Communities and people affected by crisis are not negatively affected and are more prepared, resilient, and less at-risk as a result of humanitarian action.
4. Communities and people affected by crisis know their rights and entitlements, have access to information and participate in decisions that affect them.
5. Communities and people affected by crisis have access to safe and responsive mechanisms to handle complaints.
6. Communities and people affected by crisis receive coordinated, complementary assistance.
7. Communities and people affected by crisis can expect delivery of improved assistance as organizations learn from experience and reflection.
8. Communities and people affected by crisis receive the assistance they require from competent and well-managed staff and volunteers.
9. Communities and people affected by crisis can expect that the organizations assisting them are managing resources effectively, efficiently, and ethically.

The poll results presented here reflect quality criteria accepted to assess how well organizations measure up to the 9 CHS commitments. Considering the wide range of actors, it was decided to assess the humanitarian response, rather than distinguish between actors (e.g. local humanitarians vs. international humanitarians).

*ASSISTANCE: Those exposed to Ebola responders are positive about the relevance and timeliness of humanitarian assistance, but the perception is poor among the general population*

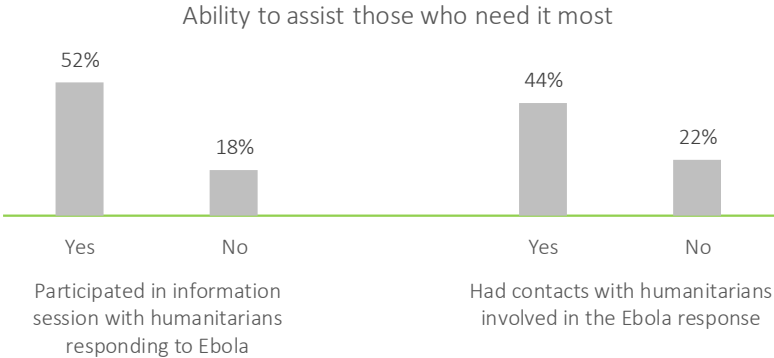
Respondents were asked to judge the ability of humanitarians involved in the Ebola response to assist those who need it most, where it is needed, and to respond rapidly. Overall, one in four respondents are positive about humanitarians’ ability to meet the needs of those who need it most and provide assistance where it is needed most, and fewer than one in three are positive about their ability to respond rapidly, except in Beni. Few respondents are positive about the relevance and timeliness of the humanitarian response in Butembo and Katwa, which remain hotspots of the Ebola outbreak. While the results are not encouraging in these locations, the situation in Beni is much more positive, and the results in Butembo and Katwa are in line with earlier surveys on humanitarian effectiveness in the region (not linked to Ebola); Poll 10 (June 2017) and Poll 15 (September 2018) found that around 15% of respondents were positive about the relevance and timeliness of humanitarian assistance in general.

*Figure 11: Perception of relevance and timeliness of humanitarian response to Ebola (% positive)*



Furthermore, the results show that participants exposed to Ebola responders, for example through in-person community meetings or general contact, are much more positive about the humanitarian response compared to those who did not have such contacts. This suggests that outreach and communication activities are likely to have a positive effect on perception of the response.

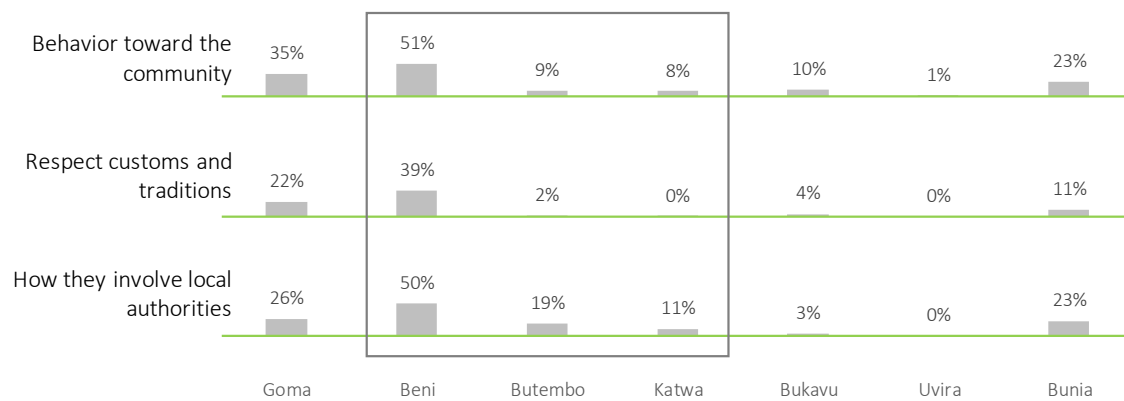
*Figure 12: Perceived relevance of humanitarian response to Ebola and contact with responders (% positive)*



*ENGAGEMENT: More engagement is needed to demonstrate respect toward the community, involve local authorities, and support meaningful participation and feedback*

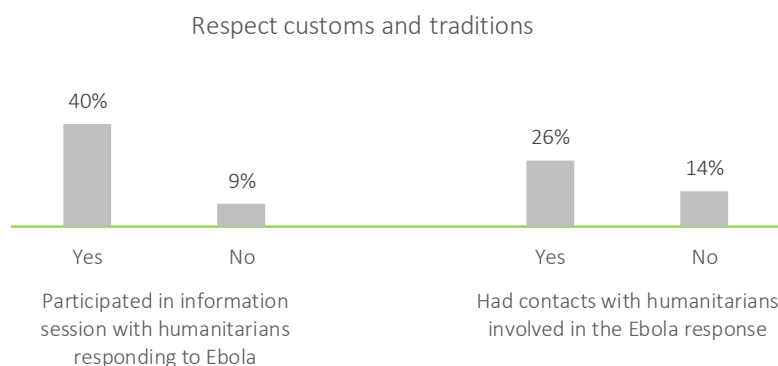
Despite significant engagement efforts, few respondents hold positive views about how well humanitarians responding to Ebola behave toward the community, respect customs and traditions, or involve local authorities, except for in Beni. While perception of the humanitarian response to Ebola in Beni is generally more positive than all the other cities, even there, just one in three respondents are positive about how humanitarians respect customs and traditions. Again, the results are consistent with, or relatively better than earlier perceptions of humanitarian actors – in June 2017, just 4% of all respondents were positive about humanitarians’ respect for customs and traditions. The June 2017 survey found that in Beni, 7% of respondents were positive about respect for customs and traditions, compared to 39% in this poll, which suggests important gains in cultural acceptability over time. In Butembo, the percentage was 2%, suggesting the current level is unchanged. These low levels of perceived humanitarian respect towards the customs and traditions of communities may be important to note and improve upon in the Ebola response efforts.

*Figure 13: Humanitarian respect of communities (% positive)*



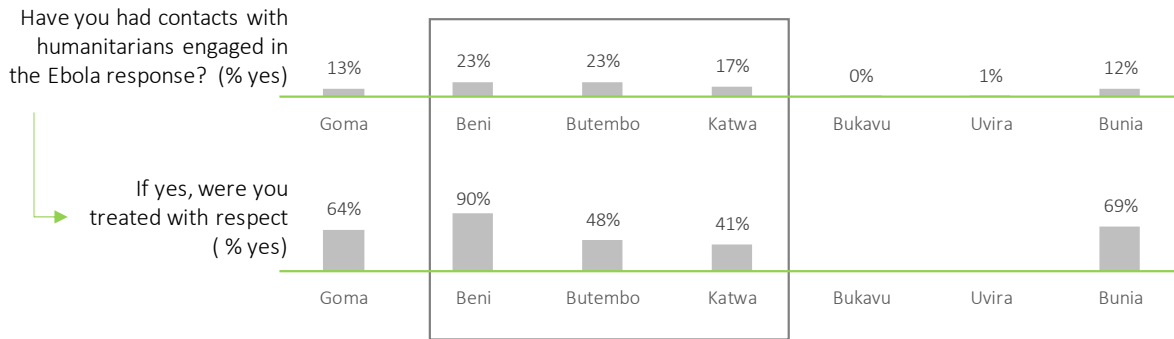
As for perception of humanitarian relevance, the poll results show that participants who are exposed to Ebola responders are relatively more positive about humanitarians’ respect for customs and traditions than those who did not have such contacts.

*Figure 14: Perceived respect for customs and traditions and contact with responders (% positive)*



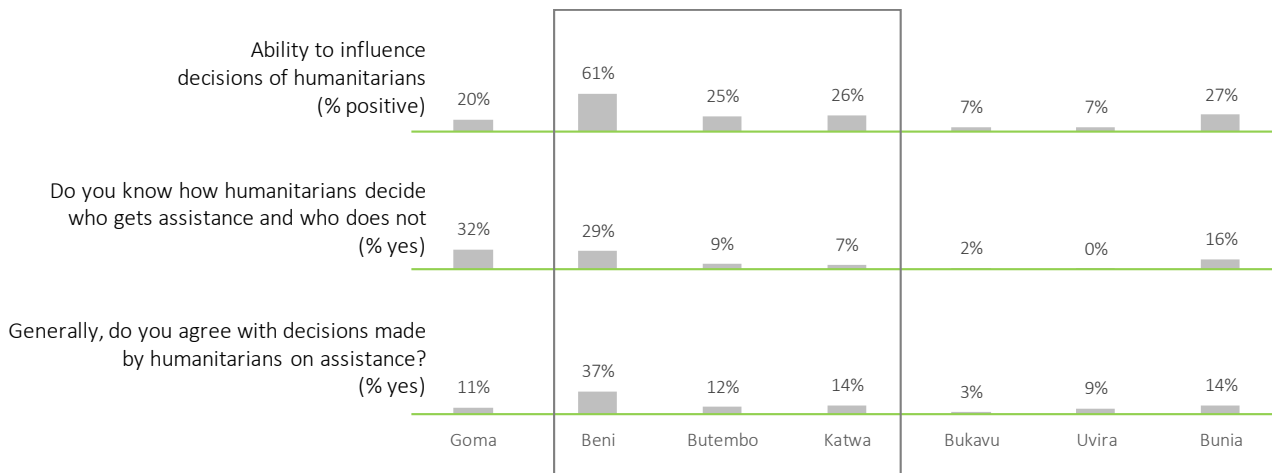
Nevertheless, one concerning finding is that ultimately relatively few respondents have had contact with Ebola responders, even in Beni, Butembo, and Katwa, at the epicenter of the outbreak, and among them, less than half feel that they had been treated with respect in Butembo and Katwa. In contrast, 90% feel they had been treated with respect in Beni.

Figure 15: Contact and respect



The perceived lack of respect among respondents may reflect a lack of understanding of and participation in decisions that affect them. Few respondents – about one in three in Beni and less than one in ten in Butembo and Katwa – stated that they knew how humanitarian decisions about who gets assistance and who does not, and few generally agreed with their decisions. While over half the respondents are positive about their ability to influence decisions of humanitarian in Beni (61%), less than half that percentage said so in Butembo (25%) and Katwa (26%).

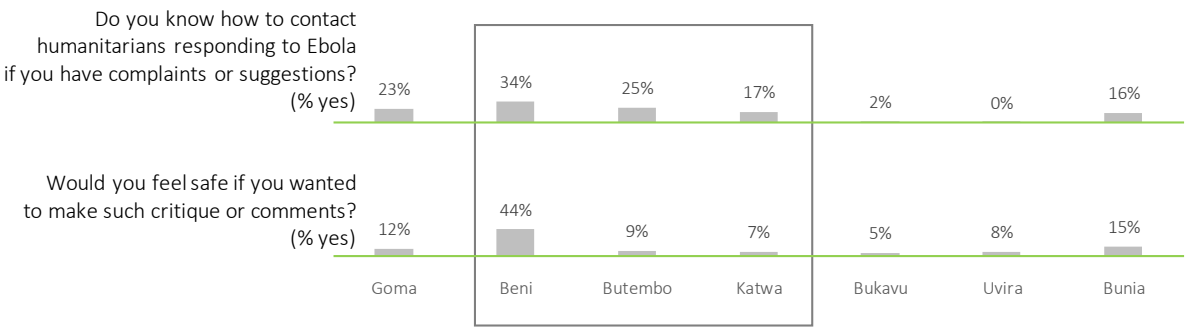
Figure 16: Participation and decision-making





Ensuring that communities and people affected by crisis have access to safe and responsive mechanisms to handle complaints is one of the nine Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) commitments. In the context of the Ebola outbreak, however, one in three respondents or less indicated that they knew how to contact humanitarians with complaints or suggestions in Beni (34%), Butembo (25%), and Katwa (17%). Furthermore, few feel safe to do so in Butembo (9%) and Katwa (7%), and a much larger percentage – but nevertheless below 50% - would feel safe to do so in Beni (44%). The causes of that insecurity are not known but likely represent a significant hurdle for meaningful engagement with communities.

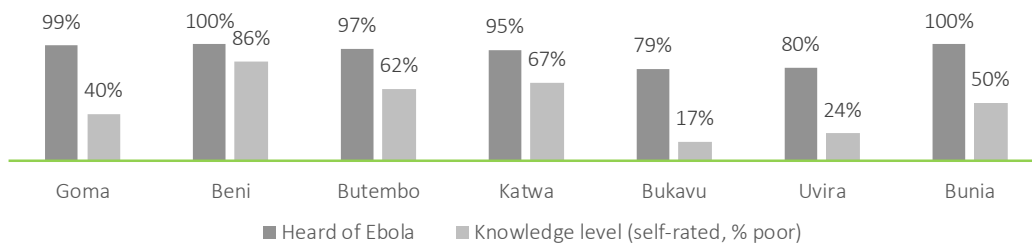
Figure 17: Feedback and complaints



*INFORMATION: Despite high awareness and exposure to information, many respondents feel insufficiently informed about Ebola*

Ten months into the current Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo, awareness about the epidemic is almost universal in cities with active cases of Ebola (Beni, Butembo, Katwa, and Bunia). In other cities not yet affected by Ebola (Goma, Bukavu, and Uvira), awareness is high as well (four out of five people know about Ebola). Self-reported knowledge is relatively high in the Ebola-affected area, with 86% judging their knowledge about Ebola as average or more in Beni, compared to 67% in Katwa and 62% in Butembo. Outside these areas, few judge their knowledge as at least average, especially in Bukavu and Uvira in South Kivu.

*Figure 18: Awareness and self-reported knowledge about Ebola*



The analysis of indicators related to CHS commitments to ensure access to information for communities, shows that respondents in affected areas have frequently received information relating to Ebola in the week prior to the survey. Information about cases and the Ebola response in the province that was found to be lacking in previous polls, appears to be now frequently communicated. Respondents receive this information from numerous sources, most frequently being the radio (local and national), friends and family, health professionals and religious leaders. One in three respondents in Beni, Butembo, and Katwa mention local leaders as a source.

Despite the arguably high levels of exposure to information in affected areas, few respondents feel sufficiently informed in Butembo (18%) and Katwa (14%). Respondents in Butembo and Katwa are also rarely positive about the timeliness of the information (20% and 15%, respectively) and how well-informed the field staff responding to Ebola is (11% and 9%, respectively.) In contrast, respondents in Beni are mostly positive, with about two-thirds feeling sufficiently informed (61%) and similar percentages judging that the information is timely (64%) and that the field staff is sufficiently informed to answer their questions (60%).

Figure 19: Types of information about Ebola received in the week prior to the survey (% exposed to selected types of information)

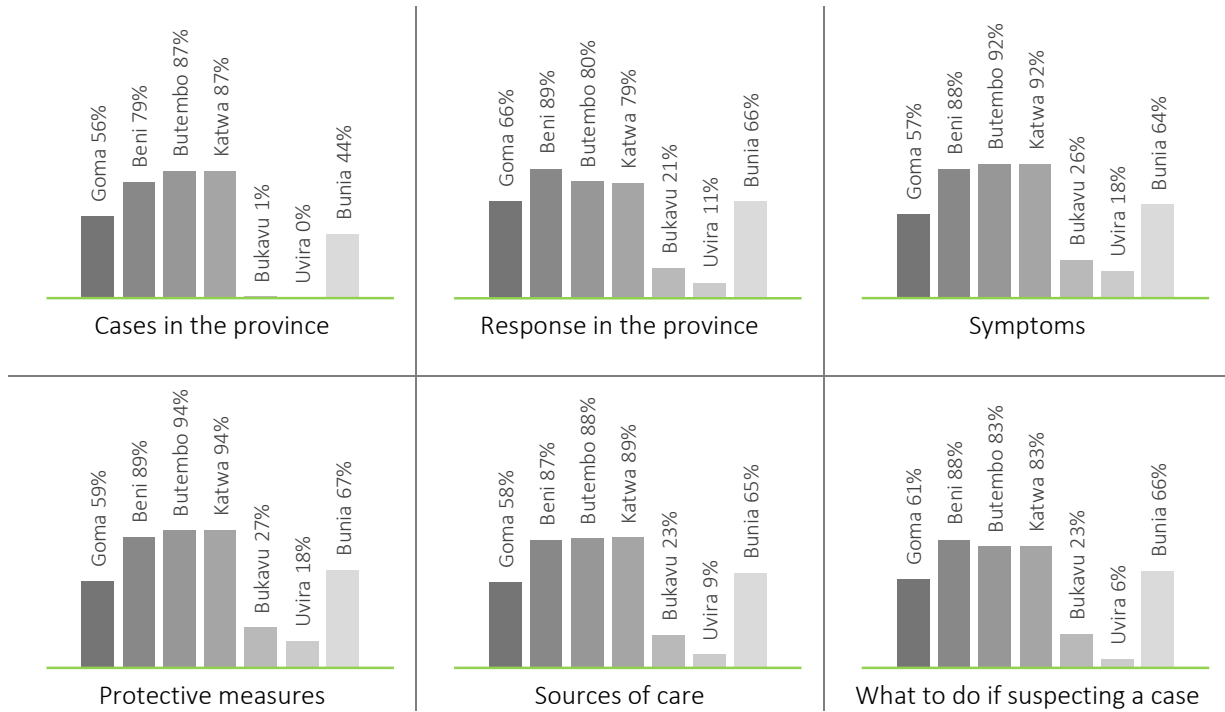
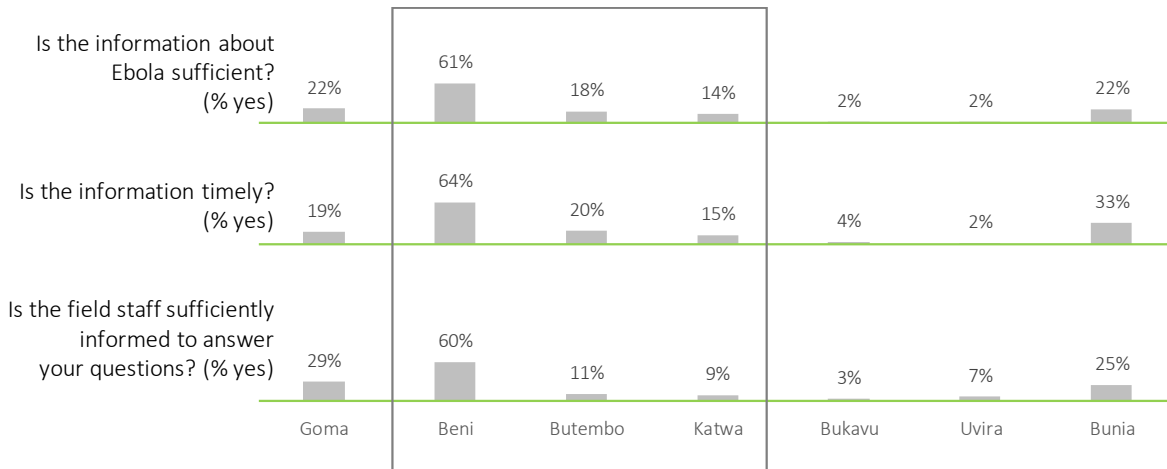


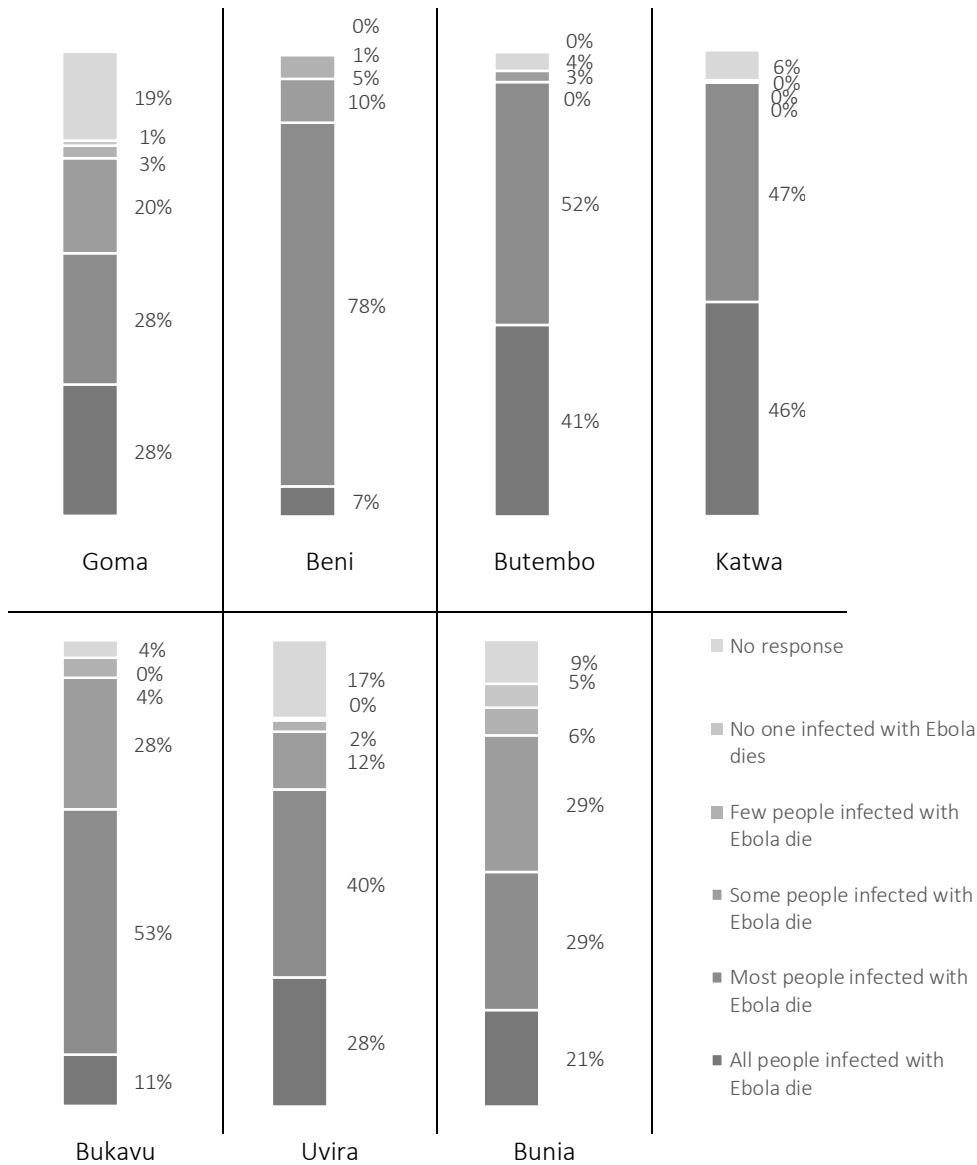
Figure 20: Access to Ebola-related information



*INFORMATION: Communication must address the perceived risk and lethality of Ebola, which may be driving underreporting of cases*

Although chances of surviving Ebola have increased since the West African outbreak, many respondents believe that all the people infected by Ebola die – among affected-communities, the belief is frequent in Butembo (41%) and Katwa (46%) and to a much lesser extent in Beni (7%). This issue is important because the perception that no-one can survive Ebola is seen by respondents as a key factor which undermines care-seeking and the reporting of suspected Ebola cases. The finding suggests that a greater emphasis on including Ebola survivors and their stories in the response efforts as well as communicating the higher chance of survival with early detection and proper treatment may be needed.

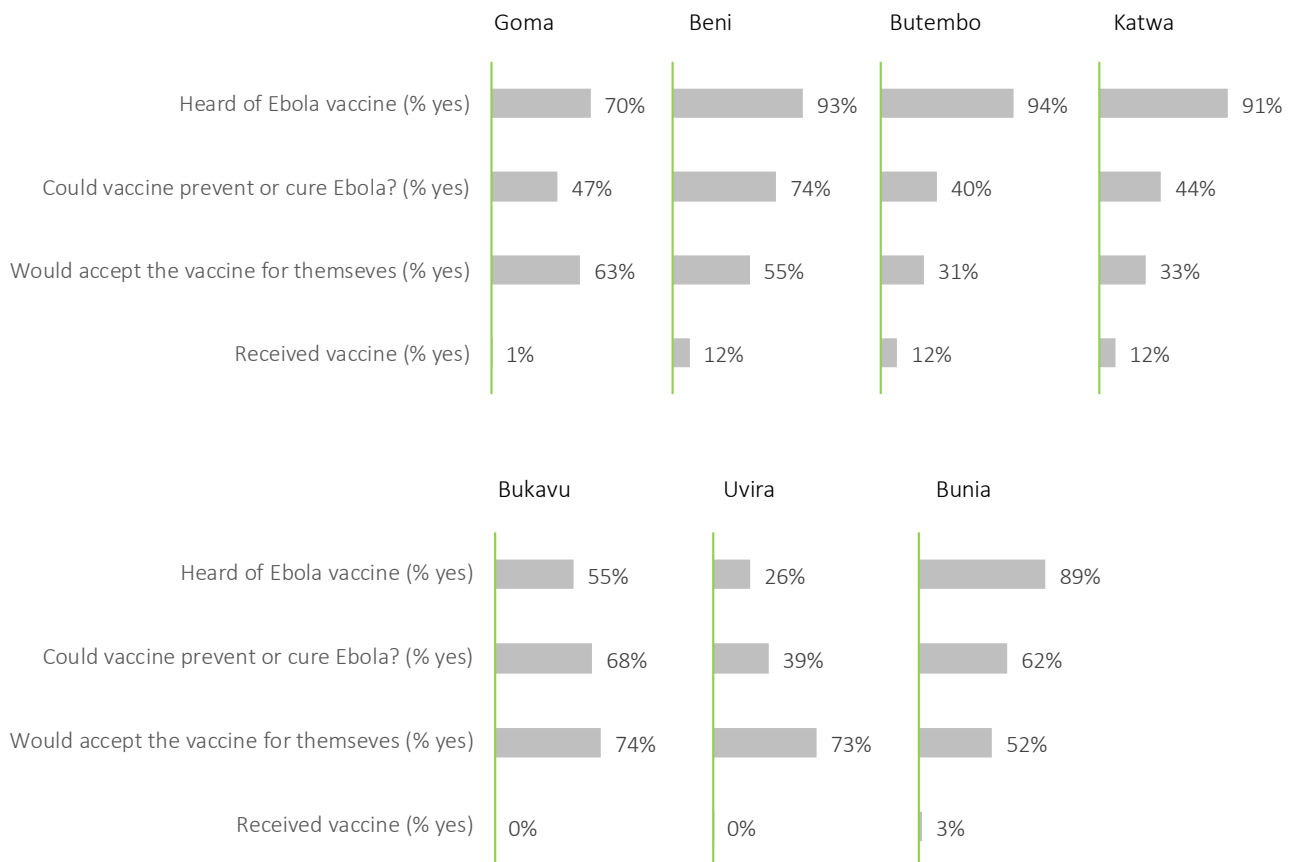
*Figure 21: Perceived risk and lethality of Ebola*



*VACCINATION: Awareness of the vaccine is high, but support for vaccination is declining*

As part of the Ebola response strategy in eastern DRC, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the DRC Ministry of Health, in collaboration with Merck, have been providing an investigative Ebola vaccine called rVSV-ZEBOV, which has been shown to be safe and protective against the Zaire strain of the Ebola virus. Results from Poll 18 show that 71% of the respondents have heard of the Ebola vaccine. Awareness of the vaccine is highest in Beni (93%) and Butembo (94%) and lowest in Uvira (26%). Despite the high-level of awareness, less than half the respondents believe that the vaccine could prevent Ebola in Butembo (40%), Katwa (44%), Goma (47%) and Uvira (39%), and less than a third of the respondents in Butembo (31%) and Katwa (33%) said they would accept the vaccine if it was available to them.

*Figure 22: Vaccine-related information and acceptance*



Looking at trends over-time suggests that support for the vaccine is declining. In Beni, the percentage of respondents who believed that an Ebola vaccine could prevent the disease increased from 69% (September 2018) to 82% (December 2018), but subsequently declined to 74% (April 2019). In Butembo, this belief has declined steadily over time from 65% (September 2018) to 53% (December 2018), and now 40% (April 2019). The trends are similar concerning vaccine acceptance in this population.

Figure 23: Belief that the vaccine can prevent Ebola (% of respondents)

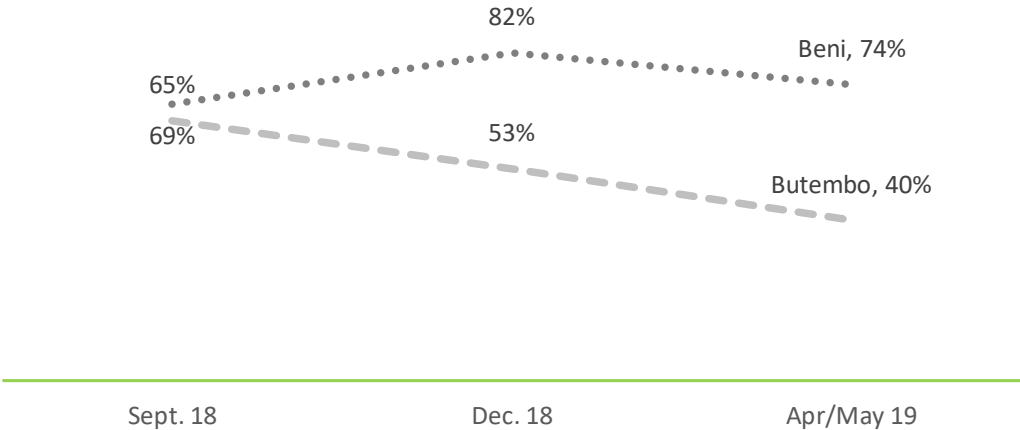
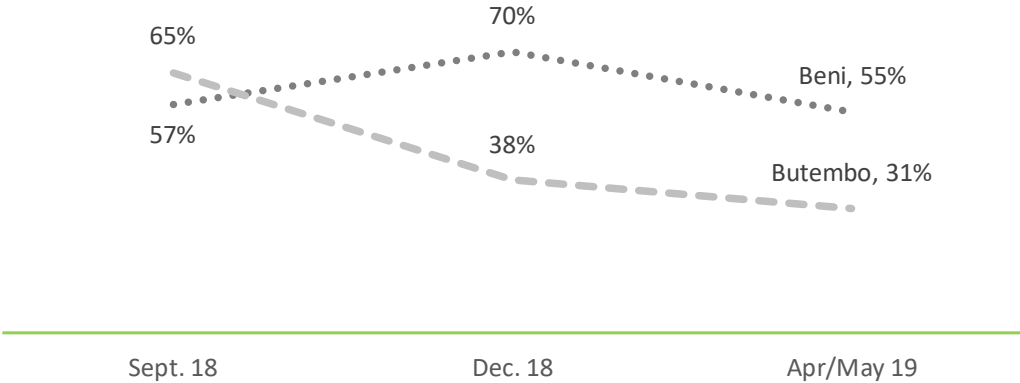


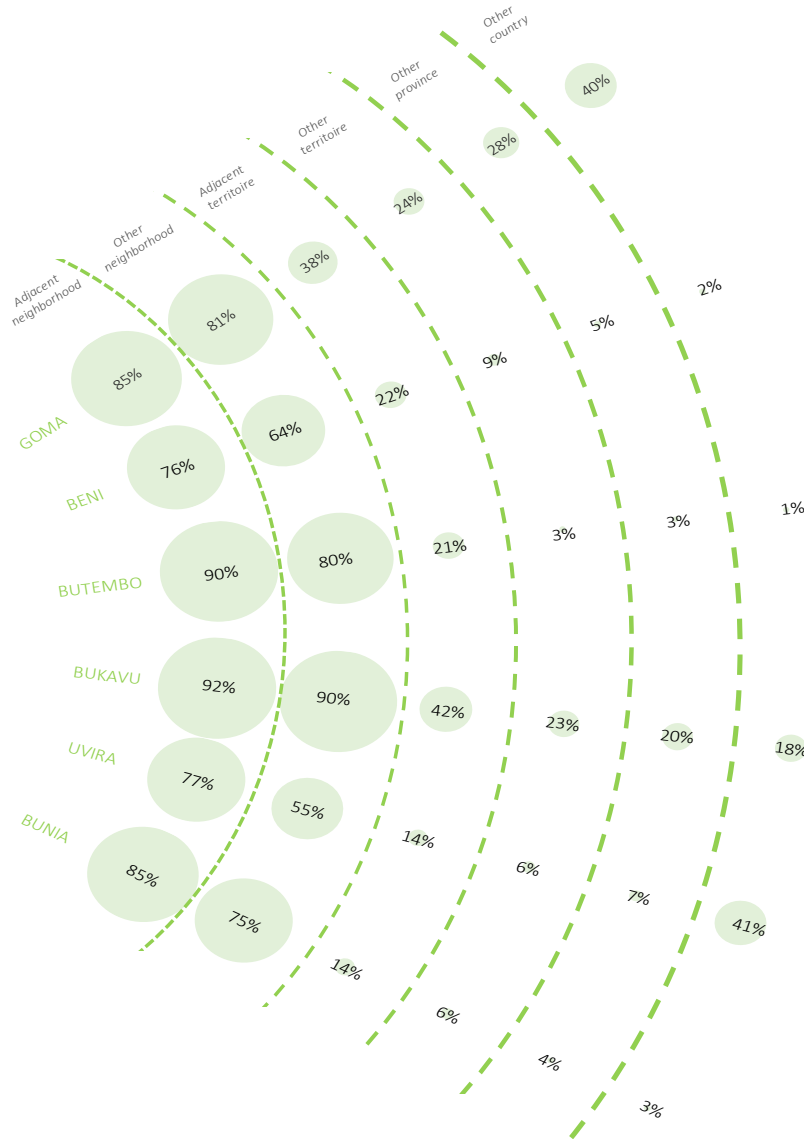
Figure 24: Acceptance of vaccines if it was offered

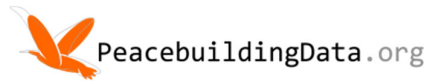


*MOBILITY: The current outbreak is limited to relatively low mobility areas but is close to important travel hubs where the population should be prepared for a potential spread of the epidemic*

Participants were asked a series of questions about the frequency and distance of their travels. Patterns of mobility is important to determine potential risk and develop targeted preparedness plans for locations that are potentially at risk of the Ebola outbreak. A large percentage of participants from all six urban areas reported that they travel at least occasionally to adjacent neighborhoods (>75%) or other neighborhoods (>55%). Less than a quarter of respondents travelled at least occasionally to territoires adjacent to the city or further in the province, except in Goma and Bukavu where such travels concerned a greater number of respondents. It is also in Goma and Bukavu, that travels to other provinces and other countries is most frequent, as both are border towns. Travel to other countries (Burundi) is also frequent in Uvira, another border town.

*Figure 25: Frequency of travel by target destination (% who travel at least occasionally to destination)*





*In collaboration with*



*With support from*

