



CAMEROON

EPIDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Communities at the heart of our work

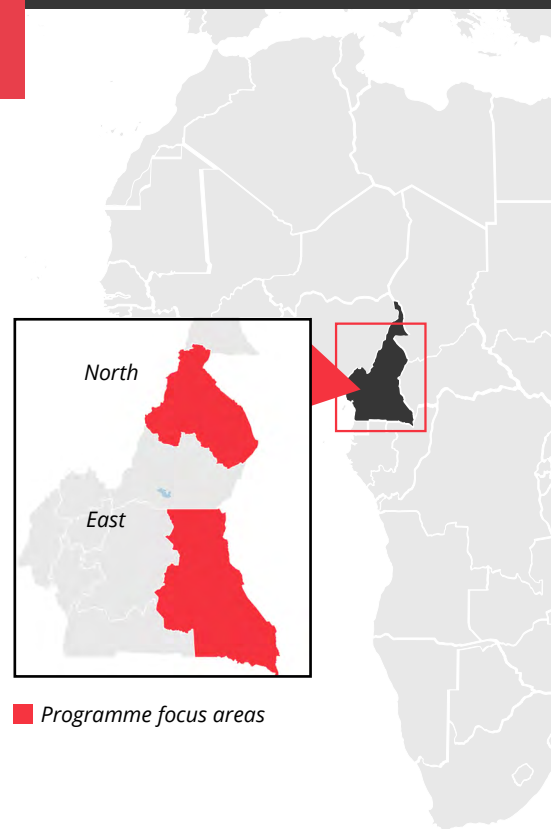
Epidemics begin and end in communities. When communities are engaged and trained in epidemic preparedness and response, they can stop outbreaks and ultimately save lives.

Early detection, early action

Cameroon is facing growing insecurity in its Far North, South and North-West regions as well as significant deterioration of food security, which makes many people vulnerable to health risks. With many people displaced, access to adequate health and sanitation services can be difficult. Cholera, measles, polio, Mpox, and yellow fever are among the most critical health concerns in the country.

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 and prevent the spread of diseases. Focusing in North and East Cameroon, Red Cross is working with governments, communities, local responders, and humanitarian partners to collectively prepare for and respond to epidemics.

Through its extensive network of local volunteers, 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 stop diseases from spreading before an outbreak occurs.



11,000

community stakeholders engaged
from June 2018 to December 2022.

102,000

households reached with critical
health messaging from June
2018 to December 2022.

400

volunteers trained in epidemic
control, community-based
health and first aid from June
2018 to December 2022.

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, 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. In their supporting role to the government, they are often central to emergency responses amid 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 not only threaten lives but all aspects of society, including trade, transportation and education. We work with a variety of key stakeholders in epidemic preparedness and response. Activities include:

- Helping prepare a variety of sectors to respond, including those affected by both animal and human health.
- Training media to communicate lifesaving information to affected populations.
- Engaging, training and collaborating with schools, teachers and students on critical epidemic preparedness messages.

Tackling a cholera outbreak in northern Cameroon

In 2019, a cholera outbreak was declared in the northern Region of Cameroon, one of the two regions where the 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 risk 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 language.

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.

