



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MONROVIA, LIBERIA

Creating Stability through Prevention

A Locally Driven Ebola Prevention Campaign in Liberia

In 2014, a decade after a prolonged civil war conflict, Liberia faced the greatest Ebola outbreak in its history. Over the course of the outbreak, more than 10,500 cases were recorded in the country and the total death toll equaled more than 4,500 individuals. The Ebola crisis posed not only a public health challenge, but also a political challenge in a country where post-war peace is still tenuous. To prevent the further spread of Ebola in their country, the Pen-Pen Peace Network (PPPN) – a peace committee of local Liberian citizens convened by the Purdue Peace Project (PPP) – designed, organized, and implemented what they called the Ebola Prevention Campaign. The PPPN conducted their Ebola Prevention Campaign with the support of the PPP and Women Movement for Sustainable Development Liberia (WOMSUD-Liberia). This report highlights the objectives, strategies, challenges, and impacts of the Ebola Prevention Campaign. The report is based on findings produced from data collected at multiple points in time between September 2014 and January 2015 during the Ebola Prevention Campaign.

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OCTOBER 2015

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OBJECTIVES

The Ebola Prevention Campaign had the following specific goals:

- To increase public knowledge about the existence of the Ebola virus in Liberia.
- To provide Liberian citizens with important information about the spread of Ebola, such as methods of prevention.
- To motivate attitudinal and behavioral changes to prevent the further spread of Ebola.
- To promote conditions for creating a peaceful environment in the context of a massive destabilizing public health crisis.

PEACE COMMITTEE

The Pen-Pen Peace Network (PPPN) is a local Liberian peace committee that emerged as a result of an actor meeting convened by the Purdue Peace Project (PPP) held in July 2013. The goal of this committee is to help decrease the likelihood of political violence between pen-pen drivers, their customers, the Liberian police, and other relevant actors. Another goal of the PPPN is to create approaches to integrating pen-pen drivers (many of whom are former ex-combatants without education) into Liberian society. Due to the rapid spread of Ebola in Liberia during the summer of 2014, the PPPN temporarily shifted its focus to Ebola prevention and violence prevention associated with the Ebola outbreak.



Our Locally Driven Approach

The Purdue Peace Project (PPP) convenes groups of local citizens in fragile states where clearly identified situations threaten to lead to political violence. The PPP works to create a space for an inclusive and representative group of local citizens to engage in dialogue with one another, and in so doing, to identify strategies that will reduce the likelihood of political violence.

The PPP believes that peacebuilding efforts that originate from local citizens are the most effective ways to prevent violence. The PPP's aim is to encourage and assist local citizens in designing, leading, and implementing strategies that will help them build lasting peace in their communities.





Indicators of Transformation

The Ebola Prevention Campaign contributed to shared knowledge and awareness of the Ebola threat, while also effectively working to prevent further spread of the virus. The campaign volunteers reported positive observations about the effects of their work:

"Presently the number of cases are reducing. There are treatment units that do not see an Ebola patient for now, so those are some of the fruitful results"
– Volunteer, Interview
January 28, 2015

"Most people are really concerned about the virus. At least they are cooperating with us as we talked to them. They are taking the preventive measures"
– Volunteer, Daily field log
December 2, 2014

"It (Ebola) brought us together as one people ... it brought us together as one country because when we fight together, then we are able to defeat Ebola. So it unified us"
– Volunteer, Interview
January 28, 2015

STRATEGIES

- **Mass Communication Campaign.** One of the strategies designed by the campaign team was a mass communication campaign that consisted of Ebola radio dramas in eight local dialects broadcasted in five counties (including Bong, Bomi, Lofa, Nimba, Margibi).
- **Interpersonal Campaign.** Campaign volunteers completed daily visits to communities in Monrovia, disseminating anti-Ebola messages through an interpersonal, face-to-face communication. They approached local Liberian citizens, talked to them about Ebola, and distributed 2,500 anti-Ebola brochures, 250 posters, and 65 flipcharts, in total.
- **Sanitary Stations.** In addition to the mass media and face-to-face components, the campaign team set up 25 sanitary stations. The sanitary stations covered five communities in Monrovia.

CHALLENGES

- **Establishing Credibility of Locally Based Prevention.** A major challenge identified by the campaign volunteers was that many citizens perceived the volunteers to be Liberian government agents responsible for the public health crisis. Such initial perceptions reflect a post-war reality in a nation marked by mistrust and suspicion of government institutions.
- **Economic Hardship at the Backdrop of Ebola.** A recurrent concern among campaign volunteers was the existing discrepancy between the need for Liberian citizens to implement preventive measures and their actual ability to follow the measures. Volunteers would report that many of the compatriots they spoke to wanted to follow the preventive measures, but lacked the economic resources to purchase the materials needed to prevent Ebola.

"We learned that most people have their buckets for hand washing inside and do not want to put it outside because they don't have money to buy materials such as chlorine/Clorox or soap"
– Volunteer, Daily field log, December 2, 2014

IMPACT

- **Achieving Attitudinal and Behavioral Changes related to Ebola.** Throughout the Ebola Prevention Campaign, volunteers reported that as they were hearing the campaign message, more and more Liberians were changing their attitudes about Ebola from being viewed as non-existent to being seen as a real threat. By the end of the campaign, volunteers reported that there was no longer denial among citizens that Ebola was real.
- **Involving an Ebola Survivor.** In December 2014, an Ebola survivor volunteered to be part of the PPPN's Ebola Prevention Campaign. This survivor had an overall positive impact on the campaign message. He said, "We [campaign volunteers] learned that my being part of the Ebola awareness has had a positive impact to our message, because sometimes people refuse to listen to us about the Ebola business. But as soon as I explain to them what happened to me, they can stop to listen to us" (Interview with Ebola survivor volunteer, December 17, 2014).
- **Promoting a Peaceful Environment in Post-War Liberia.** Campaign volunteers reported that during the campaign, pen-pen riders were highly cooperative in taking the necessary preventive measures to fight Ebola. Additionally, some pen-pen drivers took part in the campaign by acting as campaign volunteers, contributing to a gradual positive transformation of pen-pen drivers' public image and their self-image.
- **Promoting a Sense of Community.** Volunteers shared that they and the communities they spoke to could feel that they were all doing something together for the common good of their nation.



APPROACH TO M&E

The PPP's approach to monitoring and evaluation is evidence-based and longitudinal. The PPP strives for methodological rigor in selecting projects. The PPP systematically collects and analyzes empirical data at multiple points in time before, during, and after a project in order to assess its work's impact. The PPP's locally driven approach is results-oriented and cost-effective. The PPP seeks to help local citizens reduce the likelihood of political violence and contribute new knowledge about effective peacebuilding.

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