

Research and insights for development communications

DEVELOPMENT ENGAGEMENT LAB

COVID-19 Message Testing Analysis 29 April 2020

BRIEF

The COVID-19/coronavirus pandemic has changed the way we work and live overnight. To date, the virus has infected more than three million people, with 215,000 deaths globally. It presents significant challenges to development organisations' work and communications.

This research was an opportunity for DEL Partners to understand the British public's response to the pandemic and to provide insight into how to communicate our issues, that align with public sentiment and are COVID-sensitive. Specifically, we tested 1) Partner generated messages and 2) a range of questions to understand support for international cooperation, using UK aid to invest in developing countries' health systems, and how poverty interacts with disease. This report shares the results from the message testing. Partners are welcome to use this this report within their organisations.

DATA

The data for this report was generated using YouGov's online panel of adults (18+) in Great Britain. Fieldwork was conducted on April 24 - 272020. Data from the sample (n=1,761) are weighted to be nationally representative.

METHODOLOGY

DEL Partners submitted a range of messages (n= 131), some of which were modified for length, clarity, or to remove organisation's name or other identifiers. Respondents were shown 10 pairs of messages, chosen at random. Messages were selected 'without replacement' meaning that no respondent saw the same message twice. Respondents were shown the following text before seeing the first randomly drawn message pair:

Over the past few weeks, there has been a lot of different views and opinions expressed about the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

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These views and opinions cover many different issues, from how our personal lives and communities have been changing, how the UK government and other governments have been responding to the crisis, and what is the role of international cooperation between countries and international organisations in addressing the spread of COVID-19?

We are now going to show you some pairs of statements that will help us understand how you view the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Please tell us whether you agree more with the first statement or the second statement – even if neither is exactly right.

FINDINGS

The results in the table show the 'winning messages' – i.e. messages respondents agree with more – in descending order. The number shows the percentage of times that message was chosen over another message. Three examples are provided below.

- The best performing message 'I want our government to work with other governments to ensure scientists have the funding they need to find the treatments and vaccines that can help end this crisis' was chosen 78.5% of the time against other randomly selected messages.
- A better than average performing message 'We know that the most marginalised and vulnerable groups will face the greatest challenges in accessing health services, so we must commit to 'leaving no-one behind' in the global response' was chosen 60.2% of the time against other randomly selected messages.
- Lower down the table 'The British character still exists, and it will get us through this crisis' was chosen 35.4% of the time against other randomly selected messages.

The accompanying Excel file contains additional cuts by: age, gender, 2019 General Election Vote, 2016 EU Referendum Vote, and Support for Aid Spending.

CITATION

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DISCLAIMER

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	Statements 1-30	
want our government to work with other governments to ensure scientists have the funding they need to find the treatments and vaccines that can help		78.5%
end this crisis		
The only way to stop the corona virus crisis is to test, treat and prevent future infections with a vaccine - we need to support the world's scientists to do that.		5.3%
The crisis shows that investments in public health and development aid should not be viewed as a drain on resources - there is a strong need to build a social safety net for all, even within high-income countries.		
We need a global response to a global problem. We're all in this together.	71.59	6
It is in everyone's interest to stop the virus from spreading unchecked, destroying lives and economies, and continuing to circle around the world.	71.29	6
The coronavirus crisis has affected us all like we could never have imagined. Whilst we are all in this together, we know it is the most vulnerable in our communities who will be hit hardest by this crisis. For people reliant on services that keep them safe from harm, connected and warm and fed, the physical and social isolation that is necessary to stop the spread of coronavirus is an even greater threat. We need to support local charities and projects in the UK, so they can provide essential support to people who really need it through the crisis.	71%	
We should take urgent action in the fight against COVID-19 and helping communities to build resilience against diseases in the future.	70.89	6
When a COVID-19 vaccine is available, we must ensure everyone across the globe has equal access to it.	70.2%	<u> </u>
Coronavirus knows no borders. It is a global threat and our shared humanity demands a global response.	69.7%	
Left undeterred, the virus will continue to spread across countries resulting in second and third waves of infections in the UK	69.4%	1
The Covid-19/coronavirus pandemic will not end simply by conquering the disease in one country alone, but by ensuring recovery from this health crisis in all countries.		1
COVID-19 highlights the need for strong, resilient health systems everywhere to deal effectively with global health security crises. We are only as strong as our weakest health system.		4
COVID-19 is a critical reminder that health should be treated as a universal human right. Everyone deserves access to essential quality health services.		
A global pandemic demands a global response because no country or community will be safe until all of us are safe.	68.7%	
Charities and community organisations are part of our frontline response and will be needed now more than ever to provide essential support to those most at risk in our communities. Locally rooted organisations are a crucial lifeline for people in crisis. They are often the only witness to the many hidden dangers that go unnoticed behind closed doors, such as domestic abuse, child abuse, extreme poverty and destrictution and people experiencing escalating mental health concerns. We need to pull together to support our incredible NHS and other key workers so they can fully focus on their work	68.5%	
to tackle the spread of coronavirus. We have seen amazing examples here in the UK and across the world of people coming together to help their neighbours, reach out to the community, support their country and turn the tide on this disease.	68.4%	
Coronavirus is a global crisis and we all have a role to play.	67.8%	1
Now is the time to come together to prevent the spread of the disease across the world and protect vulnerable children from the worst effects. Only a huge collective effort will work, and we can all play our part.		
We are being reminding us of our connection to each other – and to nature. When we emerge from this crisis let's rebuild a future where everyone can thrive.		
We're seeing and showing that we can act together to limit harm – even though it's hard. We face tough choices as we move through and out of the pandemic. But we do get to choose. We can choose to rebuild a future that meets everyone's needs.		
Recovery from the coronavirus crisis must lead to a better world. We must ensure a truly global response, then build resilience for the future.	65.5%	
Coronavirus shows the need for investment in health systems around the world.	64.8%	
Helping support the coronavirus response in other countries is the right thing to do. But it's also the smart thing to do. A response that leaves out the poorest people, refugees, and the vulnerable wherever they are will mean this virus is still a threat to everyone.		
Our natural world is healing as we see pollution levels plummeting. For the sake of our planet and our future, we can never return to polluting business-as-usual. Let's build real sustainable societies within our planetary boundaries.		
The right government action has been the main factor in how well different countries have responded to the pandemic. When leaders act it saves lives and protects our wellbeing.		
In this period of uncertainty and upheaval in our daily lives, it is more important than ever that we are kind and compassionate.	62.2%	
We're seeing how deeply we all depend on each other. When we come through this crisis we must rebuild societies where everyone can thrive.	62.2%	
It may give a semblance of accomplishment for countries to control the virus at a national level with travel bans and border closures, but this is just a stopgap. Only global victory can bring this pandemic to an end.		
The crisis shows us how important good health is for fulfilling other human rights. Poor health has collateral impact on human development, education and economic opportunities.		
We know that the most marginalised and vulnerable groups will face the greatest challenges in accessing health services, so we must commit to 'leaving no-one behind' in the global response.	60.2%	





	Statements 96	-131	
Development charities are working hard to save the lives of people living in poverty in other countries to help end the COVID-19 pandemic.		40.1%	
Coronavirus has not just bumped Brexit down the political agenda, it makes the whole project look overblown and self-indulgent.		40%	
Solidarity begins at home, but it doesn't end there.		39.7%	
It's the UK's responsibility as a world leader to help those less fortunate than ourselves in the fight against COVID-19.		39.4%	
This crisis will make us more united and stronger together.		39.1%	
It really is about time we all said it. China caused this nightmare. Period.		38.8%	
To truly improve health security for people across the world, becoming universal health coverage heroes could be the best strategic decision political leaders ever make.		38.5%	
Development charities are working hard to help people in other countries to help make sure COVID-19 does not reappear globally.		38.3%	
Wash your hands for 20 seconds? Stay 2m apart? Only go out if necessary? For many people living in refugee camps, this just isn't possible. We all need to help support vulnerable people around the world.		37.9%	
The coronavirus is merely the latest problem to expose the problems of a globally interconnected world, highlighting the risks of open borders.		37.8%	
Governments whose mission was to shrink the state, to cut taxes and borrowing and dismantle public services, are discovering that the free market cannot defend us from this crisis – we are watching neoliberalism collapse in real time.		37.2%	
Together we can show our love for all of humanity across the world and ensure the most vulnerable children are kept safe.		36.4%	
A metaphor here is Dunkirk, to be honest. We are a lot of little boats and the little boats can be effective.		36.3%	
While painful, this crisis gives us an opportunity to tackle the other major threats we face: the climate ecological emergencies.		35.5%	
The British character still exists, and it will get us through this crisis.		35.4%	
The horror films got it wrong. This virus has turned us into caring neighbours.		34.7%	
Together we can protect the world's most vulnerable children from Coronavirus.		34.5%	
As Britain rightly focuses on halting the spread of the coronavirus here in the UK, we must not forget that we can still transform the lives of children in places like Yemen.		34.2%	
Humanitarian organisations should be there for every child during this crisis and will continue to work to build a better future for them		34.1%	
We are in this together. The UK should do its part to help people in the world's poorest countries to survive.		33.5%	
It's counterproductive to say we should 'fight' or 'roll back' globalization. Instead, it's essential we seek to reign in its risks.		32.8%	
There are 12 million people in South Sudan, and only 3 ventilators. We must help them if they are to stand a chance.		32.7%	
Each country should look after their own.		31.4%	
We should be on the frontline of the coronavirus crisis helping to save lives as the pandemic hits the poorest countries in the world.	-	30.4%	
Together we can protect children from Coronavirus in the world's toughest and most dangerous places.		29.8%	
Development charities should work to support new mums and babies to ensure that they have the nutrition they need to thrive.		29.6%	
Eurosceptics could be proved right if COVID-19 exposes European tensions and plunges the EU into existential crisis.	2	8.2%	
Charity begins at home. We shouldn't be helping people around the world to deal with coronavirus.		7.7%	
We should seek to help the world's poorest people by running hygiene promotion campaigns in the fight against COVID-19.	25	9%	
/e can donate the money we are saving on our daily commute to help deliver oxygen and ventilators to families in some of the hardest to reach places on earth.	25	96	
We should stop all aid to other countries while we deal with coronavirus.	23.5		
COVID 19 is impacting women and girls the most as they are the most likely to shoulder the caring burden and work in unstable jobs.	23.1		
I don't care about women's rights when the UK has coronavirus.	21.79		
The 'Blitz spirit' isn't back – it's bunk. It was and has always been a myth.	20.9%	1	
We can help celebrate and support front-line heroes in the UK and all over the world to protect children and their families from Cornoavirus by taking part in a special PE Challenge with Joe Wicks.	20.6%		
The primacy of national responses to the crisis shows how cross-border superstates like the EU go against nature's grain.	19.7%		