

# GUINEA

## EPIDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

### Communities at the heart of our work

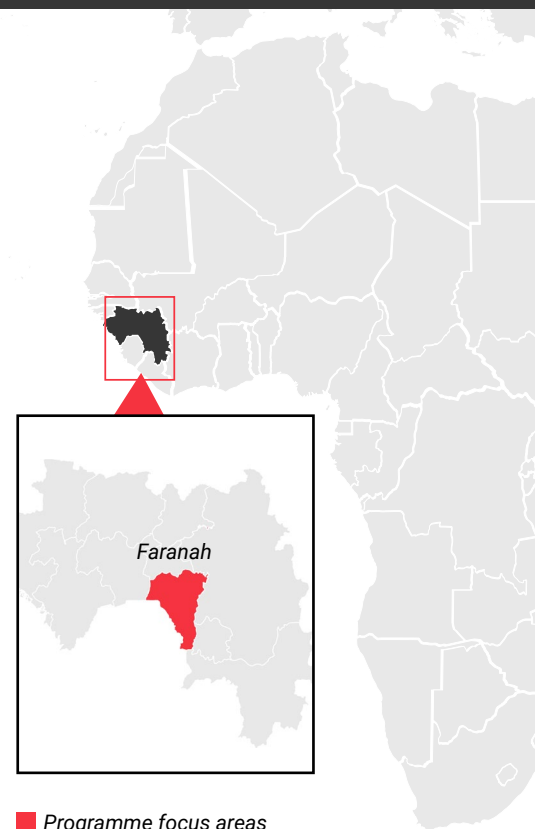
Epidemics begin and end in communities. When communities are engaged and trained in epidemic preparedness and response, they can stop outbreaks and ultimately save lives.

### Early detection, early action

More than half of the population in Guinea live below the poverty line, with alarming food insecurity and malnutrition rates, particularly in rural areas. It was only six years ago that the country faced the worst Ebola outbreak in history, which killed more than 11,000 people in Guinea alone. The country also faces a relatively weak health system with critical shortages of health workers.

Guinea Red Cross, with support from the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and funding from USAID, has been helping communities prepare and prevent the spread of diseases. Volunteers are sensitizing communities about the health risks around diseases including cholera, yellow fever, viral haemorrhagic fevers and rabies. Focused in the Faranah region, Red Cross works with governments, communities, local responders and humanitarian partners to collectively prepare and respond to epidemics.

Through an extensive network of community-based volunteers, Guinea Red Cross is providing critical information, surveillance and referrals in the local and hard-to-reach areas in coordination with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock.



■ Programme focus areas

**26**

journalists trained to help provide prevention messages and life-saving information during emergencies.

**85**

staff, volunteers and government partners trained on data literacy.

**540**

volunteers trained in epidemic control, community-based health and first aid.



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



# OUR WORK



## Preparing communities

We are ensuring 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 and group discussions.
- Strengthening community-based referral systems.
- Engaging, training and collaborating with community influencers, such as religious leaders, healers and traditional burial attendants.



## Preparing first responders

Guinea Red Cross has almost 2,500 volunteers across the country which gives extraordinary reach into communities. In their supporting role to the government, they are often central to emergency responses amid outbreaks. Activities include:

- Contingency planning with government and key partners.
- Strengthening systems to enable a fast, scaled-up response.
- Strengthening partnerships with different sectors and ministries.
- Training and readying community-based volunteers.



## Preparing stakeholders

Epidemics not only threaten lives but all aspects of society, including trade, transportation and education. We work with a variety of key stakeholders and the media in epidemic preparedness and response. Activities include:

- Helping prepare a variety of sectors to respond (including those affected by both animal and human health).
- Mapping critical data to help responders make informed decisions when a health crisis hits.
- Training media to communicate lifesaving information to affected populations.

## Working with media to respond during emergencies

Media has the power to save lives. Guinea Red Cross and IFRC, in partnership with BBC Media Action, have been working together to help strengthen their skills in community communication in emergencies. This included training journalists and communication professionals on how to share information that helps prevent or reduce the spread of disease, provide life-saving information to people affected by disasters and guide those affected towards humanitarian services and health care.

“  
**Communication in emergency situations needs to be better handled so as not to aggravate panic. With this training, I will improve my journalistic practice in times of crisis to help the population.**  
”

*Mamady Camara, Baobab FM radio correspondent*



More information: [media.ifrc.org/ifrc/community-epidemic-pandemic-preparedness](https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/community-epidemic-pandemic-preparedness)

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