



CAMEROON

COMMUNITY EPIDEMIC AND PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS PROGRAMME

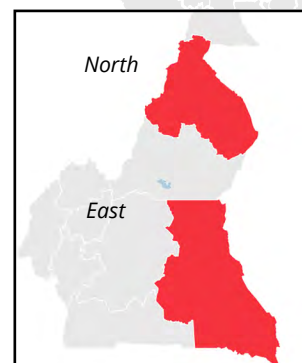
Early detection. Early action. Healthier communities.

Epidemics and pandemics are some of the biggest threats to a safe and healthy world. But with effective preparedness and response, we can minimize their impacts and even stop them in their tracks.

Cameroon's epidemiological profile is marked by a combination of infectious and parasitic diseases. The main causes of death in the country are HIV/AIDS, diarrhoeal diseases, and malaria. About 70 per cent of health facilities across Cameroon do not have the necessary medical equipment or staff to provide quality health care. Violence and food insecurity also pose critical challenges to people's health.

The Cameroon Red Cross, with support from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and funding from USAID, has been helping communities prepare for and prevent the spread of diseases. Focusing in the North and East regions, the Cameroon Red Cross is working with the government, communities, local responders, and humanitarian partners to effectively prepare for and respond to epidemics.

Through its extensive network of local volunteers, the Cameroon Red Cross is providing critical information and referrals, in coordination with the Ministry of Public Health and Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries, to help prevent and contain disease outbreaks.



■ Programme focus areas

406

alerts including acute watery diarrhea, measles, COVID-19, viral hemorrhagic fever, yellow fever, meningitis, rabies, anthrax, Rift Valley fever, unusual illnesses or deaths in animals; between June 2023 and April 2024.

458

volunteers trained in epidemic control, community-based health and first aid from June 2018 to December 2023.

27,900+

community stakeholders and teachers engaged from June 2018 to December 2023.

91,700+

households reached with critical health messaging from June 2018 to December 2023.



OUR WORK



Preparing communities

We make sure communities have critical information about the spread of diseases and how to prevent them, systems to detect outbreaks and mechanisms that ensure information sharing and community engagement. Activities include:

- Engaging communities through house-to-house visits, school clubs and group discussions.
- Strengthening community-based referral systems.
- Engaging, training and collaborating with community influencers and leaders.



Preparing first responders

Cameroon Red Cross has more than 20,000 volunteers across the country which gives extraordinary reach into communities. Through its auxiliary role to government, it is often central to emergency response during disease outbreaks. Activities include:

- Strengthening systems to enable a fast, scaled-up response.
- Strengthening partnerships with different sectors and ministries.
- Training and readying community-based volunteers.
- Strengthening infection prevention and control in Red Cross health facilities.



Preparing stakeholders

Epidemics don't just threaten lives. They threaten all parts of society, including trade, transport, and education. We work with a wide range of stakeholders in epidemic preparedness and response. Activities include:

- Helping prepare a variety of sectors to respond, including partners in human, animal, and environmental health.
- Training media to report accurate, lifesaving information to help affected populations.
- Engaging schools, teachers and students on critical epidemic preparedness activities and messages.



Tackling a cholera outbreak in northern Cameroon

In 2019, a cholera outbreak was declared in the north region of Cameroon, one of the two regions where the Community Epidemic and Pandemic Preparedness Programme is being implemented.

The Cameroon Red Cross supported the Ministry of Public Health's response. Trained volunteers supported active case finding, identifying 1,176 cases. They stepped up activities in affected communities by raising awareness about the risks of cholera and preventive measures. They increased water, sanitation and hygiene activities, including handwashing demonstrations and environmental clean-up days. The Red Cross also worked with radio stations to promote lifesaving messages through spots and radio shows in the local languages.

The active participation of Red Cross volunteers during the outbreak earned the National Society recognition as an essential partner from the regional Ministry of Health representative. Only 62 deaths were recorded.

