

EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNITY BASED EVD RESPONSE

WVSL REFLECTION

WVSL EARLY RESPONSE

- Long standing engagement with communities was a capital for WV from where all other interventions sprang.
- Early on in the EVD outbreak before it spread across the country, WVSL leadership agreed and supported community engagement capitalizing on our long standing relationship to raise awareness and facilitate community actions including bye laws
- Engagement of other community resource persons like CHWs, faith leaders was key at a time when there was total mistrust in the healthcare system including the health workforce
- WVSL engagement as a trusted organization in the safe and dignified burial consortium could not have come at a better time. This was the time when burial teams were protesting and leaving the dead unattended
- Supply of PPE was useful for the protection of healthcare workers who were also dying controlling the outbreak

Lessons

- Community Engagement was key in turning the tide against the EVD outbreak. Understanding local cultures and adapting response programmes according is key to prevention and control. As a community based organization, this critical lesson deepens WVSL's resolve to continue working with and through trusted existing local structures and in future outbreak response
- Our integrated programming ensures reach and depth. It means that various project staff can interface with communities and beneficiaries bringing consistent messages for child wellbeing and outbreak response.
- Our work with faith leaders, community health workers and traditional leaders yielded fruits in restoring trust and confidence in healthcare without which many more lives could have been lost
- WVSL continued development work even in the course of the outbreak bringing Educational materials, livelihood support and healthcare to communities

Conclusion

- We have learnt these lessons after almost 4000 lives were lost to EVD. We owe it to the memories of our lost healthcare workers and compatriots. If we (as a country) have taken these actions early on, this much lives would not have been lost
- Let us never underestimate the importance of community trust and confidence in healthcare and their role in rolling back one of deadliest outbreaks in living memory. Capitalizing on existing social capital like trust and confidence is key.
- Messages on hygiene practices was easy to be reinforced as these are long standing investments WV has done through WASH programs.