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

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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.

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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 interdependant
  - ▶ 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

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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

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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

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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

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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

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How to strengthen OH in communities

- Listening and two-way communication

- Understanding of social, political, culrual and economic contexts

- Working in a holisitic 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

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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