

OPERATION UPDATE 1

Nigeria| Diphtheria Outbreak

Emergency appeal №: MDRNG037 Emergency appeal launched: 09/10/2023 Operational Strategy published: 02/11/2023	Glide №: EP-2023-000034-NGA
Operation update #1 Date of issue: 15/01/2024	Timeframe covered by this update: From 09/10/2023 to 16/11/2023
Operation timeframe: 09 months (11/10/2023 - 30/06/2024)	Number of people being assisted: 5,500,000
Funding requirements (CHF): CHF 5.4 million through the IFRC Emergency Appeal CHF 6 million Federation-wide	DREF amount initially allocated: CHF 1Million

To date, this Emergency Appeal, which seeks CHF 5,4million, is 1 per cent funded. Further funding contributions are needed to enable the Nigerian Red Cross Society with the support of the IFRC, to continue with the operation.



Nigerian Red Cross team supporting vaccination through RCCE activities in Osun state Nigeria.

A. SITUATION ANALYSIS

Description of the crisis

Diphtheria is a severe bacterial infection that can affect a person's nose, throat, and occasionally skin. It is brought on by the bacterium *Corynebacterium* species. The people at the greatest risk of contracting diphtheria are among children and people who have not received any, or only a single dose of the vaccine (a diphtheria toxoid-containing vaccine). People at risk are communities residing in densely crowded places and unsanitary areas with poor environmental conditions. Also, healthcare professionals and hospital frontline workers who are working with or in close contact with people suffering from Diphtheria are at risk of contracting the disease. There is also a huge risk of contracting diphtheria if a person comes physically into contact with someone with diphtheria and hence can be spread from person to person.



Map of Nigeria showing caseload of Diphtheria for EPI week 47. Courtesy NCDC

Diphtheria outbreak has continued to be a huge public health concern in Nigeria. This deadly disease which first broke out in Kano State in December 2022 and into the early 2023 has been spreading to other states as reported by the NCDC and WHO. Situational report as of 30 November 2023 indicates that there were 12,049 confirmed cases from the 19,681 suspected cases and 574 deaths with a case fatality of 4.8%. The cases of diphtheria have now spread to 20 states and 143 LGAs in Nigeria. This outbreak is the worst since a decade and the situation may escalate again if immediate action is not taken. As there are issues in the context of poor testing and very low vaccination against Vaccine Preventable Disease (VPD) in the country, hard-to-reach communities are most at risk. Also, suspected unreported cases are slowly reported and slow data consolidation at the NCDC can be noted, as well as high level of transmission in marginalized communities. Also, the Republic of Niger has been reporting many confirmed cases of diphtheria in communities and states bordering northern Nigeria. Therefore, this emergency appeal aims to reduce the outbreak in those communities bordering the republic of Niger through the intervention by the Nigerian Red Cross society.

Summary of response

Overview of the host National Society ongoing response

The Nigerian Red Cross society has been conducting RCCE, active case search and social mobilisation of people at risk in the targeted states. So far into the intervention, the NRCS has worked with government agencies such as NCDC and NPHCDA in reducing the spread of the outbreak.

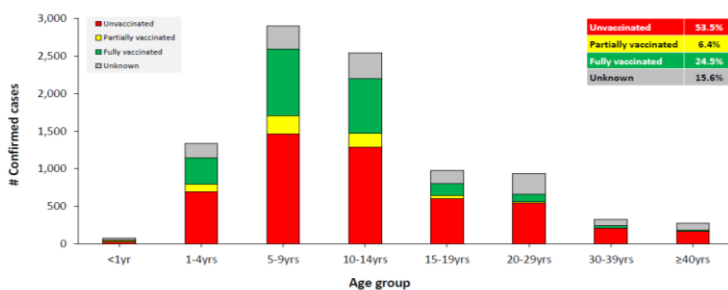
At the National society, the health, PMER and communications teams are all working hard to support the emergency operations for this diphtheria outbreak. Also, the national society has trained NDRTs that are deployed to the targeted states for supportive supervision and monitoring of the activities. The secretary general of the Nigerian Red Cross Society is providing strong leadership support to the team, for example, by visiting Kano and Katsina states in an official mission to oversee the activities of the branches and the community volunteers on this diphtheria emergency appeal. During his visit, he underscored the importance of vaccination to the communities and traditional leaders where there was high vaccine hesitancy and acknowledged the work of the branches and partnership between the state government and ministry of health.

Needs analysis

Trend in Diphtheria cases

According to Pro-Med and the International Society for Infectious Diseases, the recent situational report for the reported cases of diphtheria indicated that 85.2% of confirmed cases of diphtheria were accounted to be children aged between 2 to 14 years. Diphtheria currently affects the people who are partially immunized or have not received any form of routine immunization. It has been noted that Nigeria is one of the countries with low immunization coverage in Africa and high cases of zero dose children. Many groups of people affected are people with low immunity and poor immunization uptake. The data shows that as of November 2023, the cases load of people with diphtheria were people who have received non or partial or incomplete routine immunization.

Vaccination status by age group of confirmed cases, epi-week 47, 2023



As of 30 November 2023 (24.5%) out of 12,049 confirmed cases were fully vaccinated with a diphtheria toxin-containing vaccine. Also, NCDC situational/ epidemiological data show that 53.5% of the confirmed cases were unvaccinated with a diphtheria toxin-containing vaccine and only 6.4% of the confirmed cases were partially immunized. In addition, according to WHO, there have been a long-standing gap on immunization against diphtheria and other vaccine preventable diseases in Nigeria.

It is important to highlight the data for Nigeria on immunization for this operation. The National Immunization Coverage Survey 2021 reported that at least 64% of Nigerian children between the ages of 12 and 23 months did not obtain all the required vaccinations in the previous five years. According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) and the National Immunization Coverage Survey (NICS), 46% of children was reported to have received only a partial immunization between 2016 and 2021.

Also, the national society (NRCS) has been part of the national emergency taskforce group set up by the coordinating minister of health in September 2023 with the NCDC and NPHCDA as the co-chair of the emergency taskforce. In the

coordinating meetings which occur weekly, the Nigerian Red Cross Society provides update on its activities in the priority states which aligns with the government/national priority.

Operational risk assessment

As insecurity remains a challenge in some parts of Nigeria, NRCS follows security assessment reports and regular security guidelines from the NRCS and IFRC security teams. The Nigerian Red Cross volunteers and staff have been trained on the Safer Access framework and security precautions and will continue to receive security briefings in order to reduce the risk of harm.

Also, to reduce the risk of contracting diphtheria, Red Cross volunteers will be encouraged to take the Td vaccines for better protection against the disease and increase body immunity. Also, PPEs such as face mask and hand sanitizers will be provided to all Nigerian Red Cross volunteers to reduce risk of infection whilst in the field and during activities. In addition, assessments and strong consideration will be given to the availability of vaccines in the country. IFRC and Nigerian Red Cross Society will continue to engage with stakeholders such as NPHCDA, UNICEF, GAVI to ensure that vaccines are available for routine immunisation. Also, priority will be placed on the most affected communities to be the first recipients of the vaccines and be included in the intensification of routine immunisation campaign by the ministry of health.

B. OPERATIONAL STRATEGY


Update on the strategy

The national society has indicated minor changes on the Emergency Appeal operational strategy. The targeting of the operations will now include **Taraba State** as one of the priority states as indicated in the new sit rep data which shows new suspected and confirmed cases in Taraba State. Hence, the target number of people to be reached is now 5,500,00. Other activities conducted by the Nigerian Red Cross Society still maintains and follows the operational strategy for the emergency appeal as published.

Link to the operational strategy can be found [here](#)

C. DETAILED OPERATIONAL REPORT

STRATEGIC SECTORS OF INTERVENTION

	Health & Care <i>(Surveillance/Vaccination/Community Health)</i>	Total Target 5,500,000	Females <18: 3,500,000
			Males <18: 2,000,000
Objective:	<i>Strengthening holistic individual and community health of the population impacted through community level interventions and health system strengthening</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	Number of IEC materials developed and published	186,000	2,500,000
	Total number of volunteers trained on ECV/CBHFA	1,900	4,700

Total number of volunteers deployed for RCCE activities	640	2,000
Total number of volunteers trained on community based surveillance and contract tracing	1,300	2,700
Total number of IPC and PPE procured for the operation	5,000	185,000
Number of households reached with messages on diphtheria	200,000	5,500,000
Number of children U5 reached and mobilized for vaccination	1,435,268	4,300,000
Number of NDRTS trained on Diphtheria response	24	55
Number of NDRTS deployed to monitor diphtheria response	11	55
Number of vaccination teams deployed for routine and Td vaccination	0	2,700

The Nigerian Red Cross Society has been reaching the targeted people and conducting community outreach support through door-to-door sensitization in hard-to-reach areas and most-at-risk communities in hotspot LGAs¹. NRCS has so far deployed community-based volunteers to work alongside the vaccination teams from the State Primary Health Care (SPHCDA) in the states to conduct outreach activities. During the outreach activities, the vaccination teams consist of vaccinators, EMID recorders and town announcers/criers and supervisors. The process includes the vaccination team taking vaccine to the children in their households who are then immunized and given vaccination cards. Also, this activity covers households and communities with a fixed post at the nearest central post (such as mosques, local schools and traditional centers) for immunization activities.

During the RCCE activities, Red Cross volunteers used local languages such as Hausa in communicating to the families and beneficiaries reached with messages on diphtheria for better understanding.

NRCS team also identified suspected cases and referred them to the health facilities for medical testing/attention.

The Nigerian Red Cross society has been conducting RCCE, active case search and social mobilisation of people at risk in the targeted states. So far into the intervention, the NRCS has worked with government agencies such as NCDC and NPHCDA in reducing the spread of the outbreak through the following activities:

- Social mobilization of children under 5 years for the uptake of routine immunization especially in hard-to-reach communities.
- Supporting the Routine Immunization campaign by the ministry of health in the Intensification of vaccine in Kano, Katsina and Osun states, with 120 vaccination teams deployed and supported with stipends/logistics by the NRCS/SPHCHDA
- 640 volunteers have been trained on ECV/CBHFA and were deployed in the communities for diphtheria RCCE activities and social mobilization for immunization.
- Active case search of diphtheria by the Red Cross volunteers and adequate referral to the treatment centers through the State Disease Surveillance Notification Officers (DSNO) at the primary health care centres
- Working with MSF, UNICEF, WHO, NCDC, NPHCDA and other stakeholders in the emergency response to the diphtheria outbreak.
- Live/call-in radio shows in the priority and targeted states to increase awareness of diphtheria.

¹ Local government authorities

- A comprehensive training of NDRTs, state health coordinators and RC volunteers on community-based surveillance, contact tracing and active case search as well as cross border surveillance on diphtheria with NCDC NRRT (National rapid response teams)

Deployment of 1300 trained community based Red Cross volunteers to conduct surveillance, contact tracing and active case search on diphtheria in 8 priority states in partnership with the State Epidemiologists.



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Total target:	12,000 HH	Males >18:	3,000
		Females >18:	9,000

Objective: *Ensure safe drinking water, proper sanitation, and adequate hygiene awareness of the communities during relief and recovery phases of the Emergency Operation, through community interventions*

Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
		Number of families sensitized with WASH in clustered communities	1,500
	Number of households reached with hygiene promotion	1,000	12,000
	Number of hygiene kits distributed to affected families	1,000	12,000
	Number of NDRTS deployed to monitor the distribution	11	33

The National Society will be solely procuring the hygiene kits that will be distributed to the affected families through the branch teams. The Red Cross volunteers and the NDRTs will identify key households and conduct a registration of beneficiaries using the ODK Kobo collect tool to collect important information of the households such as ward level, LGA, contact number or address/location for proper identification.



Nigerian Red Cross team conducting distribution of hygiene kits in Kano State, the epicentre of the outbreak



Protection, Gender and Inclusion

Total target:
265,000 people

Males: **66,250**
Females:
198,750

Objective: *Communities identify the needs of the most at risk and particularly disadvantaged and marginalized groups, due to inequality, discrimination and other non-respect of their human rights and address their distinct needs*

Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	Number of people receiving psychosocial support for Diphtheria	0	20,000
	Number of persons living with disability reached on RCCE on Diphtheria	19,200	780,000
	Number of people trained on MPHSS	0	5,000

IFRC is providing technical support to Nigerian Red Cross on MPHSS. A separate training will be conducted on MPHSS for the volunteers and the NDRTs.



Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)

Objective:

Ensure the responses are guided by the diverse needs, priorities and preferences of the affected population by integrating meaningful community participation, timely, open and honest communication, and mechanisms to listen to and act on feedback

Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	Number of people reached through media (Radio)	1,580,000	5,500,000
	Number of community engagement meetings held in the targeted states	34	281
	Number of community influencers mobilized	0	120
	Number of press briefings conducted	0	3
	Number of radio jingles aired on local stations	70	-



Nigerian Red Cross health team and volunteers engaging with a traditional ruler and community influencer, the Emir of Dutse, Jigawa during a Diphtheria advocacy

NRCS supported live/call-in radio shows in the priority and targeted states to increase awareness of diphtheria. Radio jingles on diphtheria have been aired as requested by NCDC, which has been translated to 3 Nigerian languages, Hausa, English and pidgin English. These jingles were aired on the selected radio station 4 times a day. The NRCS has been conducting activities on community feedback through the CEA kobo collect tool.

Enabling approaches



National Society Strengthening

Objective:	<i>To ensure that NRCS demonstrates the capacity to respond effectively to the epidemic and that their auxiliary role in health system strengthening is well defined and recognized</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	Number of branches supported with training and capacity	8	13
	Number of NDRTs trained and deployed	24	55
	Number of community-based volunteers trained and mobilized	1,300	2,700
	Number of supportive staff in the National society	4	7

National society will be supporting in the payment of volunteers' incentives as well as working with the branch teams and the Divisional Secretaries at the LGA level to coordinate all volunteer activities and provide immediate technical and operational support to the volunteers. All necessary protective equipment will be provided to them as necessary. Also, NRCS will host regular (physical/virtual) meetings with the state teams.

25 branch staff from the 13 targeted states in the operation will be mobilized and deployed to ensure supervision and field monitoring at the community level.



Coordination and Partnerships

Objective:	<i>To provide technical and operational complementarity between IFRC membership and ICRC and ensure Movement cooperation is enhanced through cooperation with external partners</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	Stakeholder and partner engagement meetings conducted	5	37
	Engagement meetings and partnership with government agencies and ministry of health	7	41

The Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare for Nigeria, upon visiting Kano the epicentre of the outbreak in September 2023, constituted an emergency task force to curb the diphtheria outbreak as the situation

deteriorated. Following this, a national taskforce has been meeting and IFRC and Nigerian Red Cross are active members of the coordination platform.

NRCS is working with MSF, UNICEF, WHO, NCDC, NPHCDA and other stakeholders in the emergency response to the diphtheria outbreak.



Secretariat Services

Objective: *To ensure that IFRC is working as one organization, delivering what it promises to NRCS and volunteers, and leveraging the strength of the communities with which they work as effectively and efficiently as possible*

	Indicator	Actual	Target
Key indicators:	Number of IFRC staff supporting NS	4	4
	Number of monitoring activities completed	5	15
	Number of lessons learnt workshop completed	1	4

IFRC is supporting the national society with review of finance documents and technical support to the health team.

The IFRC is providing technical support to the National Society with the health and care officer, operations coordinator and manager, PMER intern and CEA officer as the programme team.

D. FUNDING

To date, this Emergency Appeal, which seeks CHF 5,400,000, is 1 per cent funded. Further funding contributions are needed to enable the Nigerian Red Cross Society with the support of the IFRC, to continue with the operation. The current funding situation of the emergency appeal is 61,461CHF. More information on contributors list can be found on the [IFRC's website landing page](#) for the diphtheria emergency appeal.

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For Performance and Accountability support (planning, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting enquiries)

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Reference documents



Click here for:

- [Emergency Appeal](#)
- [Operational Strategy](#)