

MABAN COUNTY COVID-19 RESPONSE
MABAN RISK COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORKING GROUP
MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY, RESEARCH AND LEARNING UNIT

**Cumulative Report for COVID-19 Risk Communication and
Community Engagement Interventions in Maban County**

Last updated on Monday 31 August 2020



Aim of this report: This document outlines a cumulative status report on activities conducted by the Maban risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) working group since its inception in April 2020 to date (August 2020).

Accolades: The Maban risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) working group has been cited on numerous occasions by the South Sudan National RCCE technical working group as an example of “a best practice of field-level inter-agency collaboration.”

Context: Located in the furthest corner of the northeast of South Sudan, Maban County is home to some 150,000 refugees and 70,000 people from the host community – making it UNHCR’s largest refugee operation in the country. Some 25 humanitarian partners operate in Maban County. South Sudan was at the tail end of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Whereas some countries reported on COVID-19 towards the end of 2019, South Sudan only confirmed presence of the virus in April 2020. In turn, far-flung Maban County only confirmed presence of COVID-19 in August 2020.

Activation: In April 2020, humanitarian partners in Maban County activated a COVID-19 risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) working group. The aim of the working group is to support partners to have a harmonized approach to COVID-19 RCCE interventions, in line with guidelines issued by the government of South Sudan and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Membership: To date, the following 21 partners have voluntarily signed up to be members of the Maban RCCE working group: Maban County Health Department, ACTED, Action Africa Help International (AAHI), CARE International (CI), Commission for Refugee Affairs (CRA), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Food for the Hungry (FH), Humanitarian and Development Consortium (HDC), Internews, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), MENTOR Initiative (MI), Relief International (RI), Samaritan’s Purse (SP), Save the Children International (SCI), Serving in Mission (SIM), The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), The World Health Organization (WHO)

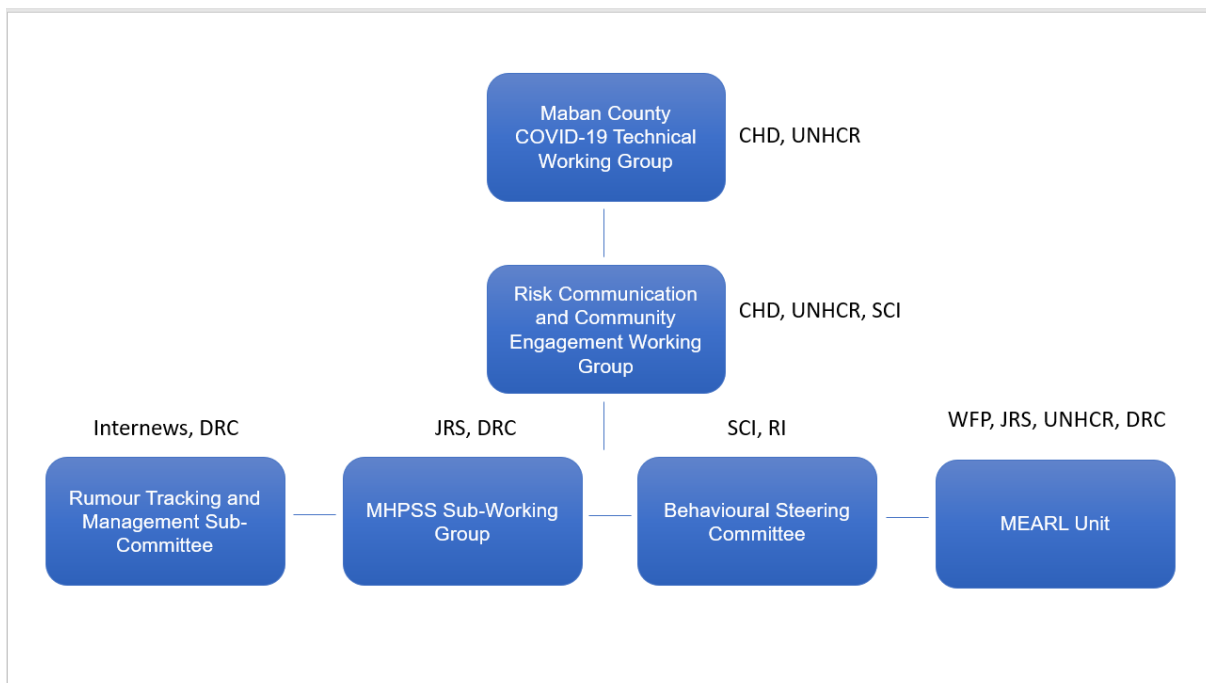
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Representation on national mechanisms: The Maban RCCE working group is represented on the following national coordination mechanisms:

- National RCCE Technical Working Group
- National Community Engagement and Social Mobilization Sub-Committee
- National Rumour Tracking and Management Sub-Committee
- National Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Technical Working Group

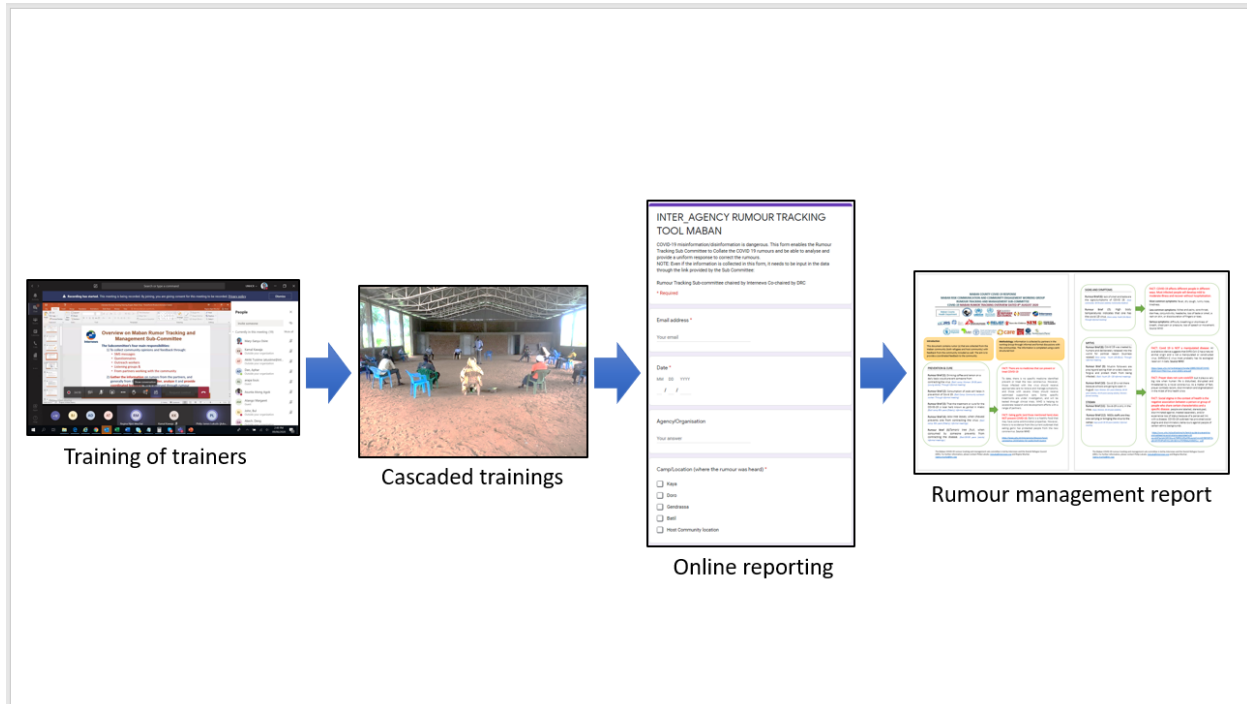
Structure: In Maban, the working group reports to the County COVID-19 technical working group. The RCCE working group is led by the government (Maban County Health Department), co-led by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and vice-chaired by Save the Children International (SCI). It has four sub-groups that are led by an eclectic inter-agency team of leaders from different partners operating in Maban County, as reflected below:

1. **Rumour Tracking and Management Sub-Committee:** Led by Internews and co-led by Danish Refugee Council (DRC) – **page 03**
2. **Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Sub-Working Group:** Led by Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and co-led by Danish Refugee Council (DRC) – **page 05**
3. **Behavioural Steering Committee:** Led by Save the Children International (SCI) and co-led by Relief International (RI) – **page 06**
4. **Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, Research and Learning (MEARL) Unit:** Led by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and co-led by Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and Danish Refugee Council (DRC) – **page 07**



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Status update from Rumour Tracking and Management Sub-Committee: This sub-committee was established to support accountability to affected populations.



1) **Training of trainers:** At the onset of the COVID-19 response, Internews was the only partner in Maban County with extensive experience in rumour tracking and management. In order to equip more partners with this vital skill, the rumour tracking and management sub-committee planned a training of trainers (ToT) for all humanitarian partners in Maban on 09 June 2020. The training was facilitated by Internews.

2) **Cascaded trainings:** The focal points who participated in this training of trainers (ToT) then cascaded the training in their respective organizations – with support and guidance from Internews. To date, eleven (11) sets of outreach workers have received this cascaded training. The outreach workers who have been trained serve with different humanitarian organizations operating in the four refugee camps and host community. **Attached is a detailed summary update on the cascaded trainings:**



3) **Online reporting:** To streamline reporting, the Maban rumour tracking and management sub-committee has developed a harmonized inter-agency online tracking tool that all partners in Maban use to report rumours. During the training of trainers and cascaded trainings, partners were guided on how to use the tool. For partners facing challenges accessing the online link, the sub-committee has set up a physical report delivery system.

This is a link to the tool: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeDgoQSh9NAVzXFh-oRjhF9j7QFd4UxY8aF8BlzzRXjDLHv0w/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1>

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4) **Rumour Management Report:** The Maban rumour tracking and management sub-committee also regularly produces a rumour management report that outlines rumours gathered from the community and recommended responses for the rumors mainly categorized under prevention/cure, myths and stigma. The sub-committee shares this report with all partners in Maban and the national rumour tracking and management sub-committee. So far, three rumour management reports have been developed, as reflected below:

Link to issue #1 : <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/78748>

Link to issue #2: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/78749>

Link to issue #3: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/78750>

To ensure that feedback reflected in the rumour management report gets to the community, the sub-committee has developed a rumour management pathway that outlines how to close the loop.

RUMOUR TRACKING AND MANAGEMENT PATHWAY (Version 02)

The Maban COVID-19 rumour tracking and management sub-committee has developed a pathway that illustrates steps taken to track and manage COVID-19 rumours.

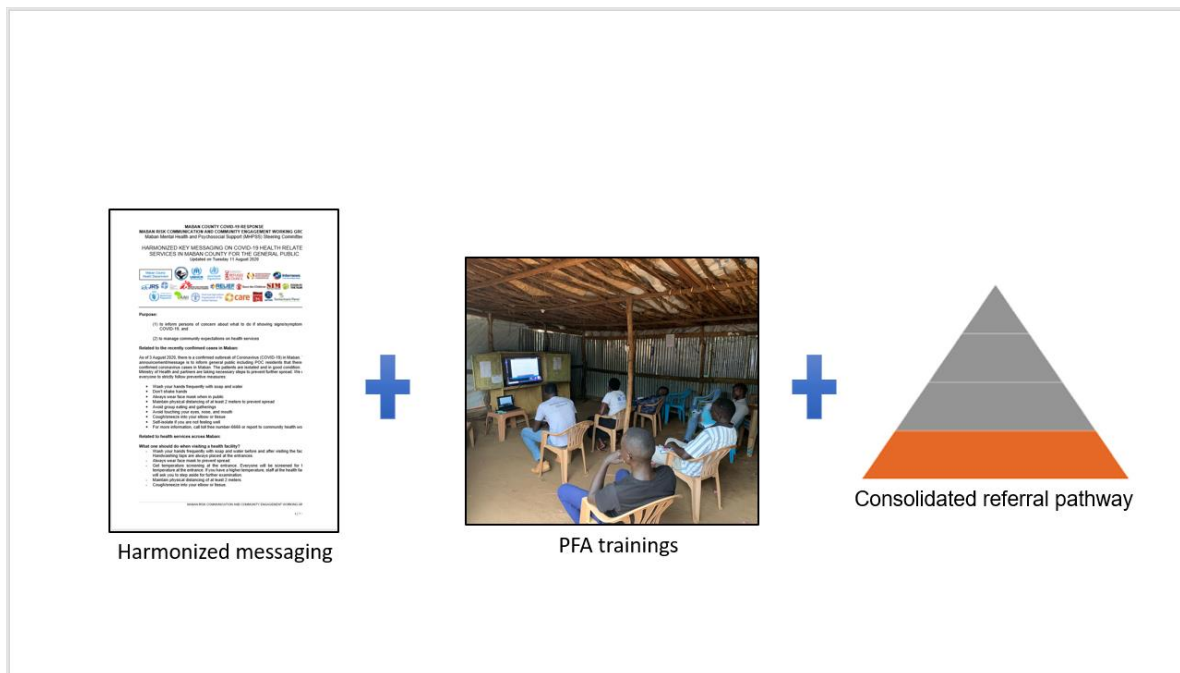
1. **Step 01:** Community spreads rumours
2. **Step 02:** Partners gather rumours and share them with the rumour tracking and management sub-committee through the harmonized inter-agency rumour tracking link <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeDgoQSh9NAVzXFh-oRjhF9j7QFd4UxY8aF8BlzzRXjDLHv0w/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1>
3. **Step 03:** The rumour tracking and management sub-committee analyzes the rumours and develops feedback for the community which is placed in a rumour management report
4. **Step 04:** The rumour tracking and management sub-committee shares the rumour management report with the leadership team of the RCCE working group
5. **Step 05:** The RCCE working group leadership team shares the rumour management report with relevant focal points for review and clearance (mainly the UNHCR public health team)
6. **Step 06:** The rumour management report is shared with relevant stakeholders for wider dissemination and feedback to refugees and host community

STAKEHOLDERS INCLUDE:

- Internews for broadcasting on Radio Salam
- DRC for cascaded dissemination to refugee community-based leadership structures
- HDC for cascaded dissemination to host community-based leadership structures
- County Health Department for cascaded dissemination to County authorities
- Rumour tracking focal points in each organization for cascaded dissemination to their outreach teams
- Partners in the Maban RCCE working group and Maban COVID-19 technical working group for cascaded dissemination to their outreach teams and the community-based structures with whom they work closely
- Heads of humanitarian partner agencies for cascaded dissemination to all their staff

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Status update from Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Sub-Working Group: This sub-working group was established to build internal capacity in implementing and mainstreaming MHPSS interventions across the COVID-19 response in Maban County.



1) **Harmonized messaging:** The role of the MHPSS sub-working group is to ensure MHPSS considerations are integrated across harmonized key messaging and information sharing among partners and community-based structures in the host and refugee communities.

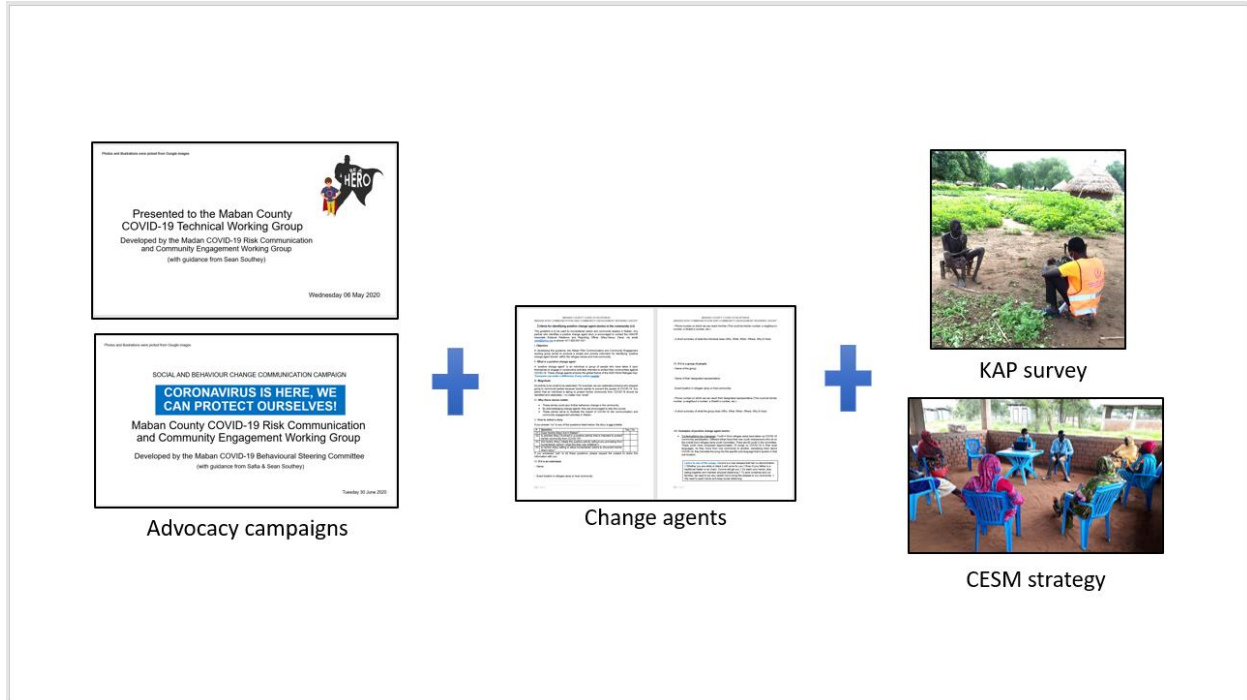
In light of the outbreak of COVID-19 in Maban County and at the request of the Maban County COVID-19 technical working group, the Maban mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) sub-working group – in close coordination with the National RCCE Technical Working Group – generated a set of harmonized key messages aligned to the new reality. These messages were disseminated to all partners in Maban County on 11 August 2020.

2) **Psychological first aid (PFA) trainings:** The trainings target humanitarian workers and community-based structures in refugee camps and the host community. In August 2020, two (02) PFA trainings were conducted: one was for the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and the other for the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS).

3) **Consolidated referral pathway:** The MHPSS sub-working group is working closely with protection partners in Maban County to develop a consolidated inter-agency MHPSS referral pathway that will outlive the COVID-19 response.

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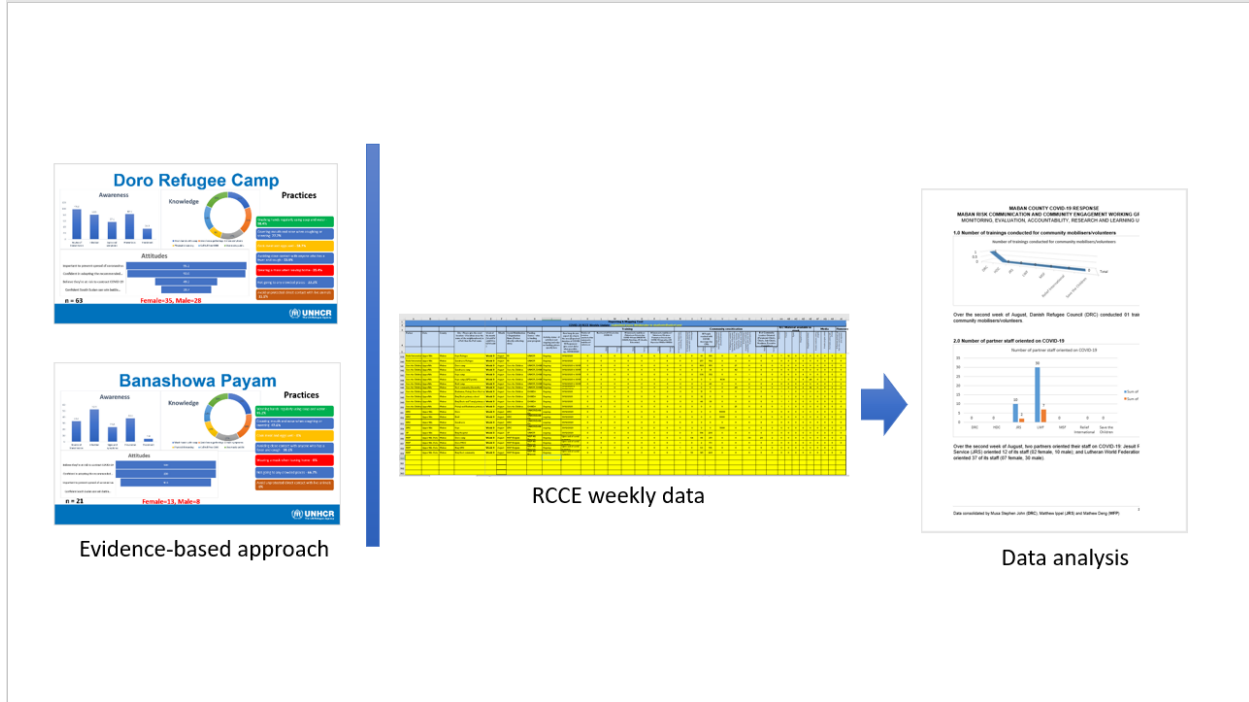
Status update from Behavioural Steering Committee: This steering committee was activated to support partners to align human behavior with recommendations of epidemiologists and public health experts.



- Since the onset of the pandemic, partners in Maban had been working tirelessly to raise awareness on COVID-19 and sensitize the community about ways they could protect themselves and loved ones from the disease. However, target audiences were slow to adapt the desired practices. This includes refugees, host community, local authorities and humanitarian workers.
- As a result, the Maban RCCE working group established a COVID-19 Behavioural Steering Committee charged with the responsibility of providing evidence-based advise to local authorities and partners on ways they could do things differently in order to attain the desired changes in practices (short term) and behavior (long term) among their core target audiences.
- So far, the committee has launched two advocacy campaigns, spearheaded two research projects and supported humanitarian partners to document stories of COVID-19 change agents within the community.

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Status update from Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, Research and Learning (MEARL) Unit: The MEARL Unit serves two primary purposes: 1) Data collection of RCCE monitoring data, and 2) Supporting inter-agency RCCE research initiatives



1) **Collection of RCCE monitoring data:** Humanitarian partners in Maban submit their RCCE monitoring data to the MEARL Unit on a weekly basis. The MEARL Unit consolidates this information and submits it to the National RCCE Technical Working Group on a weekly basis. For humanitarian partners in Maban, alongside the raw RCCE data, the MEARL Unit also shares an exploratory data analysis report. **Attached is the August 2020 data analysis report:**



MabanRCCE_MonthlyDataAnalysis_2020A

All humanitarian partners in South Sudan who are involved in COVID-19 RCCE interventions are required to submit their weekly RCCE monitoring data to the National RCCE Technical Working Group on a weekly basis. They are expected to use a harmonized tool that was developed by the National RCCE Technical Working Group.

When the monitoring tool was rolled out across South Sudan, the Maban RCCE Working Group invited an official from the National RCCE Technical Working Group to speak to humanitarian partners in Maban about the importance of sharing their data. Thereafter, the MEARL Unit organized an inter-agency training for all monitoring and evaluation (M&E) focal points in Maban County. During this training, the MEARL Unit showed M&E focal points how to use the harmonized monitoring tool.

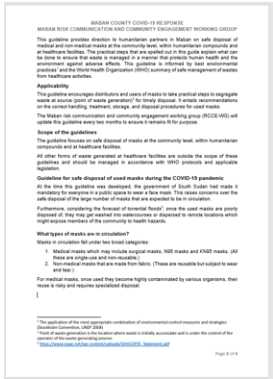
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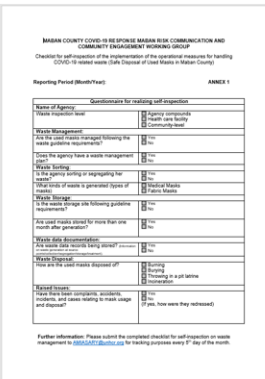
2) **Supporting inter-agency RCCE research initiatives:** The MEARL Unit has supported the Behavioural Steering Committee to conduct two inter-agency RCCE research projects: 1) The first was a rapid knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) survey that was conducted across the refugee camps and host community in June 2020; 2) The second was research on how to more effectively engage the community in COVID-19 interventions in July 2020. Both research projects had the backing of the national RCCE technical working group, and they shaped national RCCE guidance policies in South Sudan.

Inter-agency guideline on safe disposal of face masks: Led by the UNHCR Environment Unit, the Maban RCCE working group developed an inter-agency guideline to provide direction on safe disposal of used face masks.



Guideline on safe disposal of face masks





Self-inspection checklist

In wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government of South Sudan made it mandatory for everyone in a public space to wear face masks. The Maban RCCE working group predicted that this would inadvertently lead to an upsurge of masks in circulation. Consequently, they developed an on inter-agency guideline which provides direction to humanitarian partners in Maban on safe disposal of medical and non-medical masks at the community level, within humanitarian compounds and at healthcare facilities. The practical steps that are spelled out in the guideline explain what can be done to ensure that waste is managed in a manner that protects human health and the environment against adverse effects. The guideline is informed by best environmental practices and the World Health Organization (WHO) summary of safe management of wastes from healthcare activities. **Attached is the guideline on safe disposal of face masks:**



Maban_RCCEWG_GuidelineMaskDisposal

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Alongside the guideline comes a self-inspection checklist that partners are encouraged to use to develop tailor-made waste management plans. The Maban RCCE working group provide partners support to develop their own plans. **Attached is the self-inspection checklist:**



Maban_RCCEWG_Ch
ecklistSelfInspection_I

ANNEXES:

Two files are attached as annexes to this report:

- **Annex 01:** Monthly RCCE data analysis report for Maban County (August 2020)



MabanRCCE_Monthl
yDataAnalysis_2020A

- **Annex 02:** Status update on cascaded rumour tacking & management trainings in Maban County (August 2020)



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