

The importance of Community Engagement in response to mpox – **IFRC considerations**

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Time and again we
have seen how **trust,**
and other
behavioral drivers,
can halt or escalate
epidemics and health
threats.



Community engagement in epidemics

3 important lessons

- **To build trust, we need to listen and act**

Community insights are crucial to understand community perceptions and adapt continuously our response

- **Behaviour change is complex**

There are often cultural barriers and social norms that prevent people to use information or access services

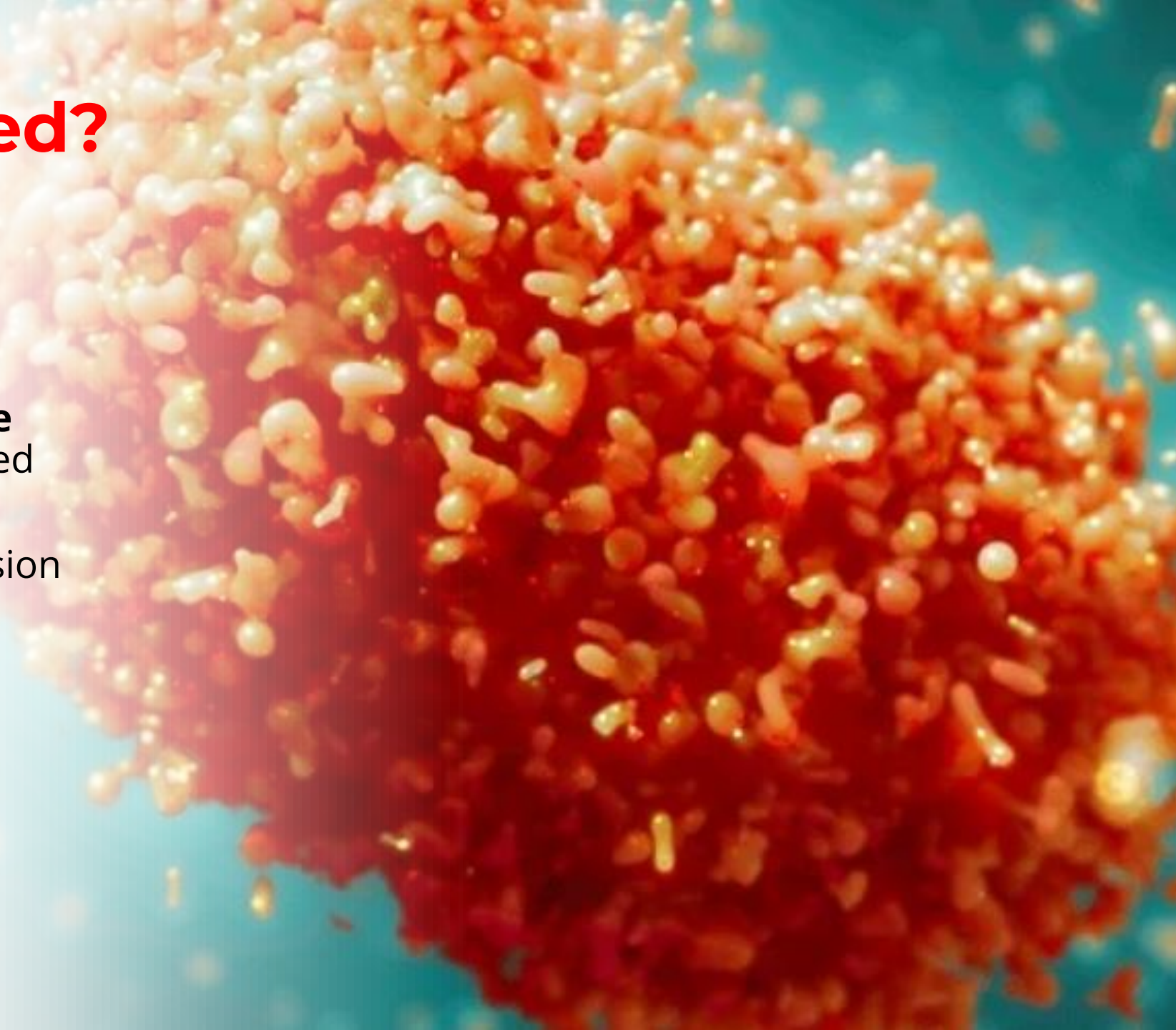
- **The community knows best**

It is the actions of community members that will sustain, or end, an epidemic so they need to be active partners in the response.



Why is mpox getting us worried?

- **3 Epidemics** affecting different groups.
- A new clade Ib/**new epidemic**.
- Rapidly spreading through **close contact**, including but not limited to sexual contacts.
- Sustained community transmission
- More severe than clade II.
- Many unknowns?
- Spreading faster in East Africa.
- Limited availability of vaccines, testing and treatment.



What are people saying?



Concerns around
PHSM and
lockdowns



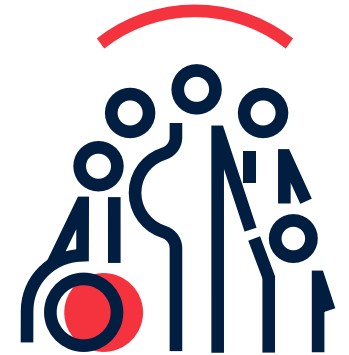
Distrusts
in health
authorities



Concerns
around
vaccines



Misinformation
and questions
around
transmission



Stigmatising
attitude

*WHO AIRA & UNICEF social listening & IFRC community
feedback data August - Africa*

Key considerations for community engagement

- ❑ Data (including community insights) - driven approaches
- ❑ Community-led actions
- ❑ Avoid framing this only as a sexually transmitted disease
- ❑ Tailor community engagement strategies for children, care takers and potentially pregnant women
- ❑ Targeted and discreet engagement with stigmatized groups
- ❑ Engage and prepare the community health workforce
- ❑ Continuously adapt and update your community engagement approach.



Stigma is a well-documented barrier to health-seeking behaviours



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[Link to IFRC mpox community engagement page](#)

**Grazie
Thank You
Merci
Shukran**