

Information Saves Lives

**Media Newsletter
Issue #15 - June 20-26**



School closure: Minister George Werner's post-Ebola education policy

On the 25th of June, newly appointed **Minister of Education George Werner** presented the post-Ebola recovery policy for the education sector. MICAT Minister Brown and Minister Werner explained the impact of **the new education policy** during a press conference at MICAT. The new policy dictates that all schools will **close** their doors on **the 31st of July 2015**. The schools will **reopen** on the **7th of September 2015**.

What will happen?

School calendar

- The school calendar for ECD (pre-primary schools), basic and secondary schools will be reverted to the regular academic cycle: which means that all schools will be closed on the 31st of July 2015.
- The academic calendar for 2015/2016 will be from September 2015 to July 2016.
- Grades 1-12 will then close again on July 12, 2016. Pre-school will be closed on August 12, 2016.

Enrolment, graduation & promotion

- For the 2015/2016 school year, students will enrol in the grade that is appropriate to their learning to date. This means:
- That students in grades 1-8, 10 and 11 may be promoted on the basis of attainment as judged by their school. If students of these grades have met the learning objectives they will be promoted to the next grade.
- Students who have not met the learning outcomes will not be promoted.
- Students who were enrolled in grades 9 and 12 during the 2015 school year will continue in that grade and will use this time to properly prepare for the 2016 WAEC/WASSCE exams.
- There will be no WASSCE or WAEC Exams in 2015 for school-based candidates.
- Examinations will be held in May 2016
- Students will be credited for fees already paid to WAEC.

Improvement of schooling

During the school break the Ministry hopes to rapidly improve the quality of teaching. Minister George Werner has stated that the MoE will:

- Distribute one million textbooks (Math, Science, Social Studies & English) for grades 5-9 to public schools. They will also distribute 1.3 million supplementary readers for grade 1 to 4 to all public basic education schools. Between now and October 2015 the MoE will also distribute textbooks for grade 10-12 (Math, English, Economics, Biology, Physics and Chemistry).
- During the August-September break, teachers will be trained by the Ministry of Education and partners. (*Red: The location and final dates of the training have not yet been made public*). In the press conference Minister Werner stated that 4000 teachers will be trained in the 2015/2016 academic year.

For more information about the MoE's policy for school improvement Internews refers you to the sources below.

Sources:

Speech by Minister of Education George Werner (Source: MICAT Twitter):

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EnaQx83TnKoOXUgwoWypmgUdicoQBi-H4qRvkFF7lUg/edit>

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Welcome to the Internews Newsletter for media in Liberia. This newsletter is created with the intent to support the work of local media in reporting about Ebola and Ebola-related issues in Liberia. Internews welcomes feedback, comments and suggestions from all media receiving this newsletter and invites them to forward, share and re-post this newsletter as widely as possible.



Polio & Vitamin A campaign

From **Friday June the 26th to Monday the 29th of June** the Ministry of Health in collaboration with WHO and UNICEF and other health partners will be organizing a **nation-wide polio and vitamin A vaccination campaign**. The Ebola outbreak has disrupted normal health care services like routine immunizations in the country. Because the children were not vaccinated, tens of thousands of children in Liberia were left vulnerable to disease. The Measles campaign and now the polio and vitamin A campaign are important initiatives that protect the children of Liberia from preventable diseases. **All children below the age of 5** will be able to receive an oral polio vaccine and vitamin A supplement. **Vaccination teams will move from house to house and all clinics and hospitals** will be providing the polio vaccine and vitamin A.

Even though Liberia was declared polio free in 2014, it is still very important to vaccinate Liberia's children against the virus since other countries in the region still have active transmission. With the vaccination, young children are protected against the virus, to ensure that Liberia will continue to be polio free. Children under the age of 5 years are at greater risk of catching the virus and are therefore specifically targeted in the campaign. When vaccinating the children with the polio drops, they will also be given Vitamin A, helps support the child's nutritional status and healthy development and strengthens their immune system.

What is polio?

The polio virus (medical term is poliomyelitis) is a virus that causes paralysis (also called "crippling") and can cause death. There is no cure for this virus. It is

transmitted from one person to another when faecal material (poo-poo) enters the mouth. Poor hygiene practices and lack of proper sanitization causes the spread of polio.

Vaccination procedures

Every child who benefits from the vaccine campaign will be given 4 free doses of polio vaccine when visiting the clinic. You will be able to recognize the vaccinator from the Ministry of Health by the aprons they are wearing (see picture below).

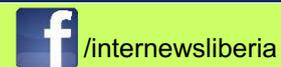


It is important to know that all vaccines are FREE and SAFE!

How will you know the vaccination teams are in your community? MoH and UNICEF have agreed that 20 gCHV (community health volunteers) will go from door to door to inform parents. In some communities town criers will be selected to announce the campaign. Do keep in mind that ALL HOSPITALS will have FREE vaccinations available from June 26th – 29th. To register for the vaccination, carry your child to the hospital or nearby clinic during this time.

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Polio vaccine VS PREVAIL

Many children are not benefiting from the vaccination campaign due to fear and misinformation. Parents and caregivers are afraid that the vaccines are 'Ebola vaccines' and will hurt their children. This is not true and to combat this idea, 4000 chiefs and close to 5000 community health volunteers have been informed about the vaccination procedures. It is important to share with your community members that the polio vaccine is not an 'Ebola vaccine'. The table below will help you explain the difference to the community members:

Ebola vaccine trial (PREVAIL)	Polio vaccine & vitamin A supplement
At PREVAIL, the team injects volunteers with one of two experimental vaccines which they are currently studying, to see whether these vaccines can protect healthy people from being infected with Ebola. These vaccines are still being tested, so are only given to people who volunteer to be a part of this study.	The polio vaccine was invented in 1955, and has been used internationally ever since.
The Ebola test vaccines are given in injections.	The polio vaccine and the vitamin A supplement is given in the mouth.
The Ebola vaccine is <u>not</u> given to children but only to people above the age of 18 years old who have given consent.	The polio vaccine and the vitamin A supplement are only given to children under the age of 5 years old.

Sources:

Poliomyelitis (Source: WHO):

<http://www.who.int/biologicals/areas/vaccines/polio/myelitis/en/>

Polio (Source: CDC):

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/pinkbook/downloads/polio.pdf>

PREVAIL Q&A (Source NIAID):

<http://www.niaid.nih.gov/news/QA/Pages/EbolaVaxresultsQA.aspx>

Poster about the Polio Campaign in Liberia (Source MoH, UNICEF):

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B4TbACi4OQL4UzN1QzhmWHFDQUE&authuser=0>

Flyer about the Polio Campaign in Liberia (Source MoH, UNICEF):

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B4TbACi4OQL4NUNQOWtzSE13alE&authuser=0>

Jingle & Spot for the Radio stations (Source MoH, UNICEF):

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B4TbACi4OQL4UDVQLVJFUXZLWW8&authuser=0>

Ebola vaccine volunteers showing no negative side effects (Source MICAT):

<http://www.micatliberia.com/index.php/blog/item/3952-all-1-500-ebola-vaccine-volunteers-showing-no-negative-side-effects.html>

Media contacts:

UNICEF Liberia

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Citizens' Feedback

CROSS BORDER SURVEILLANCE

Locals in Zorzor district recommend that the border should remain open for cross border trade.

Lofa

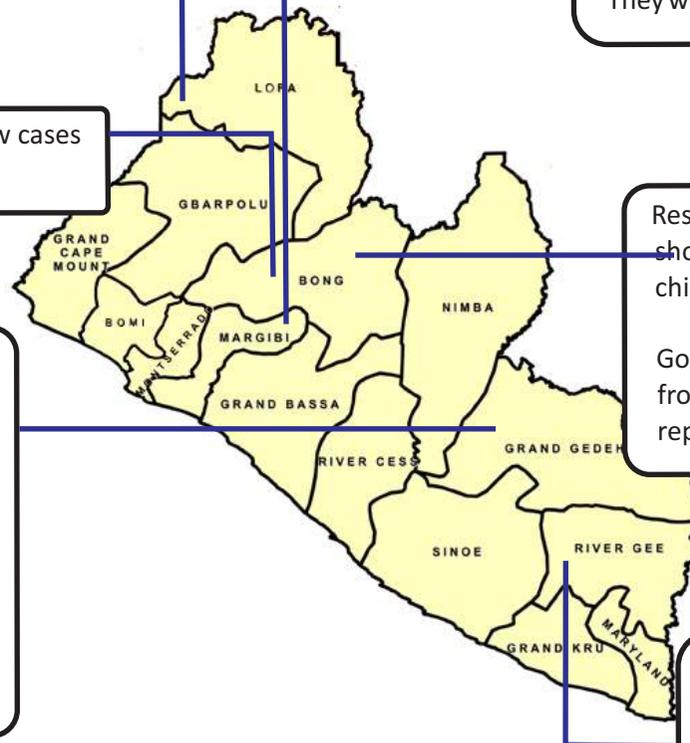
Locals complain that the border needs to be closed as new cases are still reported in neighboring countries.

Bong

Locals report that traders are being banned from going to Guinea, but that officers at the border do allow them to give their money to people across the border to purchase their goods.

Citizens of Grand Gedeh County complain that they have to wait at the border entry point for hours. At the end, they are often denied from crossing to buy their market. Locals complains that the screening process at the border is too high.

Grand Gedeh



EBOLA SURVIVORS

Three EVD survivors that were thrown out of school because they did not pay their tuition to the BWI vocational institute were taken to the ICRC office in Monrovia Freeport community. They were given 17,000LD each by ICRC to pay their school fees.

Margibi

SCHOOL CLOSURE

Residents of Bong county report that the Government should close schools because the rain is too heavy for the children. Locals complain that the rain is disrupting schools.

Government should observe illegal entry in to the country from the border as Guinea and Sierra Leone are still reporting EVD cases.

Bong

EBOLA TREATMENT UNITS

Locals are stating that the ETU in Fish Town will be turned in to a ministerial complex: the medicines and other equipment's have been transferred to the Community Care Center (CCC).

River Gee

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Citizens' Feedback

POST EBOLA RECOVERY

MOE has started distributing books to schools in the county as part of the post-Ebola recovery plans. Locals complain that the rain is disrupting schools as water is leaking in the classrooms because of badly maintained roofs.

Bomi

The County Health Team, as part of their post-Ebola recovery plan, have starting recruiting health workers for the CH Rennie Hospital in Kakata. Also, old medical instruments were replaced.

Margibi

Health practitioners complain that they have to walk long distances before getting to the medical center. Their lack of mobility makes it very difficult for them to respond to emergency health situations.

River Cess

RECOMMENDATIONS

The government should construct a residential facility on the Timbo clinic premises where doctors and nurses are able to reside. In case of emergency they can then quickly respond.

River Cess

CELEBRATIONS

Nimba celebrates the end of Ebola in the county. A monument has been built in Ganta in remembrance of those who have died while fighting to save lives during the Ebola crisis in Liberia.

Tolbert Nyenswah encouraged locals at the celebration program to continue following the EVD protocols and dispel the rumor that there are Ebola cases in the county.

Nimba

NEW CASES

Locals fear that Ebola might resurface in the county because Guinea is reporting new cases.

Grand Gedeh

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

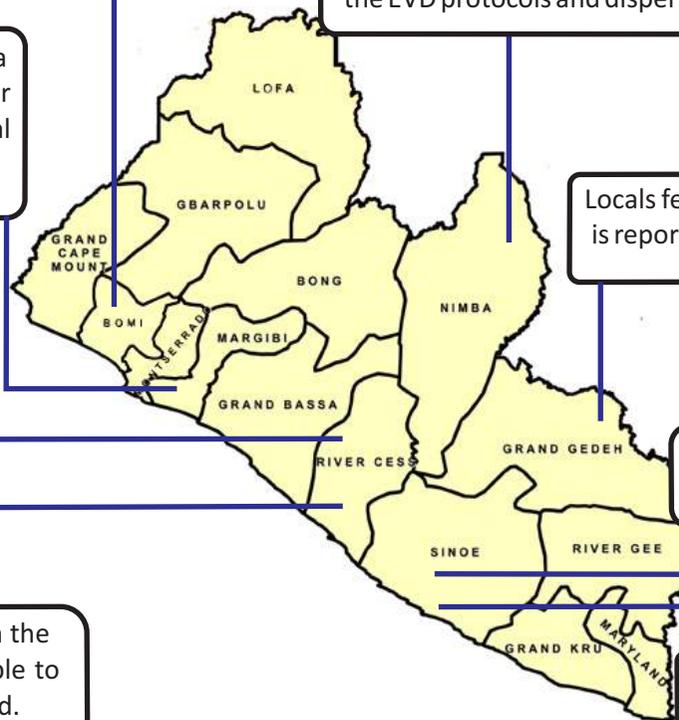
WHO County Health Coordinator in Sinoe encourages locals to continue to follow the EVD preventive measures.

Sinoe

BUSHMEAT

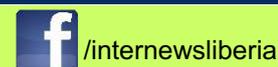
Residents from Sinoe County would like to know, now that Ebola is gone, can they start eating bush meat again?

Sinoe



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Rumors Reporting

NEW CASES

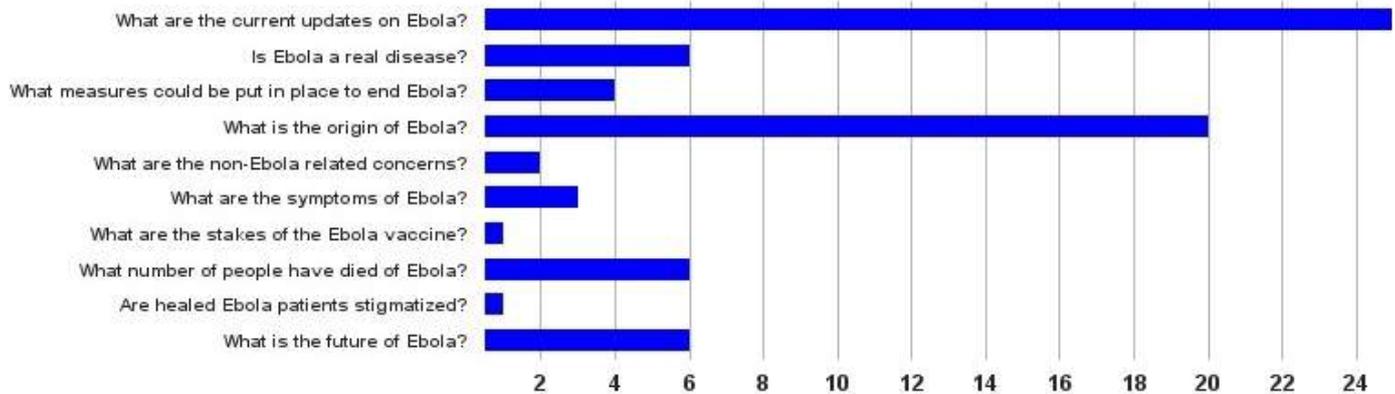
Rumors from local people	Well-sourced and accurate responses
<p>Montserrado County In Montserrado County locals rumor that there are Ebola cases in both Redemption and JFK Hospitals, but they say Government are hiding them out of the fear that the country will lose investors if Liberia reports new Ebola cases.</p> <p>Grand Gedeh Cases Citizens in Grand Gedeh rumor that Lofa County has two suspected Ebola cases.</p> <p>Lofa County: Residents in Lofa County rumor that Liberia has two Ebola suspected cases.</p>	<p>There are no new lab confirmed cases of Ebola in Liberia, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (commonly referred to as the 'CDC').</p> <p>It is important to keep in mind that just because people are admitted to an Ebola Treatment Unit, does not necessarily mean that they have Ebola, or that Ebola is back in Liberia. The admitted patients might be "suspected cases", which means that they have a fever and one of the other symptoms (coughing, red eyes, muscle pain, diarrhea etc.). In these cases, the patients are classified as a 'person under investigation' and will be tested for the Ebola virus.</p> <p>Case definitions: http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/healthcare-us/evaluating-patients/case-definition.html</p> <p>For more information, or updates on these cases, you can contact:</p> <p>CDC Yolonda Freeman, Communications Specialist 0775090926</p>

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THE MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS IN THE GEOPOLL SURVEY Information Needs Analysis



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FROM COUNTIES

BOMI COUNTY

What number of people have died of Ebola?

BONG COUNTY

What number of people have died of Ebola?

What is the future of Ebola?

What are the current updates on Ebola?

Is Ebola a real disease?

GRAND BASSA COUNTY

What are the non-Ebola related concerns?

What are the symptoms of Ebola?

What are the current updates on Ebola?

GRAND GEDEH COUNTY

What are the current updates on Ebola?

Is Ebola a real disease?

LOFA COUNTY

What are the non-Ebola related concerns?

What is the origin of Ebola?

What are the current updates on Ebola?

MARGIBI COUNTY

What are the symptoms of Ebola?

What is the origin of Ebola?

What are the current updates on Ebola?

What number of people have died of Ebola?

MONTSERRADO COUNTY

What number of people have died of Ebola?

Are healed Ebola patients stigmatized?

What are the current updates on Ebola?

What is the future of Ebola?

NIMBA COUNTY

What is the origin of Ebola?

What are the current updates on Ebola?

Is Ebola a real disease?

What are the current updates on Ebola?

RIVER GEE

What is the origin of Ebola?

SINOE

What is the origin of Ebola?

What are the stakes of the Ebola vaccine?

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Resources for the media

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