



Alberto Roias/Save the Children

# READY: GLOBAL READINESS FOR MAJOR DISEASE OUTBREAK RESPONSE

*Jojo\*, a young child who survived the 2014-2015 Ebola outbreak in Liberia, was cared for by health workers and her mother (right), also an Ebola survivor who was allowed to stay in the unit to care for her daughter.*

Large-scale infectious disease emergencies have disastrous impacts on families, societies, systems, and economies. As an example, the impact of the 2014-2015 Ebola epidemic in West Africa stretched well beyond the estimated 11,310 deaths and the 28,616 known infections. Many health workers were lost and health systems were unable to cope—severely restricting access to routine and life-saving health services. Millions of children lost months of schooling—many never returned—and thousands of children lost parents, siblings, and family members. Disruptions to markets and livelihoods also had dire consequences for the poorest communities. Major outbreaks in recent years, including influenza, Zika, plague, diphtheria, and yellow fever, have continued to demonstrate that governments, donors, and aid agencies are critically challenged in their response capacity and coordination, highlighting gaps in the global humanitarian community’s ability to respond to major infectious disease outbreaks, particularly those that escalate to public health emergencies of international concern.

In 2018, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) funded Save the Children to lead a three-year global initiative to augment capacity for humanitarian response to major disease outbreaks. Through a consortium of partners, this initiative, known as READY, will supplement existing efforts to strengthen coordination between global humanitarian outbreak structures and operational organizations responding to outbreaks, addressing identified gaps. As well, READY is building and retaining capacity among operational consortium members, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders in priority regions and countries to more quickly and effectively respond to major outbreaks with an integrated approach that addresses holistic needs of affected communities—with community engagement and communications at the center. READY will prioritize diseases with major epidemic or pandemic potential, specifically around water-borne, respiratory, and bodily fluid transmission pathways. Though global in scope, READY is executing contextualized activities in four regions – Asia, East Africa, the Middle East, and West & Central Africa – and seven countries – Bangladesh, DR Congo, Indonesia, Nigeria, South Sudan, Uganda, and Vietnam.

## READY CONSORTIUM

**READY** brings together the best parts of what works across the consortium’s operational, academic, clinical, and communications organizations to augment global, regional, and country-level capacity in major disease outbreak response coordination, operations, and multi-sectoral integrated programming.

**READY** partners include:



## OBJECTIVES & KEY ACTIVITIES:

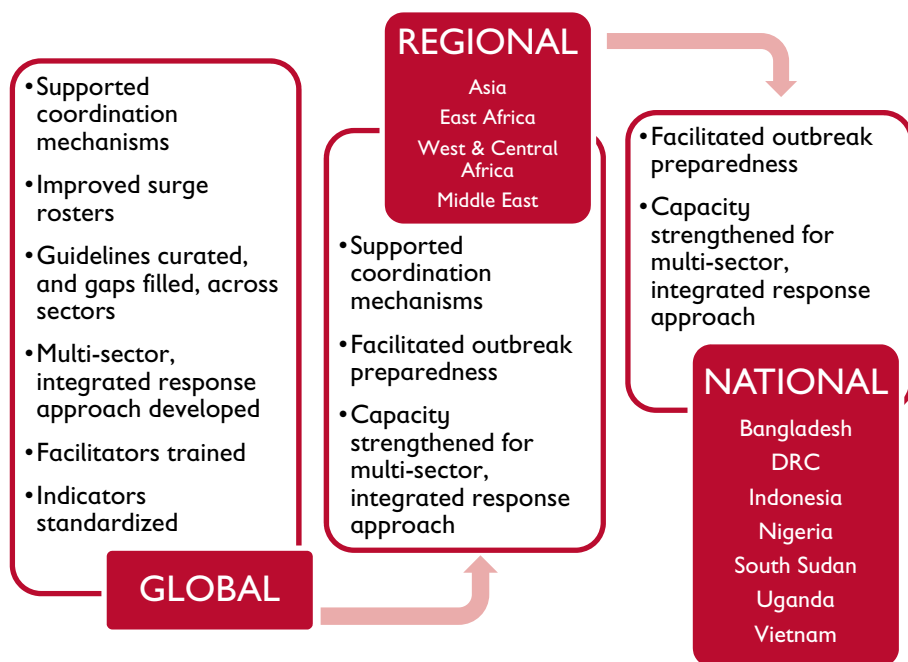
### Augmenting Coordination, Operations, and Technical Capacity for Outbreak Response

**OBJECTIVE 1:** Improve NGO **coordination** with critical infectious disease platforms to promote an effective and integrated multi-sectoral approach to major disease outbreak response.

- Conduct a comprehensive analysis of public health, zoonotic, and social and behaviour change (SBC) networks, tools, guidelines, and initiatives to examine gaps and ensure the complementarity, effectiveness, and added-value of READY.
- Conduct global and regional consultations to incorporate and ensure representation of various perspectives and priorities in program activities.
- Support existing outbreak preparedness and response initiatives, including WHO's critical functions such as the WHO PHIS Task Team, GOARN, EWARN, social science networks, and other global platforms.
- Advocate with coordination mechanisms at global, regional, and country levels to support and strengthen capacity for organizations to implement a more multi-sectoral, integrated outbreak response.
- Convene a Strategic Advisory Group to inform READY's overall design and direction from varying external points of view and facilitate the initiative's coordination efforts across key fora and critical networks.

**OBJECTIVE 2:** Strengthen **operational capacity** for more efficient integrated humanitarian response to major disease outbreaks.

- Review and improve operational capacity, including supply chains, HR policies, ethical guidelines, and systems for data capture and use.
- Facilitate regional and national outbreak preparedness based on outbreak modelling and revised decision-making protocols.
- Build, train, and support a global cadre of clinical, operational, and subject matter experts—including surge capacity—across key sectors to rapidly deploy for integrated outbreak response.
- Integrate SBC in outbreak preparedness, including tools and processes to better leverage community systems and networks.
- Integrate zoonotic surveillance in planning and protocols across public and animal health systems.
- Create a knowledge management platform to curate guidance and protocols across sectors.



**OBJECTIVE 3:** Adapt and develop **technical readiness** across relevant sectors for an integrated response to major disease outbreaks.

- Curate and gap-fill technical guidance for key sectors, including reproductive health, nutrition, WASH, child protection, mental health and psychosocial support, agriculture/food security, SBC, gender, and ethics to promote an integrated, multi-sectoral outbreak response. The integrated framework will:
  - Bring together guidance and tools across sectors
  - Roll-out through a blended-learning training approach including e-learning, regional and national workshops, continuing education, and regional and country-level outbreak response simulations