Source: *MSF*

Community perceptions of COVID-19 Prevention and Control Measures in Nigeria and Sierra Leone: multi-site, community-led qualitative study

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May 2021

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The authors declare no conflicts of interest

SCIENTIFIC DAYS

Background and Rationale

- Previous disease outbreaks:
  - Indirect impacts on health system
  - Critical role of community response

- April 2020: Will “shielding” be acceptable to the community and feasible in this context?
- If not shielding, then what? → Broad approach
- Co-design activities that will actually be accepted

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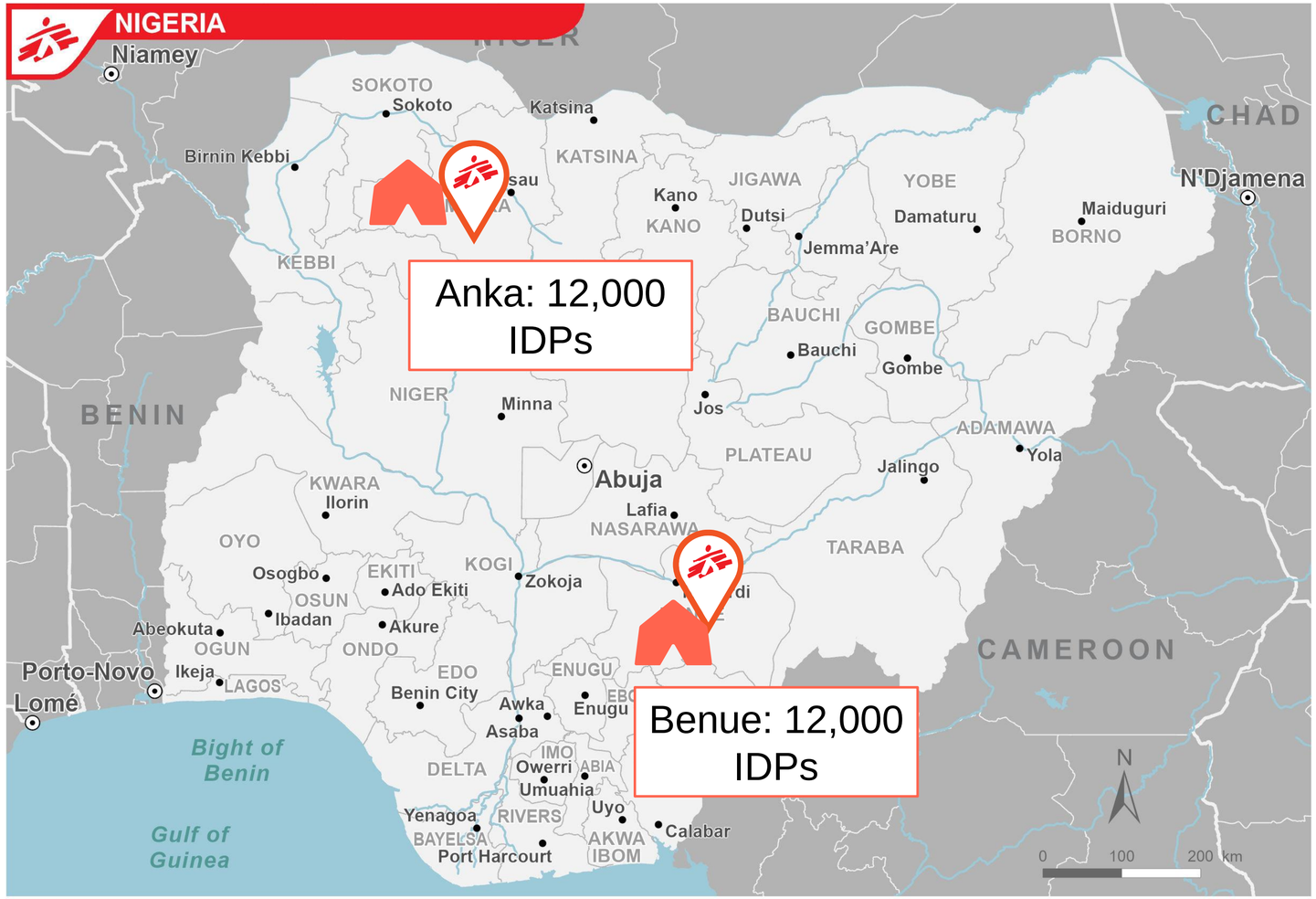
Setting: Internally Displaced Persons Camp

Shelters in MSF-supported IDP camp, Anka
(Source: MSF)



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Setting: Rural village

Tonkolili, Sierra Leone. Source: *The Guardian*

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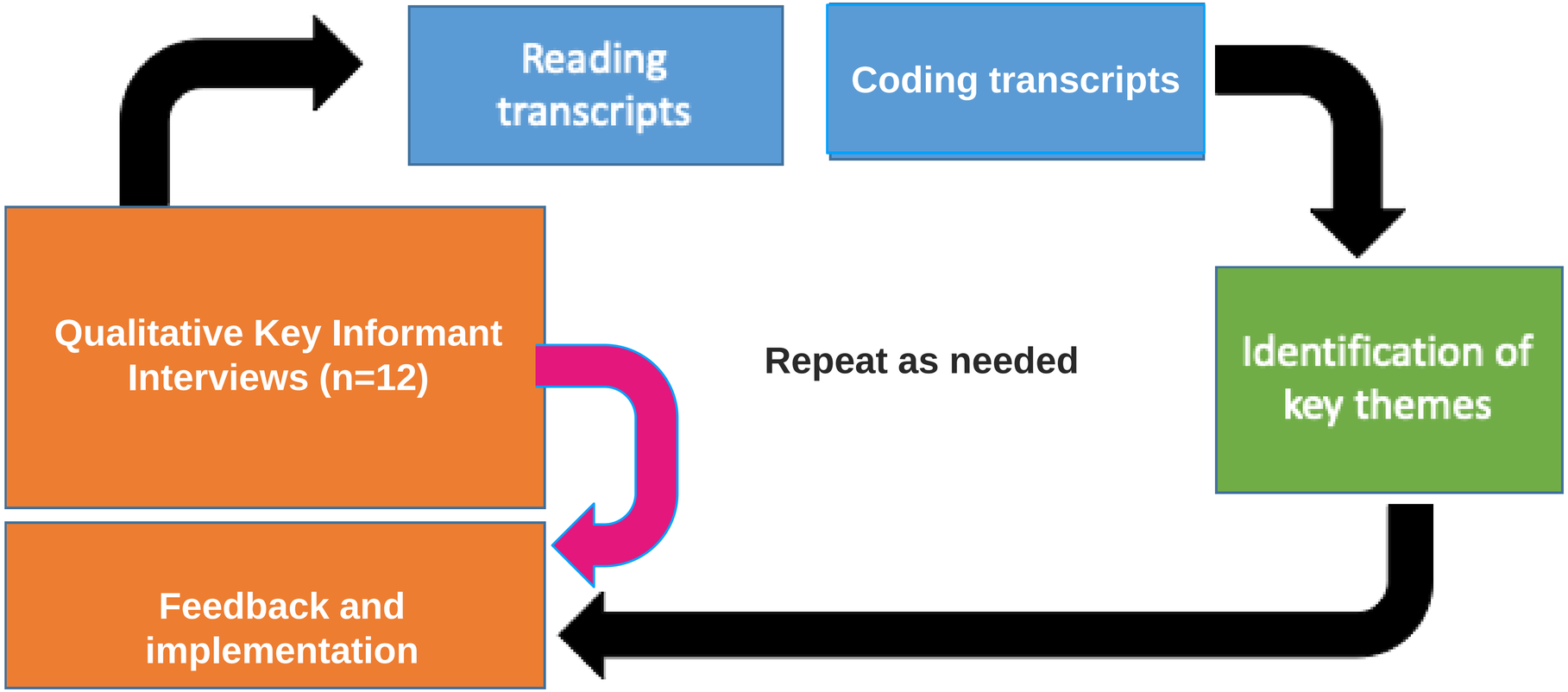
Methods: iterative series of interviews

Aim: Identify which interventions to prevent or control COVID-19 would be acceptable to the communities; Understand perceptions of health, caregiving and wellness in communities



This study was approved by the MSF Ethics Review Board and by the Ethical Review Boards of Benue State, Nigeria, Zamfara State, Nigeria, and the District Health Management team, Tonkolilli, Sierra Leone.

Results: Key Themes

Guidance of elders and leaders

Fear of seeking healthcare (previous Ebola experience)

Localised solutions

Both settings

Maintaining and sustaining life

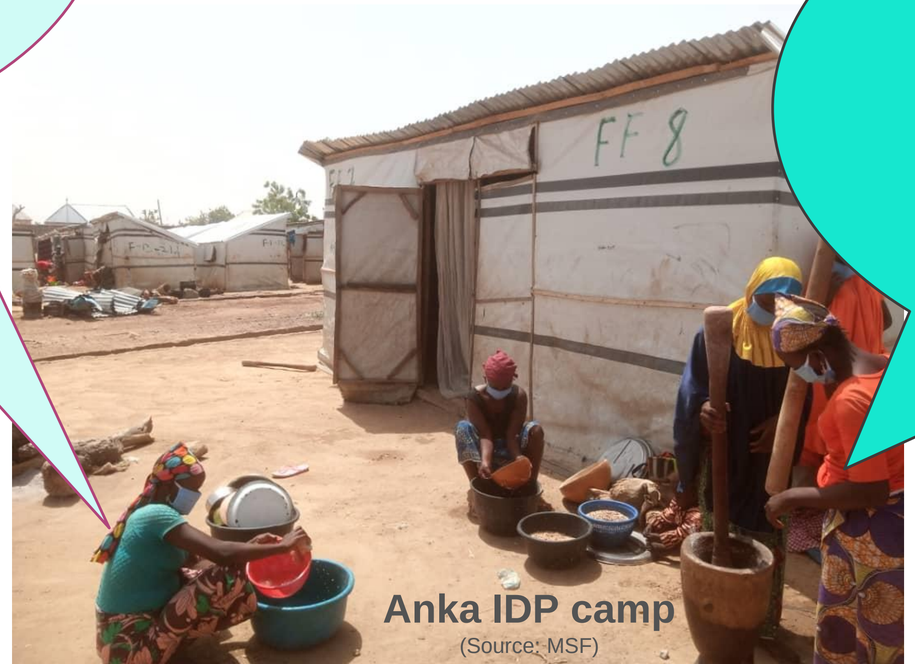
Non-COVID health issues

SCIENTIFIC DAYS

Results : IDP

Guidance of Elderly + Leaders

“Even if they will cut my neck I will still have to go and see my mother, we need to see them every day.”–CH1



Anka IDP camp
(Source: MSF)

“When there is a measles outbreak in a certain community, the leader will say don't go to that other community because we know there is a problem.” –BCM3

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Results : Rural village setting

Ebola experience, localized solutions

“Involving our own brothers in the system will reduce fear within the people, so that ah my boy, my child…he will bring information to me so I will have no more fear.” – SLIDI4

“People would be scared of going to quarantine, because you think when you go there you will be dead- there is no cure.” – SLIDI6

Tonkolili clinic
(Source: MSF)

Both settings

Results : Both settings

Maintaining and sustaining life

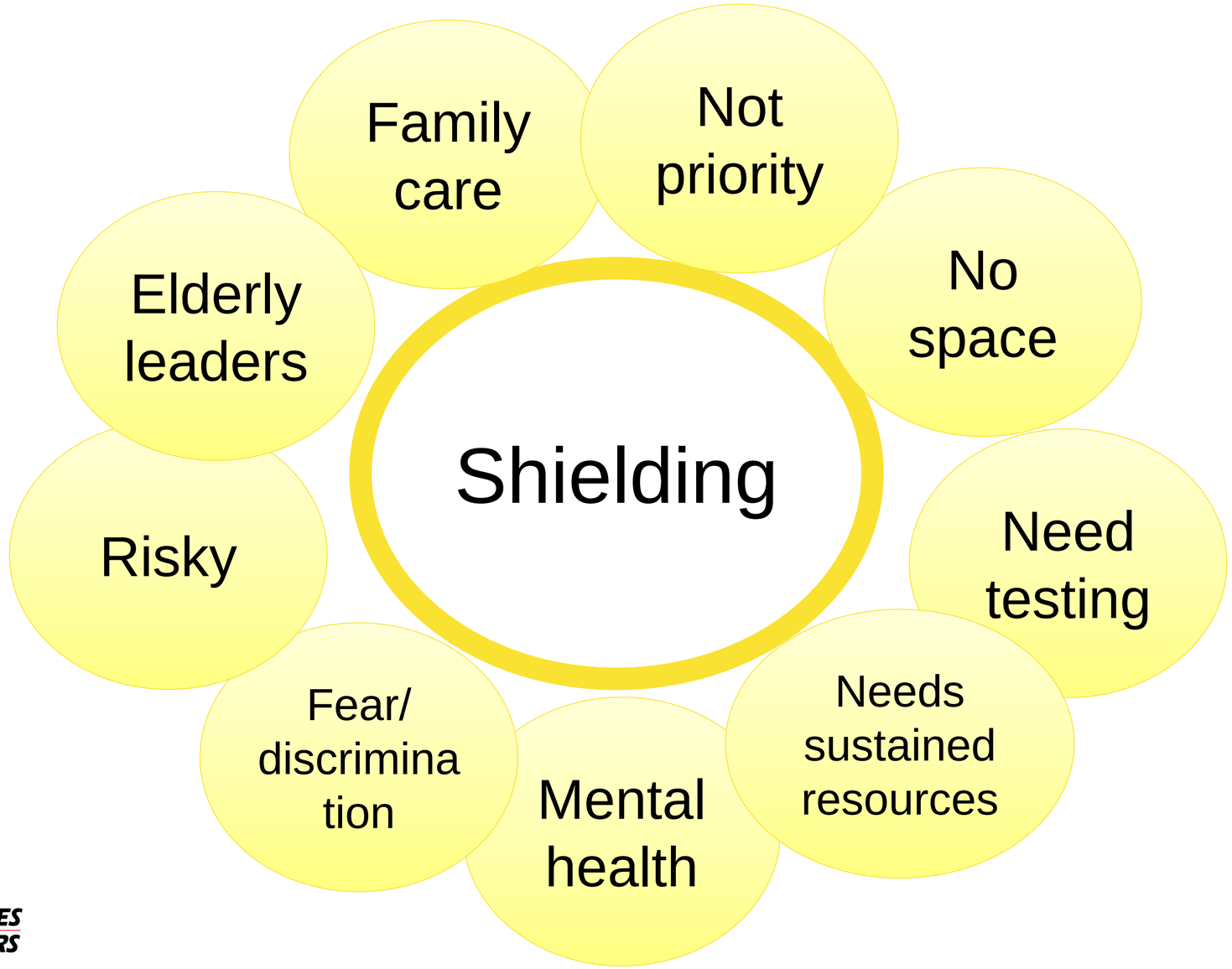
Non-COVID health issues

"If markets are closed then our daily survival has ended" – SLIDI7

"Child abuse causes most of the teenage pregnancies in our community…lockdown makes them more vulnerable"– SLIDI7

"There should be general tests carried out in the camp, reason being some persons might have other diseases aside from COVID-19" – ACL4

Results: Feedback on shielding



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Results: Acceptable public health measures

"Use of face masks is very important not for COVID-19 prevention only, but for the other airborne related disease."- ACM

"The health personnel, because they have protective equipment, they should come to the house and the person should not come to the clinic."– BCM1.2

"Handwashing should be the rule at each household"
– SLIDI6

Benue clinic (Source: MSF)

Timely use of data for implementation

Handwashing point in IDP camp, Anka
(Source: MSF)

Multiple rounds of interviews

Option	Acceptable to community?	Feasible and implemented?
"Shielding" (separation of elders from others)	?	✗
Food relief incentives for all IDPs to minimize movements	✓	✗
Organize smaller markets	✓	?
Community and HPs at front of response	✓	✓
Modify distributions to minimize crowds/ contacts (IDPs)	✓	✓
Reinforce number and maintenance of latrines, handwashing points, etc.	✓	✓
Offer mobile healthcare	✓	✓
Capacitate local tailors to make cloth masks	✓	✓

Limitations & Conclusions

- Limited sample of interviews in short time period
- Developed agile methodology (real-time analysis to inform operations)
- Piloting experience in Nigeria and Sierra Leone informed assessments in 13 settings across MSF operations
- Communities are experienced dealing with multiple crises
- Timely consultation of community to inform operations

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MSF Health Promotion team, Benue (source: MSF)

Acknowledgements:

- Community members and leaders
- Health Promoters and Community Health Educators
- Benue State Ministry of Health, Nigeria
- Zamfara State Ministry of Health, Nigeria
- Ministry of Health, Sierra Leone

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Emily Briskin, Julianna Smith, Grazia Caleo, Annick Lenglet, Jodie Pearlman, Guy Maloba K, Lauren Hoisl, Aminu Mohammed Anka, Maryam Babangida, Claude Bitaronga Bitaclau, Daniel Kanu, John Asema, Muhammad Shoaib, Bukola Oluyide, Mark Sherlock, Bilal Ahmad, Serge Kisenga, Sachiko Miyake, David Kargbo, Mohamed Ali R, Kees Keus, Ahmad Rufai, Terna Kur, Abdul Mac Falama, Beverley Stringer

MSF COVID-19 Community Engagement Community of Practice:

Over 100 people across all 13 sites

MSF Health Promotion team, Anka (source: MSF)