

Exercise: Disease outbreaks and health emergencies

Individually or as a small group please consider the following case study:

Improving face to face communication in a disease outbreak

The findings from the knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) surveys in Liberia and Sierra Leone during the 2013-2016 Ebola outbreak showed that knowledge levels about the modes of transmission and symptoms were consistently high, often above 90%. This is an endorsement of the mass media communication approach used in the response in a combination with printed materials. The mass media approach was successful in reaching a large number of people, however, the quality and coverage of the interpersonal face to face communication at a household level was variable, sometimes carried out without sufficient discussion of the key concerns in regard to the spread of the disease or without spending any time with the household members to explain the situation. The large number of communicators that had been temporarily employed were often fearful of entering a household and had rapidly been deployed to the community level from other areas (Laverack and Manoncourt 2015).

Identify how you would improve the face to face communication at a household level between the communicator and the household members. What knowledge, skills and resources would you provide and how and to whom would these be given? Refer to the paper provided (Laverack and Manoncourt 2015) for further information.