



Medical Mission Institute Würzburg

Catholic Advisory Organisation for International Health

... health for all.

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Würzburg,

Multifaceted Response to the Ebola Crisis in West Africa

Application for the EU Health Award for NGOs

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The recent outbreak of Ebola in West Africa was unprecedented in its socio-economic and political impact and became a major challenge for global health. Based on its capacities, competencies, experiences and mandate, the Medical Mission Institute Wuerzburg (MI), applied a multifaceted strategy to contribute to the Ebola response on national, international level and with partners in the crisis countries. As the aim of achieving zero Ebola is not a reality yet we continue to conduct a variety of activities, interventions or projects to contain the spread, to create and to reinforce capacities, to respond and to build resilience in the view of health system strengthening and alleviating impact with our partners in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Our multifaceted response can be described as follows.

1. Strengthening of the Ebola Response in Liberia

On behalf of the Medical Mission Institute, Misereor and the GIZ, Dr. Klemens Ochel paid various consultancy visits to catholic health centers, among them the St. Joseph Hospital in Monrovia, which had to be closed down because 9 health workers had contracted Ebola Virus Disease (EVD). To carefully plan Infection Prevention Control (IPC) measures and to coach the medical personnel before reopening the hospital was therefore of utmost importance. Furthermore Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was provided. The sterilization department and the laboratory of the hospital were re-established. Our laboratory specialist, Hanne Fleischmann, was sent to St. Joseph's to set up the new lab.

2. Ebola first level pre-deployment training for volunteers working in an Ebola outbreak

We have trained more than 200 international volunteers from various NGOs to effectively conduct an Ebola intervention. Participants learned in case simulations in a Mock-Ebola-Treatment-Unit to dress and undress PPE and to treat patients with Ebola. The theoretical sessions included topics such as staff health, basic medical facts about EVD and its management, logistic and water and sanitation aspects of an Ebola intervention, health promotion and psychosocial care, as well as epidemiologic management such as surveillance and contact tracing.

Since the end of 2014, an "EVD Training Kit" is available at our institute; we are able to now take up our training activities again immediately in case another emergency of national or international public health concern should occur. The course was conducted in cooperation with the German Red Cross and Doctors Without Borders.

3. Our course "**Living around Ebola**" focused on the preparation of non-healthcare professionals working in development cooperation, who initially had been evacuated from the field to resume their work in the Ebola stricken regions. The main goal of the course was to train the participants to protect themselves against EVD. Therefore, the participants learned how to successfully alter their own behavior and how to apply adequate safety precautions both in their private and professional life. We conducted the course in cooperation with the German Institute for Medical Mission (Difäm).

4. "EFFO"

EFFO is an Ebola preparedness project in Senegal and Burkina Faso, in which nearly one hundred multipliers have been trained to prevent, detect and manage EVD. The 5-day course covers all relevant aspects of an Ebola Intervention. However, the trainers stressed the importance of practical training in barrier nursing and the safe use of PPE. Another focus was set on basic hygiene precautions as they are essential for staff health in every health facility and the key to sustainable prevention of (highly) contagious diseases in the future. The training of trainers is already completed. We will run the program until March 2016, during that time we will still supervise the work of our trainers. Participants eligible for this program are members of Catholic health care providers in Burkina Faso and Senegal as they have been excluded from the governmental preparedness training. We conducted the course together with the Robert Koch Institute (RKI).

5. Ebola Toolbox

Ebola Toolbox (<http://www.ebolabox.org>) is a sub-unit of MEDBOX (www.medbox.org), a free and independent online library developed by the Medical Mission Institute aiming to improve quality of healthcare and humanitarian action. Via the Ebola Toolbox health workers have access to important guidelines on treatment, infection control, standard precautions, and other relevant documents about EVD and its containment. It is available in different languages.

6. Ebola - How to manage suspect cases

(Ebola-das richtige Vorgehen beim ersten Verdacht“)

This course was especially designed as a preparedness tool for possible EVD cases in Germany. We trained more than 250 German health care professionals and Public Health Service Officials to safely manage an Ebola suspect case and thus prevent the spread of EVD in Germany. The curriculum included an interactive, hands-on training in barrier nursing and the safe use of PPE as well as power-point presentations about the historical, medical and epidemiological background of EVD. Moreover, the participants learned on the basis of case simulations how to identify patients with possible EVD using the official German EVD Case detection algorithm. We conducted this course in cooperation with the Medical Mission Hospital Wuerzburg.

7. Ebola Response Misereor in neighboring countries

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8. Advocacy

The Medical Mission Institute's CEO, Michael Kuhnert and other employees of our institute have repetitively called on government and church officials to take immediate action in response to the current Ebola Emergency. We have not only stressed the need for Ebola Treatment Units but also for support of regular health care facilities as more people have died because of Ebola than from Ebola.

9. Supporting Serabu Hospital in Bo, Sierra Leone

We sent a specialist for highly contagious diseases, Norbert Gresser, to support Serabu Hospital in Sierra Leone. Serabu Hospital is not an Ebola Treatment facility but provides health care such as Malaria treatment, emergency (obstetric) surgery and paediatric care. Mr. Gresser trained staff in the use of personal protective equipment and evaluated triage and infection prevention control protocols.

Serabu Hospital was one of the very few health facilities in Sierra Leone that did not close during the 2014 Ebola epidemic and more importantly no health worker became infected with EVD due to very strict hygiene precautions which were set in place in spite of several cases of EVD that were diagnosed in the facility.

10. Clinical Management of Highly Contagious Diseases

One of the most important lessons to be learned from the current Ebola Epidemic is that it is not yet time to declare infectious diseases as a solved problem in public health. Therefore we have been asked by the German Red Cross to design and conduct a course for members of the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control and the Nigerian Red Cross about the clinical management of highly contagious diseases. We will focus on diseases that are endemic in Nigeria (such as VHF, Meningitis, Measles and Cholera) but we will also cover MERS CoV as its spread is continuing to evolve in alarming ways. This course is currently ongoing.

11. Ebola E-learning Initiative

Dr. Klemens Ochel designed an Ebola E-learning program covering the following aspects: The history and update of the 2014 Ebola emergency, Ebola - preparedness, prevention and control, the management of an Ebola Treatment Unit, medical aspects of EVD, and community mobilization during an EVD outbreak. The courses were held in English and French and were accompanied by expert tutors.

Through this capacity building measure we were able to provide timely access to newly developed of Alumni and encouraged the participants to implement transfer projects.