

What is Channels of Hope for Ebola?

The Channels of Hope (CoH) model is a World Vision (WV) methodology that mobilises faith leaders to respond to development issues in their immediate environments. In response to the Ebola crises, WV applied years of experience and developed a curriculum focused specifically on Ebola.

This curricula draws on a range of material including sacred scriptures, scientific information and messages, case studies, personal experience and interactive activities to remove religious and social barriers that result in the continued spread of Ebola. It also addresses the stigma and the psychosocial and spiritual challenges that affected individuals face. The programme fully equips faith leaders to promote accurate and responsible messages about Ebola and helps them to respond with compassion and care for affected people.



Why Channels of Hope for Ebola?

Faith leaders are amongst the most influential members in a community. They wield considerable influence over culture and what actions are prescribed or prohibited in their communities. With proper information and insight, faith leaders can be powerful messengers and change agents who play a significant role as part of a health and psychosocial care system in a communities. Their beliefs, values, role modelling and weekly messages can inspire entire communities to care for and love one another and deconstruct barriers to good health in their communities.



Faith Leaders share stories from their personal experience with Ebola and how it has impacted their lives and communities.

Unfortunately, faith leaders and faith communities often lack necessary skills and information to engage in a helpful way on health issues. In fact, they can drive wrong information or promote religious practices that continue to spread the disease.

CoH originally equipped faith leaders to overcome their silence on and judgment of HIV and AIDS, and to help others do the same. After successfully catalysing hundreds of thousands of faith leaders, WV field staff and partners saw the potential to apply CoH to other areas. WV subsequently developed CoH for Gender, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, and Child Protection were developed. When Ebola began to spread in Sierra Leone, faith leaders who had previously been exposed to

CoH for other areas began to mobilise; they realised that they had a moral obligation to respond. Impromptu workshops led WV to create full content for workshops to ensure faith leaders have supporting scriptural and accurate scientific information to inform and care for their communities.

Use in other groups

The CoH programme has been successfully adapted for various ecumenical Christian and Muslim contexts. It has also been used effectively with various non-faith groups including teachers, community leaders and youth. In such cases, the faith-specific content can be omitted, however the sustainability of the programme relies heavily on the long-term commitment of faith leaders to their communities; this vital component is not always present in the case of non-faith groups.

Key CoH-Ebola content

CoH for Ebola establishes personal relevancy for faith leaders through exploring faith texts and history to motivate their response. The curricula also shares relevant health messages and connects faith leaders to community partners, information and planning tools to effectively combat Ebola and provide support and care for those affected by the disease.

Title	Objective	Components
Ebola and Me	Give participants an opportunity to share their personal experience with Ebola	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal story and community stories • Hopes and fears
Ebola: More than basics	Share necessary, relevant technical information about Ebola	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of statistics • Ebola and the immune system • Modes of transmission • Testing and treatment
Living with realities	Bring statistics to life in the form of real people and stories and give a holistic understanding of needs for support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies/Personal story of a survivor • Addressing stigma • Home-based care and support • Psychosocial support
Ebola prevention	Accurate messages on how to prevent the spread of Ebola	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General guidelines • Safe, dignified burials
Faith response	Deepen understanding of sacred texts and moral responsibilities and opportunities	Opportunities for faith communities to prevent, care
Community response	Connect faith leaders to other community actors	Map relevant health and social services providers with clear ways to engage them
Towards Ebola competent faith communities	Faith communities learn to monitor and evaluate their progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of competencies • Tools to track progress

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