

# Channels of Hope for Ebola

## OVERVIEW

Channels of Hope is an interactive process to create a safe space for faith leaders, their spouses and faith communities to become active participants in the well-being of children through science-based information and insight from religious texts. It reaches to the root causes and deepest convictions that impact attitudes, norms, values and practices toward the most vulnerable. The process is grounded in guiding principles from participants' religious texts and is designed to move the heart, inform the mind and motivate a sustained and effective response to significant issues. Channels of Hope equips faith leaders to apply their religious texts to key social issues and encourage other faith leaders and faith communities to do the same.



## The Channels of Hope process

Channels of Hope is both a methodology and a process focused on partnering with local faith leaders, their congregations and communities for sustainable solutions to community needs. The process is structured into four phases of activity: prepare, catalyse, strategise, and empower.



## The Channels of Hope for Ebola objectives

Channels of Hope for Ebola draws on religious texts, 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.

Faith leaders are amongst the most influential members in a community, wielding considerable influence over culture and prescribing and prohibiting actions in their communities. Unfortunately, faith leaders and communities often lack necessary skills and information to engage in a helpful way on health issues, resulting in the spread

of wrong information and promotion of religious practices that could continue to spread Ebola.

Channels of Hope for Ebola enables faith leaders to become powerful messengers and agents of change, inspiring entire communities to care for and love one another and deconstruct barriers to good health in their communities.

### Key outcomes

- Faith communities are engaged in actions that contribute to Ebola prevention, advocacy or care
- Community knowledge about mechanisms to prevent and treat Ebola increases
- Survivors and families are supported and accepted

## Story of transformation in Sierra Leone

Ebola sparked a spiritual crisis in Sierra Leone that debilitated morale and compounded the devastating health emergency. Responding to the nation-wide fear and grief, faith leaders risked their own lives to comfort the sick and bereaved throughout the epidemic. And they did so much more. More than 2,000 leaders – both Christian and Muslim



‘When faith leaders got involved in the fight against Ebola, it was a turning point. They convinced people in churches and mosques to stop touching and burying Ebola victims, who remain highly infectious.’

- **Dr Alhaji Sanyi Turay,**  
**Bo District Medical Officer**

– were trained in Ebola awareness and prevention through Channels of Hope for Ebola.

Following the Channels of Hope training, faith leaders debunked rumours and stigma about Ebola. They called for compassion for virus survivors. They urged their congregations to adopt Ebola prevention measures – like

regular handwashing – and equipped them with buckets and chlorine. The clerics also helped followers to better understand passages in the Qur’an and the Bible about burial practices and caring for the sick. They successfully influenced hard-held attitudes, convincing people to change cherished traditions, such as unsafe burial rites – at least during the Ebola crisis. United, they saved lives.

## Channels of Hope for Ebola in numbers

- **371,580 community members** reached by faith leaders (Christian, Muslim, traditional chiefs and healers) trained in Channels of Hope workshops about preventions and anti-stigmatisation of survivors.
- **18,840 community focus groups** conducted by faith leaders
- **2,117 faith leaders** trained to conduct safe and dignified burial services and in Ebola prevention through Channels of Hope workshops
- **20 facilitators** from partner organisations trained (Catholic Relief Services, Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, and others)
- **130 Channels of Hope for Ebola training workshops** held
- **8 West African** countries benefitted from Channels of Hope training
- **0% of the 58,000 World Vision-sponsored children** in Sierra Leone who contracted Ebola

For more information on World Vision’s Channels of Hope work please visit [www.wvi.org/faith-and-development/channels-hope](http://www.wvi.org/faith-and-development/channels-hope)