

# EBOLA: RESPONDING FOR THE LONG TERM



Save the Children

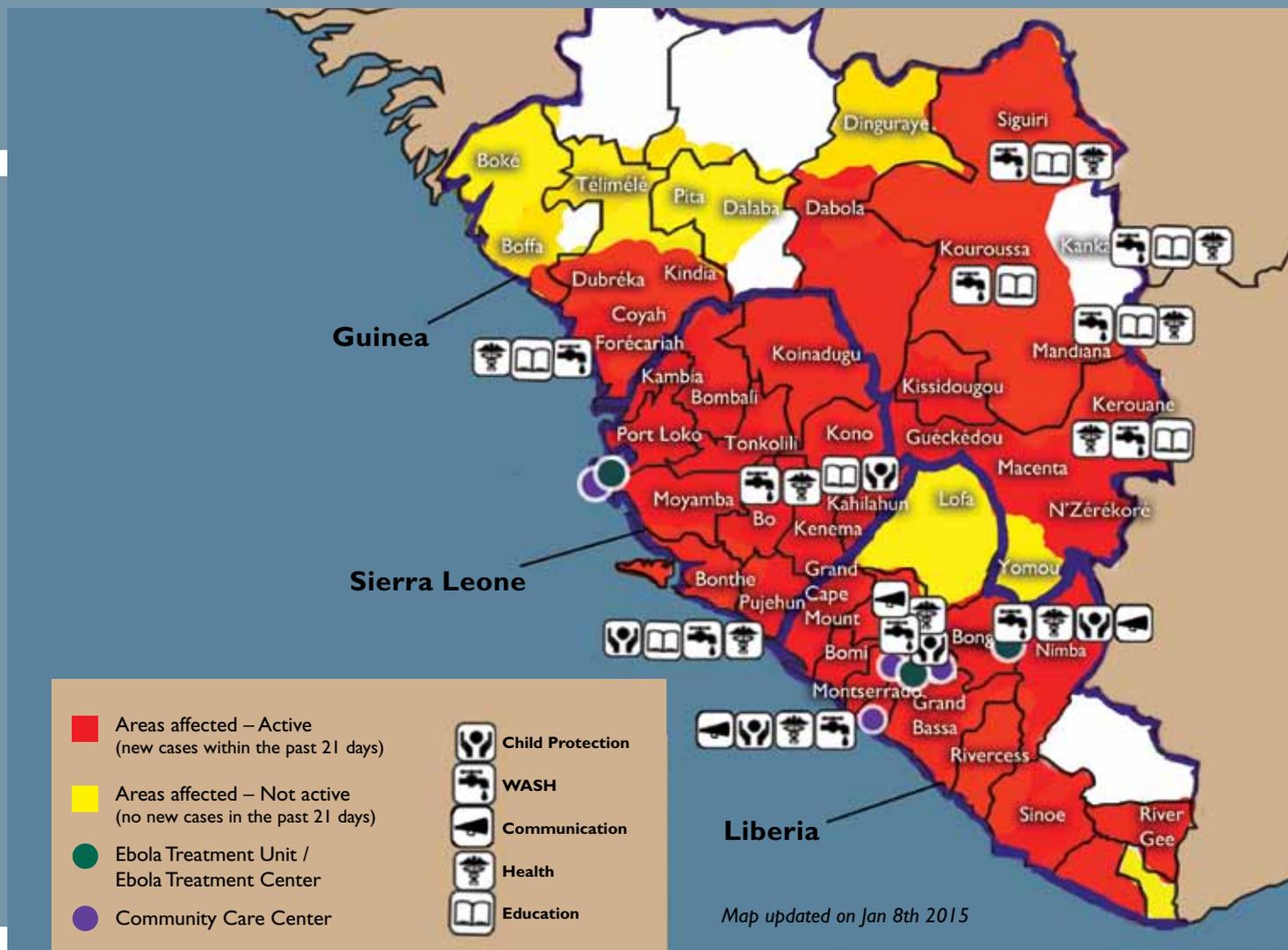
# THE OUTBREAK

The Ebola epidemic in West Africa represents an unprecedented global public health crisis. Since the first case in a remote area of Guinea in late 2013, the virus has spread through Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea at an alarming rate.

The outbreak threatens to set the three countries back a decade in development progress. Having made a fragile recovery from conflict and instability, they now face a situation where thousands of children have lost parents and family members, and where many more have missed out on critical months of learning, with schools

closed since mid 2014. The closure of borders and restrictions on movement are impacting markets and food availability, while reduced productivity threatens to deepen food insecurity and vulnerability among affected communities. The World Bank estimates that the economic impact of the Ebola epidemic to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone will be well over US\$ 2 billion in 2014–15.

The scale of the epidemic is also taking a significant toll on already weak health systems, as scarce resources are redirected to address Ebola, reducing the capacity to deal with routine health problems. In this context women and children are particularly vulnerable. Essential health services such as pre-natal care and routine immunisation have been badly hit, threatening to jeopardise recent hard-won gains in child and maternal health.



## THE GLOBAL RESPONSE



ASHLEY HAMERS/SAVE THE CHILDREN

**A key challenge in 2015 will be to both end the outbreak and invest in rebuilding the health systems left devastated by Ebola.**

Across all three countries, the international response now has sufficient capacity to isolate and treat all patients, with the WHO reporting that there are now more than two treatment beds per reported confirmed and probable case. To put that into perspective; at the height of this epidemic last September there was a shortage of over 2,000 beds compared with patients. Similarly, there is now capacity for 100% of burials to be conducted safely.

As of late December, \$1.2 billion of the \$1.5 billion of the revised appeal was available with almost half disbursed in six months. In order to ensure we never see a repeat of the devastation caused by a virus like Ebola, we need international commitment to establish a universal standard of health infrastructure to protect the most vulnerable from future epidemics.

The risk is that, as the outbreak is contained and new cases fall off, we will see a rapid draw down of donor support and a return to the pre-crisis situation. It's essential that the international community stays the course and works with Ebola affected countries to build back stronger in essential services, and repair the economic damage wrought by the outbreak.

# IMPACT ON FRAGILE HEALTH SYSTEMS

Health systems in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone that were already under severe stress risk collapsing as a result of the Ebola outbreak. Ebola has killed at least 500<sup>1</sup> health workers in countries already beset by a chronic shortage of health professionals. Now, children and families are afraid to visit health clinics for fear of contracting the disease or being misdiagnosed. They are going untreated for common and treatable but deadly diseases like malaria and diarrhoea.

Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone have some of the most severe shortages of medical resources and capacity in the world. Prior to the Ebola outbreak, Liberia and Sierra Leone needed an additional 8,600 and 12,700 qualified health workers respectively to meet WHO guidelines to ensure minimum delivery of health services to their populations.

In combatting Ebola, information is a key battleground. As part of the international response, we have trained thousands of health workers to reach out into Ebola-hit communities and create the behaviour change needed to bring transmission rates down.

1. As of 11 January 2015/ <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/situation-reports/en/>



KRISTYANIS NONGSA/SAVE THE CHILDREN



CHRIS DE BODE/SAVE THE CHILDREN



BEFORE THE OUTBREAK, SIERRA LEONE HAD JUST 127 DOCTORS. THAT IS ONE DOCTOR PER 45,455 PEOPLE. THE UK HAS ONE DOCTOR FOR EVERY 358 PEOPLE.



- BEFORE EBOLA THE GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA WAS SPENDING \$30 PER PERSON PER YEAR ON HEALTH, SIERRA LEONE \$34 AND GUINEA \$19.
- BY COMPARISON, IN THE SAME YEAR THE GOVERNMENTS OF FRANCE, THE USA AND NORWAY SPENT \$3,278, \$4,128 AND \$5,080 PER PERSON RESPECTIVELY ON HEALTH.
- THE WHO RECOMMENDS THAT \$60 PER CAPITA SHOULD BE SPENT TO PROVIDE MINIMUM ESSENTIAL HEALTH SERVICES.



THE UK HAS ONE PROFESSIONAL HEALTH WORKER FOR EVERY 86 PEOPLE. LIBERIA HAD ONE FOR EVERY 3,472 INHABITANTS AND SIERRA LEONE ONE FOR EVERY 5,319.



PRIOR TO THE OUTBREAK, LIBERIA HAD 8 HOSPITAL BEDS PER 10,000 PEOPLE, WHILE GUINEA HAD ONLY 3 PER 10,000. BY COMPARISON, ITALY HAS 36, SWITZERLAND 52, AND JAPAN 137 BEDS PER 10,000 PEOPLE.

# SAVE THE CHILDREN RESPONSE

Save the Children has been on the ground in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia since the crisis began. Our priority is to stop the spread of the disease and bring Ebola under control by running mass prevention and awareness campaigns. We are also setting up and managing health centres where Ebola sufferers can be isolated and treated.

## How we're responding in Liberia

- We have reached 34,000 people directly and 283,000 people indirectly through Ebola awareness programmes.
- We have built two Ebola treatment units which are being run by the International Medical Corps.
- We have established two community care centres to provide community level rapid isolation and treatment.
- We are providing specialist emotional support to children whose lives have been affected by the crisis.

## How we're responding in Sierra Leone

- Save the Children helped the UK government set up an 80 bed Ebola Treatment Centre (ETC) in Kerry Town which we now manage and run. Recently, we discharged our 100th patient from the ETC, a twelve year old boy, just five weeks since its opening.
- We supported 1,007 community health workers in Freetown on a house to house sensitisation campaign reaching over 97,000 people.
- We are providing care to unaccompanied children and orphans affected by the crisis.

## How we're responding in Guinea

- We have recorded radio broadcasts to raise awareness of hygiene practices and help people understand what to do if they suspect they, or someone they know, might have the virus.
- We have supported the training of health workers in contact tracing in Kerouane and Conakry.
- We are conducting awareness sessions for health workers on how to deal with the outbreak and protect themselves.



SAVE THE CHILDREN



DANI STEWART/SAVE THE CHILDREN



AUBREY WADSWORTH/SAVE THE CHILDREN

# THE HIDDEN IMPACT

The impact of Ebola has gone far beyond the 21,000 reported cases and over 8,000 reported deaths.

Over 12,000 children have lost one or both parents to the disease and they now face uncertain futures, with the fear of the disease sometimes overriding people's impulse to care for vulnerable children.

Schools are closed and an estimated 5 million children are currently missing their lessons putting a generation's education at risk. We know that once children have the absolute basics they need to survive, education is their number one priority in an emergency. (Source: UNICEF)

## Education

It has been almost 1 year since Joshua\* 12, (pictured), has been able to go to school. He used to attend a school supported by Save the Children in Margibi, Liberia, but due to the Ebola crisis, schools across the country have now closed. He's missing his spelling and mathematics lessons. His favourite subject is maths and he wants to become a mathematician, but for now he uses his maths skills helping his mother sell goods.

\*Name has been changed



# LETTERS FROM CHILDREN TO WORLD LEADERS



LOUIS LEBON/SAATCHI CHILDREN

*“I want the world leaders to send more health workers to take Ebola from in our country. We can do it together.”*

*\*Ben, Liberia, age 10*

*Dear world leaders,*

*I'm Dimitri\* and I am 16 years old. I have lost three of my friends to Ebola, as well as my best friend which put me through a lot of pain.*

*I can't play with my friend anymore neither can I go to school all because of Ebola. I am kindly asking all the world leaders to pay attention to us and do more helping us kick Ebola out of Liberia. We the children of Liberia need you all and your support. Help us kick Ebola out and put smiles on our faces again.*

*Yours,*

*Dimitri\*, Liberia, 16 years old*

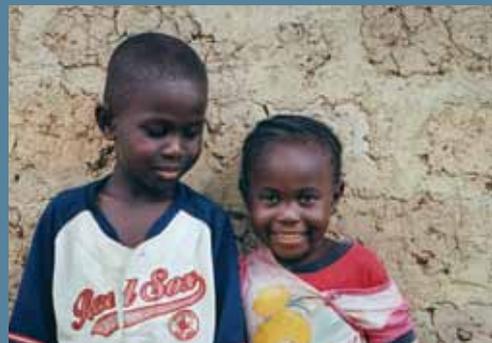
*Dear world leaders,*

*We see our futures fading away because of Ebola. The situation here in Sierra Leone is very serious. The impact of the disease is being felt across every aspect of children's lives. Truly, to defeat Ebola we must both stop its transmission and ensure that the disease does not take away children's futures.*

*Children in Sierra Leone are seeing their lives and future being shattered due to the impact of Ebola. In many hospitals and treatment centres, children are treated in the same way as adults, without special children's wards and paediatric care and support. We need special wards at all Ebola treatment centres and isolation units across the country. The impact on the health system threatens to have put the lives of children more at risk.*

*Following the closure of schools we feel that our futures have been put on hold.*

*Sierra Leone Children's Network*



# Together we can #EndEbola



Photos: Front cover: Louis Leeson/Save the Children  
This page, top left: Krista Armstrong/Save the Children, 2,3: Aubrey Wade/Save the Children,  
Middle: 1 Aubrey Wade/Save the Children, 2 Chris de Bode/Save the Children, 3 Louis Leeson/Save the Children  
Bottom: 1 Louis Leeson/Save the Children, 2,3 Dan Stewart/Save the Children