



CAMEROON

EPIDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Communities at the heart of our work

Epidemics begin and end in communities. When communities are engaged and trained in epidemic preparedness and response, they can find and stop outbreaks which will ultimately save lives, restore services and help build resilience.

Early detection, early action at community level

Cameroon is facing growing insecurity as well as significant deterioration of food security and nutrition, which puts many people vulnerable to a variety of health risks. With many people displaced, access to adequate health and sanitation services can be difficult. Cholera, measles, polio, viral haemorrhagic fevers and yellow fever are among the most critical health concerns in the country.

Cameroon Red Cross, with support from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and funding from USAID, has been helping communities prepare and prevent the spread of diseases. Focusing in East (Boumba-Ngoko, Kadey and Lom-Djérem) and North Cameroon (Benoue and Mayo Rey), Cameroon Red Cross is working with governments, communities, local responders and humanitarian partners to collectively prepare for and respond to epidemics.

Through its extensive network of local volunteers, Cameroon Red Cross is providing critical information, community-based surveillance and referrals in coordination with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries to help stop diseases from spreading before an outbreak occurs.

1070+

cases of cholera have been confirmed in the ongoing outbreak in North, Far North and South West regions.

13,000+

households reached with critical health messaging

340+

volunteers trained in epidemic control, community-based health and first aid



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

OUR WORK



Preparing communities

We are ensuring communities have critical information about the spread of diseases and how to prevent them, systems to detect outbreaks and mechanisms that ensure information sharing and community engagement. Activities include:

- Engaging communities through house-to-house visits, school clubs and group discussions.
- Strengthening community-based referral systems.
- Engaging, training and collaborating with community influencers, such as teachers, leaders and traditional healers.



Preparing first responders

Cameroon Red Cross has more than 8,100 volunteers across the country which gives extraordinary reach into communities. In their supporting role to the government, they are often central to emergency responses amid outbreaks. Activities include:

- Contingency planning with government and key partners.
- Strengthening systems to enable a fast, scaled-up response.
- Strengthening partnerships with different sectors: Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries.
- Training and readying community-based volunteers.



Preparing stakeholders

Epidemics not only threaten lives but all aspects of society, including trade, transportation and education. We work with a variety of key stakeholders and the media in epidemic preparedness and response. Activities include:

- Helping prepare a variety of sectors to respond (including those affected by both animal and human health).
- Mapping critical data to help responders make informed decisions when a health crisis hits.
- Training media to communicate lifesaving information to affected populations.

Tackling a persistent cholera outbreak in northern Cameroon

After contracting cholera herself, Didjatou is determined no one else should experience the same. She now shares critical information learned from Red Cross with her neighbours and customers at her shop.

Cameroon Red Cross volunteers have been educating people like Didjatou to prevent the spread of cholera in an area currently fighting an outbreak. Volunteers are also providing important information about detecting the signs and symptoms and where to go to seek health care.



More information: <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/community-epidemic-pandemic-preparedness>

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