Preventing epidemics and pandemics in communities, through the One Health approach
Overview

- Epidemics and pandemics start and end in communities.
- Different drivers lead to each stage of disease emergence to global spread.
- When health threats are detected in communities and responded to before spreading, a pandemic can be prevented.
- It is possible to stop this cascade at outbreak stage, by working and co-creating knowledge, strategies, tools and solutions with communities to detect and respond to outbreaks with the One Health approach.
Overview:
What One Health in Communities Involve

- A One Health approach with communities involves:
  - Empowering communities to manage risks, identify outbreaks and avoid infected animals for outbreak prevention.
  - Moving from a human-centered approach to epidemics and pandemics and respecting the facets of peoples lives
  - Multi-directional dialogue with communities, with the recognition that scientific knowledge and community knowledge are interdependent
  - Understanding and respecting local culture, traditions e.g. safe burial practices for diseases like Marburg

- COVID-19 mobilized communities for pandemic action in unprecedented ways, this can be built on and combined with One Health approach
Working with communities for One Health: a global humanitarian organization perspective

- **Insights:**
  - Breaking silos both at operational and community levels
  - Providing and co-creating information and solutions with communities
  - Trust before during and after outbreaks critical

- **Example:** IFRC projects in 7 countries, preventing epidemics from animal source using the One Health approach
  - 5000 plus volunteers trained, with 1.5 million household visits
  - Used health literacy, risk communication and community engagement
  - Engaged with those trusted by communities
  - e.g. Rabies in Guinea used a One Health platform with the outcome of no deaths, animal sources identified and a database created of animals infected

- **Challenges:**
  - Volunteers have turnover
  - Lack of animal and human health workers to investigate cases after volunteers alert
Communities in public health prevention efforts: Government agency perspective

Insights:
- Community engagement is shaping the One Health policy agenda at a national level
- However bottom-up approaches are needed when working with communities
- Importance of data and information sharing for both communities and government agencies in shaping community engagement and the One Health approach

Example: Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention
- Produced a risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) One Health multi hazard strategy
- Innovative and creative methods of community engagement such as drama and piloting human-centered design approaches for Lassa fever
Communities and the One Health research agenda: perspective from academia

• Insights:
  • Community engagement is shaping the One Health policy agenda at national level

• Example
  ▶ Mexico’s ELDORADO: Ecosystem, biological diversity, habitat modification and risk of emerging pathogens and diseases project
  ▶ Recognises and investigates the risk of pathogens in animals and anthropological factors for human exposure that lead to outbreaks with communities
  ▶ Finding best practices for reducing risk of pandemics and epidemics
A narrative for One Health: CSO perspective

• Insights:
  • Holistic narrative needed regarding the connections between human, animal and environmental health
  • One Health intersecting with human rights approach particularly with marginalized groups and communities

• Example:
  ▶ Friendship NGO Bangladesh
  ▶ Working in a complex community ecosystem and with marginalized groups such as climate migrants
  ▶ Grew from working on human health to covering One Health-human, animal and environmental e.g. began with de-worming of humans but expanded to de-worming programs of animals
  ▶ Working at different tiers of community
How to strengthen OH in communities

• Listening and two-way communication

• Understanding of social, political, cultural and economic contexts

• Working in a holistic way, beyond silos both in government and in the field

• Challenges
  ▶ governments do not have one approach to One Health, still siloed e.g. between ministries and with financing
Useful links

- WHO One Health webpage
- IFRC epidemic and pandemic preparedness webpage
- Friendship NGO Bangladesh https://friendship.ngo/
- Previous EPI-WIN digest overview of One Health series: https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/epi-win-digest-4-emerging-zoonotic-diseases-and-the-one-health-approach