



Uganda
Catholic
Medical
Bureau



CCIH
Christian Connections
for International Health

Leveraging Catholic Faith Structures for Community Engagement to Reduce Risk of Ebola Virus Disease: Messaging and Practices in Uganda

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CCIH 2023

HOPE IN HEALTH: OUR LABOR IS NOT IN VAIN

About Uganda Catholic Medical Bureau (UCMB)



UCMB is the Health Department of the Uganda Episcopal Conference

4 ecclesiastical provinces, 19 Dioceses

33

Hospitals including Specialist Hospitals

264

Lower Level Health Units

15

Health Training Institutions

Coordination

Capacity Building

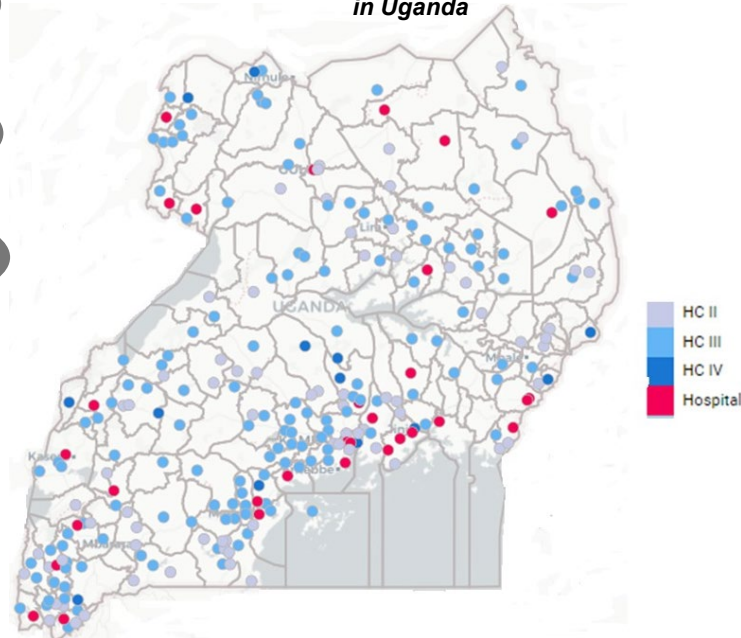
Advocacy

HSS

Quality Management

Resource Mobilization

Coverage of UEC-UCMB Health Facilities in Uganda



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Background

- On 20 September 2022, MoH declared an Ebola disease outbreak caused by the Sudan ebolavirus species, after the confirmation of a case in Mubende district in the central region.
- In total during this outbreak, there were **164 cases** (142 confirmed and 22 probable), **55 confirmed deaths** (38.7%) and **87 recovered patients** (61.2%).



Photo courtesy of New Vision



Uganda Ebola Outbreak 2022 Events Timeline

Date	Event
20 th Sept 2022	MoH Declared an EVD outbreak the Epi centre in Mubende
15 th Oct 2022	Lockdown in Mubende and Kassanda
17 th Dec 2022	Lockdown lifted
11 th Jan 2023	Uganda declared EVD free by MoH and WHO



AfricaTembelea
@AfricaTembelea

#BREAKING Health Minister @JaneRuth_Aceng declares Uganda Ebola-free.

"I confirm that all transmission chains have been fully interrupted and take this opportunity to declare that the Ebola outbreak is over."

#VisitUganda #PearlofAfrica



World Health Organization (WHO) and Ministry of Health- Uganda

12:39 pm · 11 Jan 23 from Mubende, Uganda



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EVD Response

MoH Multipronged National response along pillars;

1. Coordination and leadership
2. Testing, case finding, contact tracing, monitoring and surveillance
3. **Infection prevention and control (IPC)**
4. **Logistics**
5. **Risk communication, Social Mobilization, and Community Engagement (RCCE)**
6. Mental health and psychosocial support
7. Water and Sanitation for Health (WASH), and
8. Strategic Information, Research, and Innovation (SIRI).



Intervention

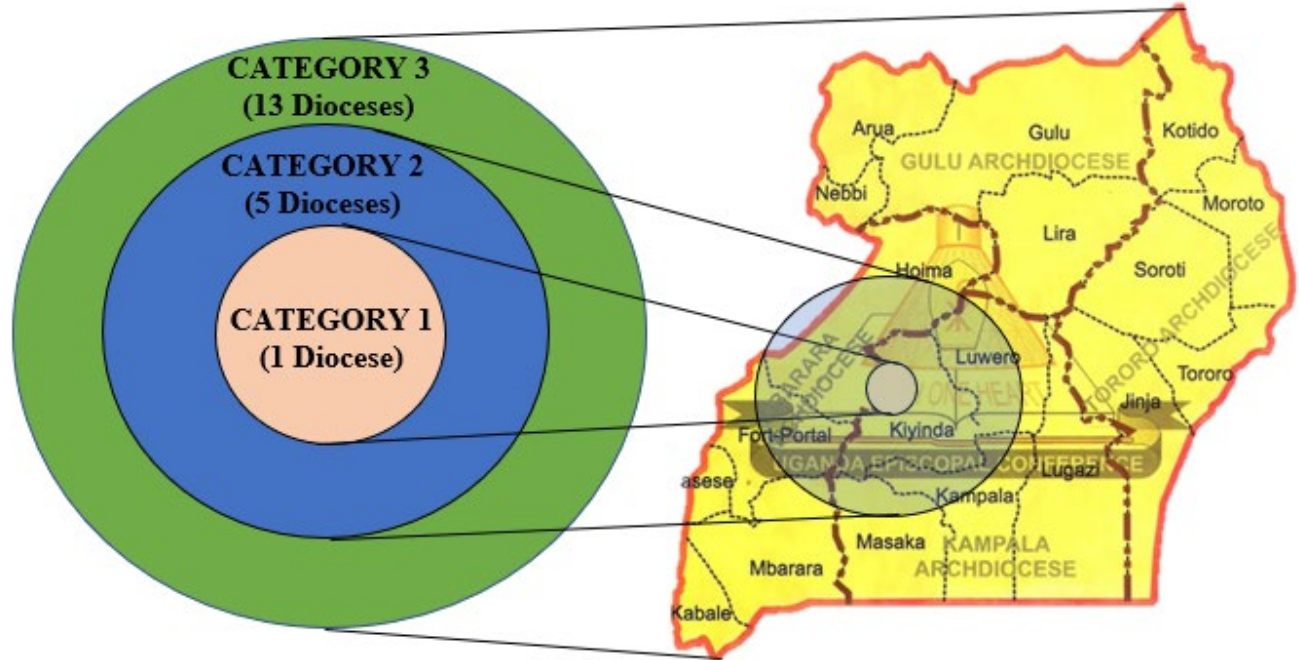
- Built capacity of religious leaders (Bishops, priests, nuns, brothers and catechists) as change agents to reach communities with risk reduction messages, and supported to make places of worship safe
- Mobilized by the Diocesan Health Coordinators (DHCs) and Pastoral Coordinators
- Pre-orientation questionnaire administered, to check knowledge of faith leaders on EVD transmission, prevention and practices including safe administration of religious sacraments.
- Physical and virtual orientation sessions used to sensitize religious leaders, face-to-face and virtually jointly with MoH, reaching many faith leaders in a short time.
- Post-training survey conducted at two weekly intervals to check knowledge gain and report on actual practices done by the faith community to reduce EVD transmission risk.



Zoning of UEC Dioceses during EVD Intervention

Guiding Principles

- Risk prioritization
- Health equity
- Universal Coverage



EVD Risk Reduction Sensitization of Catholic Faith Leaders

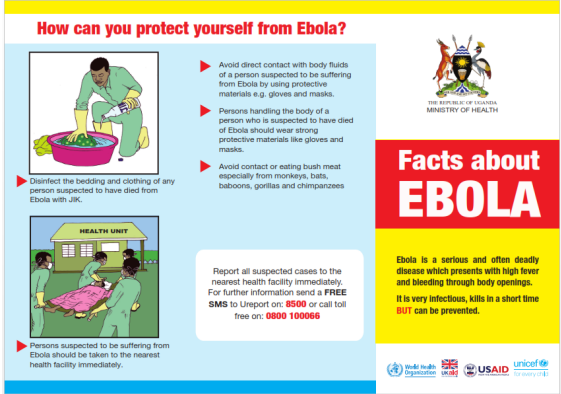


Package for Religious Leaders



Temperature Guns and handwashing stations for places of worship

- Given talking points to guide their community engagement, dispel myths and misconceptions, and discouraging practices of traditional healing to manage EVD cases
- Discouraging risky practices including exhuming bodies and visits to traditional healers
- Safely administering religious sacraments
- Transmission of EVD and risky practices
- Negotiated subsidized costs for radio airtime
- Given internet data bundles to facilitate reporting



How can you protect yourself from Ebola?

- ▶ Disinfect the bedding and clothing of any person suspected to have died from Ebola with JIC.
- ▶ Avoid direct contact with body fluids of a person suspected to be suffering from Ebola by using protective materials e.g. gloves and masks.
- ▶ Persons handling the body of a person who is suspected to have died of Ebola should wear strong protective materials like gloves and masks.
- ▶ Avoid contact or eating bush meat especially from monkeys, bats, baboons, gorillas and chimpanzees.

Facts about EBOLA

Ebola is a serious and often deadly disease which presents with high fever and bleeding through body openings. It is very infectious, kills in a short time BUT can be prevented.

Report all suspected cases to the nearest health facility immediately. For further information send a FREE SMS to Ureport on: **8500** or call toll free on: **0800 100066**

Persons suspected to be suffering from Ebola should be taken to the nearest health facility immediately.

IEC materials and brochures distributed in English and local language



Results summary

Activity		Outputs
Faith leaders oriented in EVD IPC and risk reduction messaging		301
Responded to pre-orientation questionnaire		68 (31 nuns, 45.6%)
Responded to post training questionnaire		48 (23 nuns, 47.9%)
<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Post Training</i>
Ebola is air-borne like Coronavirus	32.4% (22)	2.1% (1 respondent)
Transmission to others when asymptomatic	30.9% (21)	31.2% (15)
Persons who die from EVD should be buried by the community	5.9% (4)	0% (0)
Handshaking during mass as a sign of peace should continue	16.7% (8)	0% (0)
Anointing of the sick should involve history taking before and PPE	47.1% (32)	100% (48)
Temperature screening should be done for people before mass	64.7% (44)	87.5% (42)



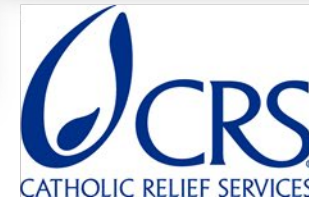
Results summary

Activity	Outputs	
<i>Practices</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Post Intervention</i>
Have put in place facilities for handwashing at places of worship in category 1 and 2 dioceses (working with 93 health facilities)	73.3%	100%
Handwashing	49%	100%
Temperature screening	11.1%	100%
Numbers of community members reached with EVD messaging	16.7% (8)	0%
Anointing of the sick should involve history taking before and PPE	27,944	
Pulpit	33.3%	
Schools	17.7%	
Whatsapp	4.4%	
Radio	4.4%	
One-on-one	8.9%	
Other	31.3%	

Radio Talk Shows conducted by 6 trained priests (DHCs) in 8 Catholic-owned Radio Stations



Support from **Catholic Relief Services**- the lead partner



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Lessons

- The church structure is evidently a key player in Public Health Disease response; experience of EVD and the Faith Community Initiative (FCI) projects
- Vast network and deep reach into the grassroot communities
- Faith leaders can be empowered with knowledge and skills
- Interbureau coalition and partnerships are key
- Working with MOH Community Technical Working Group (TWG)
- Need for continued orientation and engagement of faith leaders to further improve knowledge gain and bridge persisting knowledge gaps
- Public Health Programs should go beyond messaging but include logistical preparedness
- Periodic evaluation of knowledge retention and implementation practices is key



Acknowledgements



- Communities
- Health Workers
- Faith Leaders
- Logistics Partner JMS

THANK YOU

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