



Sierra Leone Community Based Health Care Programme Q3 2010 Report

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**for
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Executive Summary

Thanks to the generous support of Soroptimist International Wales South Health Education & Hygiene Trust (SIWSHEHT), the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society's (SLRCS) Community Based Health Programme is providing invaluable support to improve health and hygiene in vulnerable communities.

During this quarter, one of the main priorities of the SLRCS has been responding to the suspected outbreak of Lassa fever in Bombali and Port Loko. Working together with the Ministry of Health, British Red Cross volunteers have conducted increasing numbers of awareness-raising sessions on Lassa fever across all branches. In addition, Red Cross volunteers are using drama performances to help communities detect Lassa fever at the crucial early stages.

Despite poor road networks, caused by heavy rains between July and September, Red Cross volunteers have carried out an enormous amount of work including, chlorinating wells, delivering training in hygiene promotion and distributing hygiene promotion kits. This ongoing work continues to underpin SLRCS's promotion of Lassa fever prevention and control.

Highlights

Here are some just some highlights of what we have been able to achieve this quarter:

- Red Cross volunteers chlorinated 45 traditional wells and 4 hand pumps, providing safe water to over 8,500 people.
- In collaboration with UNICEF, 720 community motivators were trained on child survival and are now teaching households on family hygiene procedures such as the benefits of immunisation, exclusive breastfeeding, and environmental sanitation.
- 80 link teachers were trained across all 13 branches
- 520 volunteers were trained in Community Based Health First Aid in all 13 branches
- 70 community meetings on prevention and control of Lassa fever were carried out across all branches.

Achievements this quarter

Reducing stigma

In the run up to World AIDS Day, over 240 Youth Peer Educators conducted 36 drama performances in schools and local communities in order to raise much-needed awareness about HIV and AIDS related issues. These performances reached over 19,000 people across 11 branches

A total of 245 Youth Peer Educators from all branches conducted regular monthly meetings in order to reflect on their past achievements and plan for the future.



Care, support and treatment

Home Based Care facilitators and Branch Health Officers made 27 home visits to people living with HIV and AIDS (PLHIV) in Bo and Moyamba in order to provide invaluable support and assistance to care givers.

Nutritional support in the form of beans, rice, palm oil and vitamins supplements were provided to 60 PLHIV. In addition, 105 orphans and vulnerable children and 83 PLHIV in Bombali also received nutritional support in the form of beans, rice and oil with support from the Global Fund.



Early detection and control of Lassa fever

During this quarter, the Ministry of Health and Sanitation reported a suspected outbreak of Lassa fever in Bombali and Port Loko. In Kenema, two people were confirmed as having Lassa fever. Very sadly, they later died in hospital.

Red Cross staff and volunteers are carrying out continuous monitoring and increasing numbers of awareness raising sessions on Lassa fever in the Northern Province.

Branch Health Officers conducted 70 community meetings to educate communities about the signs, symptoms, prevention and control of Lassa fever across all branches. In addition, participatory drama performances on the prevention and control of Lassa fever are being carried out by Red Cross volunteers in the local communities.

Prevention and control of communicable diseases

In Pujehun upper Malen Cheifdom and Kpanda Kabonde chiefdom, 3,606 long-lasting insecticide treated nets were distributed in the communities. Red Cross Volunteers also conducted awareness-raising on the importance of using nets. During house visits 345 children under the age of five were successfully found to be sleeping under insecticide treated nets.

Hygiene promotion and safe water

Through the dedication of 420 local volunteers, the Red Cross provided house to house promotional activities on hygiene, sanitation and related health issues to communities across all 13 branches.

In the Tonkolili district 542 hygiene kits were distributed and four new Water and Sanitation teams were formed across two branches. A total of 46 community meetings were held regarding the important use of latrines, and 36 community meetings were held on Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST).



In Moyowa, Semabu, Senehun, Timbo and Kabati, Red Cross volunteers chlorinated 45 traditional wells and four hand pumps. These wells are now providing safe water to over 8,500 people.

A five-day workshop on hygiene promotion delivered by the Red Cross reached over 520 school children across all branches. In addition, awareness-raising on the importance of hygiene was carried out in the wider communities across all branches. As a result of these health promotion talks, there has been a noticeable improvement in the habit and frequency of hand washing in communities.



Promoting exclusive breastfeeding

Red Cross Volunteers reached 5,432 people, including pregnant and lactating women and their husbands, with vital information about the importance of exclusive breastfeeding. Volunteers also made an additional 874 home visits as part of their health promotion exercise.

During World Breastfeeding week between 1 and 7 August 2010, SLRCS, the Ministry of Health, and UNICEF worked together to raise awareness on the importance of exclusive breastfeeding. A total of 10,561 women of childbearing age were reached across 13 branches.

Immunisation and growth monitoring

In this quarter we continued to raise awareness of the vital importance of full immunisation of children under five and women of childbearing age. During home visits by Red Cross Volunteers, 226 children were found to be fully immunised against vaccine preventable diseases. During these visits, volunteers referred 16 children under five years old for immunisation at appropriate health facilities.

A total of 1,272 children under five had their growth monitored by volunteers. Of this figure, 927 were of a healthy weight, whilst 345 children were severely malnourished and immediately referred to an appropriate health centre for treatment.