



NEWS
RELEASE

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION ESSENTIAL FOR HALTING EBOLA SPREAD IN DRC

Mercy Corps publishes new analysis on ways to overcome mistrust

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GOMA – The global organization Mercy Corps has published [new analysis](#), which demonstrates how community mobilization should be a central element to help stop the spread of Ebola in DRC and neighboring countries, taking lessons from the West Africa epidemic of 2014-2015.

With Ebola numbers in North Kivu, DRC, now at [1,851 confirmed cases, and 1,208 confirmed deaths](#), the largest outbreak in the country's history is spiralling out of control. It poses a serious threat to the ongoing humanitarian response in DRC on which nearly [13 million people](#) depend for lifesaving aid.

Despite the rapid pace of new infections, the Ebola response faces serious obstacles; confusion about the virus, and community resistance driven by a lack of trust between communities, the government and responders. This has resulted in open hostility and violence against the response, which has escalated from targeting facilities to targeting response workers.

Mercy Corps' [new analysis](#) includes lessons from its Ebola response in Liberia in 2014-2015, which reached over half the population in that country. Over a five-month period, Mercy Corps' community mobilization programs led to substantial and rapid changes in behaviors and a deeper level of understanding about how to prevent the spread of Ebola.

"While vaccines and treatment are essential to end the epidemic in DRC, if there isn't a level of trust and understanding about Ebola, we will not be able to reach communities to use these services and prevent future cases. Community engagement needs to be viewed as equal in importance to the medical response, and as a cross-cutting theme throughout," says Adrian Ouvry, Regional Humanitarian Advisor for Mercy Corps.

Mercy Corps' experience in Liberia highlights several key mobilization practices that can be adapted to the DRC context, while taking into consideration the unique political and conflict dynamics. These include partnering with trusted local communicators, engaging in ongoing conversations with individuals, and using community feedback to meaningfully shape the response.

"Successful community mobilization in a conflict setting will require the donor community to step up and urgently commit direct, flexible funds for organizations already working with communities on the frontlines," Ouvry added.

Mercy Corps is working in DRC in Ebola-affected areas on infection prevention and control in health facilities, schools and communities, and conducting health and hygiene education and communication campaigns in collaboration with community organizations and leaders. In March 2019, Mercy Corps also launched its Vision: Ebola Zero initiative to reduce the spread and impact of

ABOUT MERCY CORPS

- Leading global organization powered by the belief that a better world is possible
- Empowering people to survive through crisis, build better lives and transform their communities for good
- Meeting the urgent needs of today through emergency response and disaster preparedness
- Building a stronger tomorrow by connecting people to the resources they need to strengthen their community from within
- About 5,500 team members reaching nearly 28 million people
- \$471.8 million total operating revenue in FY2018; 86% channeled directly into programs in more than 40 countries

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Ebola in Goma, which is expected to reach 1.2 million people.
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