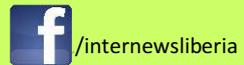


Information Saves Lives

Media Newsletter
Issue # 3



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 all of them to forward, share and re-post this newsletter as widely as possible.



EBOLA IS STILL HERE: Staying Safe

According to feedback from local media located in the counties as well as in Monrovia itself, there is a growing perception among some communities that “Ebola is now basically over”. They have shared reports that people are starting to shake hands again, and are not paying as much attention to safety measures such as washing hands.

Let us be clear: While Liberia has made major strides towards stopping the spread of Ebola within the country, **EBOLA IS STILL IN LIBERIA.**

According to the United Nations, Liberia reported 2 new confirmed cases of EVD in the week ending on February 12th. And on February 20th, local newspapers in Monrovia also reported an incident in which an individual who was a known Ebola contact tried to gain access to three different clinics and hospitals throughout Monrovia, in order to seek medical attention. According to these reports, the lady changed her name and denied having any knowledge of being an Ebola contact. When she finally gained access into the S.D. Cooper private hospital, she came into contact with over 30 people – who the newspapers report are now under quarantine, and the hospital is currently closed.

To repeat: **EBOLA IS STILL HERE.** And until the number of cases is officially down to zero – in Liberia as well as over the borders in Guinea and Sierra Leone – it is still possible to come into contact with the virus.

Remember, it started with 1 person and has now taken the lives of thousands. So as long as there is 1 person with Ebola, *all of us* must continue to be careful and protect ourselves, our families, and our communities!

Therefore, it is extremely important for all journalists and media houses to continue to encourage their communities to maintain the following safety measures – and to make sure their audiences are aware that Liberia is not yet Ebola-free.



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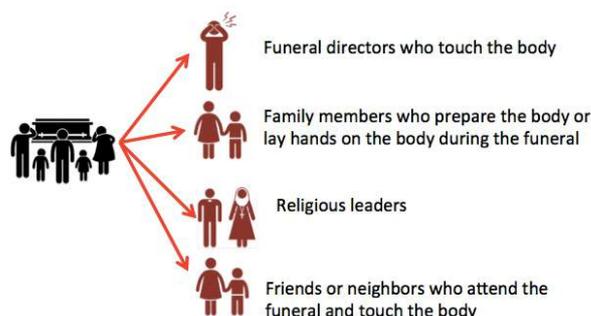
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Bury all dead bodies safely

- Allow only trained people to handle a dead body
- Do not touch, bathe, or bury a dead person
- Do not hide dead people
- Families can still pray and make decisions about the funeral – the only rule is never touch a dead body

The Body of a Deceased Ebola Patient Can Infect Others



Credit: IMS Dead Body Management Committee

Speak out! If you know of a sick person:

- Always call 4455 and tell your community leader
- Do not hide sick people
- Do not let others hide sick people

Keep sick people away from others

- Do not touch sick people or things they have used
- Keep them in their own area and stay 4 steps away
- Get the person treatment quick-quick – call 4455 and tell your community leader

Help find everyone who touches a sick person

- Anyone who touched a sick person is a “Contact” who could have Ebola
- Help health workers find these “Contacts”
- If you touch a sick person, stay home and tell your community leader

Contacts must stay to one area with food and water

- Anyone who touches a sick person must stay to their area for 21 days
- Make sure these “Contacts” do not run away
- Give them food and water and encourage them – talk to your community leader

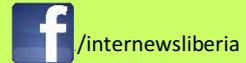
Sources:

<http://ebolaresponse.un.org/data>

<http://bit.ly/1vNK41p>

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ENSURING SAFETY AT SCHOOLS

As Liberian schools slowly re-open, Internews has been receiving reports from across the country, about worried parents who are unsure about sending their children back to classes. Some of their concerns involve the state of the healthcare system in their individual counties – they worry that, should there be an outbreak at one of the schools, their local clinics would not be well equipped enough to contain it. Others parents worry that if their children become ill, they will immediately be sent to an ETU, before it is determined whether or not they in fact have Ebola.

These are also some of the concerns currently being addressed by UNICEF – who, in partnership with the US Agency for International Development (USAID), has now provided over 7,000 specialized kits, which are currently being distributed to over 4,000 schools in all 98 school districts. These kits are specifically designed to help keep students, teachers, and communities safe. They contain thermometers, buckets with faucets, chlorine, soap, brooms and brushes, rubber boots and gloves.

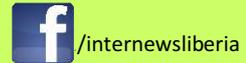
But the kits alone are not enough. There are also certain safety measures that need to be carried out. And while District Education and Health Officers are currently working along with various NGO partners and community leaders to conduct trainings on these procedures, there are a number of things that communities themselves can do to stay safe.

For parents and students returning to school:

- If students are sick, they should stay at home. Any child who has fever, vomiting, or running stomach should *not* go to school.
- There should be a temperature check in place at the entry point to every school. When students go to school every day, they will be checked for fever and other symptoms.
- There should also be hand-washing stations located at the entry point of every school, and outside the school bathroom(s).
- If a student becomes sick during school, they will be moved to a safe place away from other students, and wait there while the school calls for help. This safe place should be identified before the school re-opens on the 16th.
- Parents should continue to remind their children not to share personal items (including cups, spoons, food and clothes) with others, and not to touch anybody who gets sick.

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We urge journalists to help keep their communities safe by sharing this information, regarding what safety measures are currently being put in place to keep students safe (the distribution of safety kits, the training of officials, etc.), and also sharing with them the above points on what they can do to protect themselves. Also, we would like to point out that speculation and the spreading of conspiracy theories regarding the safety measures at schools can cause unnecessary panic and fear in communities. Therefore, we ask that journalists stick to the facts when reporting on the issue of schools re-opening, and/or host talk show call-ins regarding this subject.

For further information you can contact:

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Resources:

[“Protocols for Safe School Environments in the Ebola Outbreak in Liberia”](#)

[“Protocols for Safe School Environments in the Ebola Outbreak in Liberia”](#)

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Citizens' Feedback

There is a conspiracy theory going around that the Ebola Virus was man-made and purposely introduced to West Africa, and that these “inventors” have not yet reached the “targeted number of deaths”. Therefore parents are afraid to send their children to school because they have heard that the sanitation kits contain the Ebola Virus – to continue its spread and death toll.

Cape Mount

1. Parents are worried about sending their children to school based on rumors that Ebola sanitation kits contain the virus that could infect them.
2. Local business people are concerned about cross-county and border trade. Their businesses were affected by the outbreak in other areas especially Monrovia and by the closure of the border with Cote D'Ivoire. They are worried about being able to buy goods.

Grand Gedeh

Local populations are concerned about fixing the health sector after Ebola. There are rumors that sick people are still being refused at health facilities in the county.

Montserrado

1. People in River Gee are wondering, if Liberia is not yet Ebola-free, why the government is reopening schools. They are afraid to send children because they feel health facilities are not properly equipped to care for an outbreak amongst children.

2. People are planning to go back to their small businesses (petty trading), but after the long break from business they are having difficulties in accessing funds to get back on track. They are trying to get micro-loans from local financial clubs or the Central Bank.

River Gee

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Citizens' Feedback

1. People are talking about how they will support children who are orphans as a result of Ebola especially due to issues with stigmatization of these individuals.
2. Food security is another concern for the local population. During the outbreak people ran away from the farms and some were quarantined. Post Ebola, they are talking about what they can do to stop the hunger.
3. There was a Multi-Sectorial meeting to address post Ebola challenges held in Garnga. The final report is expected in next week, but the community is too eager to hear what it contains.

Bong

1. People are very worried about the new outbreak in the county.
2. People are concerned about helping Ebola orphans. One example is a group of young people held a program to help their friends who are Ebola survivors and orphans to go back to school.
3. People are worried about regaining the loss in agriculture. Farmers in the Gibi belt and Lakayata Township are calling local radio stations, asking the government and international organization to help them go back to farming.

Margibi

1. Communities in River Cess County are saying the ETUs built by the US Military are not intended to treat Ebola, but are Military bases for the US Army. People are saying this because they believe America should have sent doctors to combat Ebola instead of the Military.
2. The population of River Cess is also concerned about food security. People are worried about poor harvest because farmers were afraid to go to farms while others were quarantined.
3. People in River Cess are worried about the reopening of schools. It is rumored that government benefited financially from the outbreak in Liberia. Therefore reopening schools is intended to cause another outbreak in the hopes of receiving further donor funding.

River Cess

1. Parents are afraid to send their children to school because there is a rumor that when a child has any other sickness, the Ebola treatment team will immediately take them to ETUs.
2. There are also rumors that escaped Ebola contacts from Guinea are in the Ganta- Saclepea area, and that these individuals follow marketers or people who walk in groups, in order to not be identified and sent to quarantine.

Nimba

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RESOURCES:

Ministry of Health Website: <http://www.mohsw.gov.lr>

Ebola Updates from the Ministry of Health:
http://www.mohsw.gov.lr/content_display.php?sub=report2

Press Releases from the Ministry of Health:
http://www.mohsw.gov.lr/content_display.php?sub=press_release2

Ministry of Information Page:
<http://www.micatliberia.com/>

Ebola Updates from the Ministry of Information:
<http://www.micatliberia.com/index.php/ebola-update.html>

WHO Ebola Updates: <http://apps.who.int/ebola/>

WHO Situation Reports:
<http://apps.who.int/ebola/en/current-situation>

UNICEF Liberia: <http://www.unicef.org/liberia>

UNICEF Liberia Press Releases:
<http://www.unicef.org/liberia/media.html>

Ebola Response Contact List by Organization:
<http://bit.ly/1D4VEwT>

Ebola Communication Network:
<http://ebolacommunicationnetwork.org>

Message Guide for Ebola Communications:
<http://bit.ly/1yZXqZX>

“Protocols for Safe School Environments in the Ebola Outbreak in Liberia”