

## GLOBAL CONTEXT

On August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018, an Ebola outbreak was declared in Eastern DR Congo. As of 11<sup>th</sup> September, there were 31 probable and 102 confirmed cases, with 19 suspected cases currently under investigation. There have been 92 deaths. Out from the 102 confirmed cases, 61 have died and 37 have recovered (according to the Ministry of Health Situation Report, 11<sup>th</sup> September). Under the leadership of the Congolese Ministry of Health and the World Health Organisation, Medair and other partners are working to respond and to mitigate against further spread of Ebola Virus Disease.

## WEEKLY UPDATE

From 05<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> September:

- There have been 4 new confirmed cases, and 3 deaths.
- In the past week, there have been 2 new confirmed cases in Butembo; given Butembo town's size (more than 670,000) there is concern about urban spread of Ebola in this area.
- Vaccinations are still ongoing in the Nord Kivu and Ituri provinces. So far 8,444 people have been vaccinated in Mabalako, Beni, Mandima, Oicha, Masereka, Butembo, and Katwa health zones where cases have been confirmed, as well as in Kinshasa (health care workers to be deployed to support the response).

## MEDAIR RESPONSE SUMMARY

Before the outbreak was declared, Medair was working in 47 health facilities in Eastern DR Congo, with Health, Nutrition, and WASH related interventions. Medair's first priority is to ensure that suspected Ebola cases can be safely identified, isolated and referred at these health facilities, in order to:

- 1) Ensure suspected Ebola patients receive timely care
- 2) Prevent further spread of the Ebola Virus Disease
- 3) Enable affected populations to continue to access quality primary health care in a safe environment

Beginning with areas where the risk is most elevated, Medair is ensuring that supported health centres are equipped to triage patients at the entrance to the health centre before isolating suspected Ebola cases in a temporary isolation area, while arranging for referral.

Health centre staff are being trained on how to consistently implement screening, isolation and referral without exposing themselves or other patients to the risk of being infected with Ebola Virus Disease. To support this, they are being equipped with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and receive instruction - derived from the WHO guidelines for responding to Ebola in DR Congo - on how to safely screen and isolate suspected Ebola patients.

In addition to supporting health facilities covered by pre-existing projects, Medair has prioritised and begun working in seven additional health centres as part of the Ebola response. These health facilities were selected based on the level of risk of suspected cases emerging. Health personnel in all seven health facilities are now trained and equipped to properly screen and isolate suspected Ebola cases, as well as to refer them safely to the nearest Ebola Treatment Center (ETC). At each health facility, a package of Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures, and water, sanitation, and hygiene support has been provided, both in the health facilities themselves, and in surrounding communities.

The health facilities that Medair supports are included as an annex.



A mother and child are screened at the entrance to Oicha referral hospital, Beni Territory, DR Congo. Medair established screening here on August 21<sup>st</sup>, and has followed up regularly to ensure that it is implemented consistently.

### PROGRESS UPDATE: BENI

- In the past week, six new national staff (one WASH Project Manager, one WASH Promoter, two Health Supervisors, one Health Promoter and one Monitoring & Evaluation Assistant) have been hired to add capacity for the response as well as support the other ongoing projects.
- Further interviews have been completed and additional staff will shortly join the team.
- The focus continues to be on the training of health care workers on Ebola and its transmission, as well as the implementation of screening and isolation areas in health facilities. Supervision is still ongoing in all supported health facilities in order to ensure and reinforce good IPC practices.
- Due to staffing constraints, some health facilities (Oicha, Mbau and Sayo) do not have the capacity to support the screening areas after 1500hrs. Medair is therefore recruiting additional staff and be able to cover the afternoon shift of the screening stations. These additional staff members will be trained and supervised, and will initially be hired on a one-month non-employee contract.
- On the 06<sup>th</sup> of September, there was a confirmed case in Butembo, who was a contact who traveled from Beni. Consequently, the Medair Beni team decided to reinforce support to our existing health facilities along the major roads between Beni and Butembo. Four health facilities have been prioritised to be supported with training and materials. In Kivethya and Butuhe, health care workers have been trained on Ebola and its transmission, as well as the implementation of screening and isolation areas. Due to security issues on the road, similar work planned for

Mabuku and Kalungunta has had to be paused until calm is restored and teams can conduct their work safely.

- On the 08<sup>th</sup> of September, the team received reports of damage to one of Medair supported health centre, where the handwashing station has been destroyed. This was due to community unrest following the death of a suspect Ebola case in the nearby community. Medair will evaluate the situation and ensure that adequate community outreach is conducted, before returning to the health centre to set up a new handwashing station and to replenish the stock that was damaged or destroyed.

#### PROGRESS UPDATE: BUNIA

- The Bunia Project Coordinator (PC) has departed for three weeks of holiday. The PC from the Tshikapa base is on his way to Bunia to cover for that role in her absence. Before starting his mission, he will be briefed on the Ebola response by the Ebola Health Coordinator in Beni.
- On the 05<sup>th</sup> of September, the Ebola Health Coordinator travelled to Bunia to spend two days with the Bunia team and ensure the standardisation of the Medair Ebola Response between Beni and Bunia. She gave a training of donning and doffing of full PPE to part of the international and national staff. The team also took the opportunity to share experience and challenges of the past month of the response.
- On the evening of 10<sup>th</sup> September, a person arrived to Kainama health center showing Ebola symptoms. The patient was screened at the entrance of the facility, and put in isolation with the help of his family as he was too weak to walk alone; the Medair team raised an alert. It is encouraging to see that the training that was done to the health care workers enabled them to properly screen and identify that suspected case, as well as isolate him without putting themselves and others at risk. However, insecurity around that area and lack of coordination between the Beni and the Bunia coordination commissions and partners created challenges to safely take a sample, manage the dead body, and decontaminate the isolation area. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of September, the suspected case turned out to be negative. However, on that same day a second suspected case was isolated. The team in Bunia and the Département Provinciale de la Santé (DPS) is traveling to Kainama to decontaminate the area, take a specimen sample (if the suspect case meets the Ebola case definition), and reinforce IPC procedures. Medair has been encouraging the other partners involved to ensure better coordination between the Beni and Bunia commissions<sup>1</sup>.

#### PROGRESS UPDATE: NATIONAL / GLOBAL LEVEL

- After having spent three weeks supporting the response in Beni, one of the Global Emergency Response team members travelled back to Switzerland to resume her work in HQ. She will still provide high level support remotely in her role of Senior Health and Nutrition Advisor.
- Discussions are ongoing with UNICEF regarding the WASH project in Goma. After visiting several health facilities with the DPS, the Goma team has selected ten health facilities to support as part of this project; the list of the proposed facilities has been shared with UNICEF.
- Medair has been working on a new proposal for an OFDA project to include IPC support of health facilities during the Ebola epidemic.

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<sup>1</sup> Information around this case is incomplete and conflicting information have been received. Therefore, the accuracy of the current version cannot be guaranteed.

## ACTIVITIES

In addition to the health facilities Medair supported before the outbreak, seven health facilities in the highest risk areas have been added, evaluations of these health facilities have been conducted and safe screening and isolation have already been established in the seven additional health facilities.

Medair also continues to carry out ongoing supervision in supported health facilities to ensure compliance and improve upon IPC practices in the health facilities. In parallel, Medair continues to assess needs to increase our support to existing health facilities or to support additional facilities based on the spread of the outbreak. Following the confirmed Ebola case in Butembo, Medair is focusing some of its work on health facilities on the Beni – Butembo road.

Medair will continue to participate in the coordination of the Ebola response, helping to ensure coverage and avoid duplication of activities. It is liaising closely with partners to ensure that Medair's work achieves its objective of stopping disease spread and complements that of other humanitarian organisations.

## CHALLENGES & NEEDS

- **Security:** Insecurity remains a major challenge within the region. The activities of armed groups in the area have created difficulties to access health facilities. From Saturday 08<sup>th</sup> to Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> of September, there were several security incidents on different axes from Beni to surrounding cities, as well as in Beni town. As a consequence of repeated insecurity incidents in the past weeks, Medair has increased the level of security from yellow to orange; additional security measures will be put in place to protect staff members.
- **Community resistance:** Community resistance represents a major challenge in this response, creating risks for expansion of the outbreak to new areas. The Ndindi neighbourhood in Beni town has been identified as one of the major centres of the epidemic at the moment. It has been highlighted that, for a long period of time, some families have been hiding sick people, prevented health care workers from transporting patients to the Ebola Treatment Centres (ETCs), refusing vaccination, and traveling outside of their area against contact tracing advice. Several violent incidents against medical staff and health facilities had also been reported. Some confirmed cases in other towns like Butembo have been traced back to Ndindi. Community resistance is also an issue in health areas where Medair is active. Also, the Medair Health Supervisors and Health Promoters have shared concerns about safety, particularly with regards to community engagement in areas where Ebola Response actors are being resisted.
- **Human Resources:** Despite the addition of new staff members, both national and international staff continue to be overstretched, with cumulative tiredness from working overtime since the beginning of the outbreak. The HR team is hoping that the new timesheet template in place will help to better monitor overtime and enable to managers to give proper rest to their team members.
- **Space:** As the number of staff in Beni keeps increasing, space for the base staff and office remains a concern. The search for additional office and/or team base is still ongoing. During the past week, one office space and four houses have been visited. However, due to security constraints, none of them can be considered as viable options, but the quotes will be used as comparison for further search. It has been observed that the lack of working space also creates additional stress to staff members, adding an additional layer to the current level of concerns. However, finding a big enough space in town remains difficult taking into account the activities of other NGOs. Similarly, the warehouse space and means of transportation in

Beni remain a challenge.

- **Procurement:** The logistics team often purchases materials in Butembo, but insecurity issues on the road Beni – Butembo are hindering procurement. Also, as NGOs are scaling up their activities, some supplies are becoming scarce and the logistics team foresees that the price of the items may increase in the following weeks. Items like chlorine are no longer available in Butembo, and must now be bought in Goma.

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*Medair is a humanitarian organisation striving to relieve human suffering in some of the world's most remote and devastated places. We bring relief and recovery to people in crisis, regardless of race, creed, or nationality. In Eastern DR Congo, Medair is supporting 54 health centres, with funding from OFDA, ECHO, the SDC, UNICEF, the Common Humanitarian Fund and private funders.*

**Annex I: New health facilities to be supported as part of Ebola response<sup>2,3</sup>**

#	Province	Health Zone	Health Area	Trained on case definition & surveillance?	Can screen, isolate & refer?			Funding Partner
					Yes	Yes	Yes	
1	Nord Kivu	Oicha	Oicha*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	ECHO-SDC
2	Nord Kivu	Oicha	Mabasele	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	ECHO-SDC
3	Nord Kivu	Oicha	Mambabeka	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	ECHO-SDC
4	Nord Kivu	Oicha	Ngandilama	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	ECHO-SDC
5	Nord Kivu	Oicha	Ngele	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	ECHO-SDC
6	Nord Kivu	Beni	Rwangoma	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	ECHO-SDC
7	Nord Kivu	Beni	Sayo	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	ECHO-SDC

All health facilities are primary health facilities, unless indicated with a \* (referral centres)

**Annex II: Health centres supported by Medair's current projects**

#	Province	Health Zone	Health Area	Trained on case definition & surveillance?	Can screen, isolate & refer?			Funding Partner
					Yes	No	No	
1	Ituri	Lita	Katoto	Yes	Yes	No	No	OFDA
2	Ituri	Lita	Bahwere	Yes	Yes	No	No	OFDA
3	Ituri	Lita	Zumbe	Yes	No	No	No	OFDA
4	Ituri	Fataki	Jina	Yes	No	No	No	OFDA
5	Ituri	Fataki	Bule	Yes	No	No	No	OFDA
6	Ituri	Nizi	Iga Barrière	Yes	No	No	No	OFDA
7	Ituri	Komande	Luna	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	OFDA
8	Ituri	Gety	Bukiringi	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	OFDA
9	Ituri	Gety	Kagaba	Yes	Yes	No	No	OFDA
10	Ituri	Boga	Tchabi	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	OFDA
11	Ituri	Rethy	Rethy	Yes	No	No	No	Pooled Fund
12	Ituri	Rethy	Mola	Yes	No	No	No	Pooled Fund
13	Nord Kivu	Oicha	Kainama	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	OFDA
14	Nord Kivu	Oicha	Mbau*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	OFDA
15	Nord Kivu	Oicha	Masosi	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	OFDA
16	Nord Kivu	Oicha	Kitevya	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	OFDA
17	Nord Kivu	Beni	Mukulya	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	OFDA

<sup>2</sup> High priority health facilities are highlighted in orange. Further health facilities will be identified as 'priority' depending on the direction of outbreak spread.

<sup>3</sup> Following the two confirmed cases in Oicha, new health facilities have been identified as a priority for IPC based on proximity to Oicha General Hospital and the patient volume. This table has therefore been revised based on these new priority health facilities.

18	Nord Kivu	Beni	Paida	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	OFDA
19	Nord Kivu	Kalunguta	Butuhe	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	OFDA
20	Nord Kivu	Kalunguta	Mabuku	Yes	Yes	No	No	OFDA
21	Nord Kivu	Kalunguta	Kalunguta	Yes	Yes	No	No	OFDA
22	Nord Kivu	Kalunguta	Vurondo	Yes	Yes	No	No	OFDA
23	Nord Kivu	Kalunguta	Kivethya	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	OFDA
24	Nord Kivu	Mutwanga	Lubiriha	Yes	Yes	No	No	OFDA
25	Nord Kivu	Mutwanga	Luolo	Yes	Yes	No	No	OFDA
26	Nord Kivu	Kayna	Mulinde*	Yes	No	No	No	ECHO-SDC
27	Nord Kivu	Alimbongo	Bingi*	Yes	No	No	No	ECHO-SDC
28	Nord Kivu	Alimbongo	Kalungu	Yes	No	No	No	ECHO-SDC
29	Nord Kivu	Alimbongo	Alimbongo	Yes	No	No	No	ECHO-SDC
30	Nord Kivu	Alimbongo	Bunyatenge	Yes	No	No	No	ECHO-SDC
31	Nord Kivu	Alimbongo	Lunyasenge	Yes	No	No	No	ECHO-SDC
32	Nord Kivu	Lubero	Bukununu*	Yes	No	No	No	Pooled Fund
33	Nord Kivu	Lubero	Baraka	Yes	No	No	No	Pooled Fund
34	Nord Kivu	Lubero	Kagheri	Yes	No	No	No	Pooled Fund
35	Nord Kivu	Lubero	Kaghuli	Yes	No	No	No	Pooled Fund
36	Nord Kivu	Lubero	Kasima	Yes	No	No	No	Pooled Fund
37	Nord Kivu	Lubero	Kasalala*	Yes	No	No	No	Pooled Fund
38	Nord Kivu	Lubero	Katolo	Yes	No	No	No	Pooled Fund
39	Nord Kivu	Lubero	Kipese*	Yes	No	No	No	Pooled Fund
40	Nord Kivu	Lubero	Kisima*	Yes	No	No	No	Pooled Fund
41	Nord Kivu	Lubero	Kiviriri	Yes	No	No	No	Pooled Fund
42	Nord Kivu	Lubero	Lubero Cité	Yes	No	No	No	Pooled Fund
43	Nord Kivu	Lubero	Mubana	Yes	No	No	No	Pooled Fund
44	Nord Kivu	Lubero	Vukendo	Yes	No	No	No	Pooled Fund
45	Nord Kivu	Lubero	Kisaka	Yes	No	No	No	Pooled Fund
46	Nord Kivu	Kibirizi	Bulindi	Yes	No	No	No	ECHO-SDC
47	Nord Kivu	Kibirizi	Kilambo	Yes	No	No	No	ECHO-SDC