

SIERRA LEONE

EPIDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Communities at the heart of our work

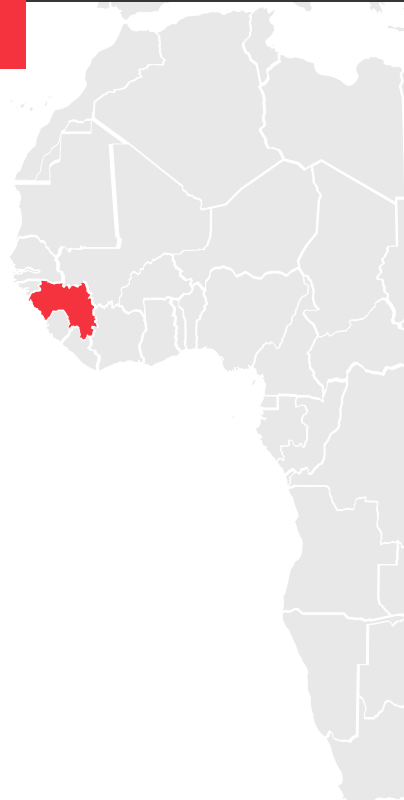
Epidemics begin and end in communities. When communities are engaged and trained in epidemic preparedness and response, they can find and stop outbreaks which will ultimately save lives, restore services and help build resilience.

Early detection, early action at community level

Sierra Leone has one of the lowest life expectancy in the world - including having one of the highest under five years of age childhood mortality rates. Six of the top ten causes of death in Sierra Leone are related to infectious diseases. Acute watery diarrhea, measles and viral haemorrhagic fevers are among some of the most critical health concerns in the country. It was only six years ago that the country faced the worst Ebola outbreak in history, which killed almost 4,000 people in Sierra Leone alone.

Sierra Leone 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, including Acute watery diarrhea, measles and viral haemorrhagic fevers. Focusing in Kailahun and Kambia, Sierra Leone Red Cross is working with governments, communities, local responders and humanitarian partners to collectively prepare for and respond to epidemics.

Sierra Leone 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.



74

traditional healers trained to provide critical information in the community on how to prevent and detect outbreaks

1,200

households reached with critical health messaging to prevent, detect and respond to diseases

400+

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

Sierra Leone Red Cross has more than 16,000 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.



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

Follow us: twitter.com/ifrc | facebook.com/ifrc | instagram.com/ifrc | youtube.com/ifrc