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READY: GLOBAL READINESS FOR MAJOR DISEASE OUTBREAK RESPONSE

April 2020: Dr. Omnia conducts a health screening in a religious school in Khartoum state, Sudan

Large-scale infectious disease emergencies have disastrous impacts on families, societies, systems, and economies. For 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.

Now, the COVID-19 pandemic is revealing similar systemic challenges across health systems, economies, and communities, but at a global scale, and countries around the world are struggling to respond. Ebola, COVID-19, and other major outbreaks in recent years - including influenza, Zika, plague, diphtheria, and yellow fever – demonstrate that governments, donors, and aid agencies are severely challenged in their response and coordination capacity, 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’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance funded Save the Children to lead a three-year initiative to augment global capacity to respond to major disease outbreaks. Through a consortium of partners, the READY initiative supplements existing efforts to strengthen coordination between global humanitarian outbreak structures and operational organizations responding to outbreaks. Additionally, READY is building and retaining capacity among operational consortium members, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), 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. Since the COVID-19 outbreak in December 2019, READY has pivoted its programming to focus exclusively on COVID-19 readiness for NGOs, strengthening coordination, operational capacity, and technical preparedness to support a holistic and integrated response to the pandemic.

READY PARTNERS

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.



For more information, contact READY’s Chief-of-Party, Laura Cardinal, at lcardinal@savechildren.org

COVID-19 KEY ACTIVITIES:

Augmenting Coordination, Operations, and Technical Capacity for COVID-19 Readiness



COORDINATION

- Support and strengthen **COVID-19 outbreak coordination** through leadership and engagement in the Global Health Cluster COVID-19 Task Team, GOARN RCCE for COVID-19 Sub-working Group, GOARN sub-group on community engagement in low resource settings (co-lead), and in additional fora
- Socialize and solicit NGO feedback on **COVID-19 GHRP indicator frameworks**
- Conduct COVID-19 coordination landscape analysis globally and in 2-3 READY priority countries, as well as technical and operational gap analyses for COVID-19 readiness and response



OPERATIONAL CAPACITY

- Deliver **COVID-19 operational readiness workshops** to READY priority regions and countries
- Redesign the READY **Knowledge Management Hub**, curating a collection of vetted COVID-19 tools and resources for NGOs
- Conduct **predictive modelling** of COVID-19 trends and impact, looking at transmission risk and public health measures in select countries and contexts
- Develop **surge staffing models** specifically for COVID-19 responses, and explore mechanisms for bilateral joint response deployments between consortium partners



TECHNICAL READINESS

- Develop a **COVID-19 RCCE toolkit**, including resources from global-level coordination bodies and READY-developed guidelines
- Produce a **technical webinar series**, bringing together interagency subject-matter experts from different regions and countries to discuss emerging strategies and guidance, key response challenges and program adaptations, and critical cross-cutting considerations for COVID-19 preparedness and response.
- Develop an **integrated framework tool** that aims to minimize transmission in vulnerable communities by supporting the implementation of non-pharmaceutical interventions with holistic wrap-around humanitarian services
- Work through global coordination mechanisms to map gaps in **technical tools and guidelines**, provide technical input to new guideline development and existing guideline adaptation, and disseminate technical materials across agencies and sectors
- Develop and deliver a **micro-training package addressing community-level COVID-19 programmatic challenges**, targeting national-level project managers and front-line coordinators in READY priority countries.

Though global in scope, READY is executing contextualized activities in four regions – **Asia, East Africa, Middle East, and West & Central Africa** – and six countries – **Bangladesh, DR Congo, Indonesia, South Sudan, Uganda, and Vietnam.**