Towards an understanding of how Ebola and Ebola Response affected Liberia

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Methodology

- Various mixed method Surveys / Interviews
  - 41 community & ETU workers
  - 167 heads of household under quarantine
  - 67 Heads of households with children who were directly affected
  - 47 community members in Bong
  - 16 persons from highly affected community
- Observations, informal encounters, reflections

During Ebola Times in Communities

EVD
- People got sick
- People died / survived
- Everywhere: danger
  - Fear
  - Despair
  - Helplessness
  - Grief
  - Staying away from others

EVD response
- NO caring for the sick!
- NO proper burials!
- NO touching!
- Restricted movement
- Destruction of property
  - Shame, Guilt
  - Norms-violating behavior
  - Anger, Blame, Conflict
  - Social disconnect
  - Loss of income/property

Why EVD Crisis Affectedness?

- NGOs support "highly affected" groups
  - How is this defined?
  - Which support makes sense?
- Need for understanding and evidence
  - For helpful programming
  - For avoiding harm doing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Association with &quot;Ebola&quot;</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bad sickness</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad feeling</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatred</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustration</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worries</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cureless disease</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dimensions of EVD crisis impact

- Physical
- Psychological
- Social
- Existential
- Cultural/spiritual

EVD crisis affectedness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Psych.</th>
<th>Existential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infected ETU</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infected com</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family in community</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family elsewhere</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community affected</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Elsewhere</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is past or present more relevant?

Blaming persons for having...
- Called ambulance
  - “Community dwellers gave address when they started getting sick. Up to now the family members are not talking with them, because they had called.”
- Not helped sick person
  - “Health workers said they felt the friends were not given good treatment by the co-workers”
- Killed/sacrificed persons
  - “Ambulance drivers, sprayers, they put chemicals in it, and killed the patients”
- Brought Ebola to family/community
  - “Her little sister is number one enemy...was the cause for the family to perish”

Blaming for infecting others
47 community members in Bong
- 32 feel towards those who infected others:
  - Bad feelings (24)
  - Anger (6)
  - Blame (2)
  - Rejection (2)
- 60.5%: almost many people they know blame someone for infecting others
- 42 (89.4%): people are angry with someone who has brought Ebola to their communities.
- 6 (12.8%) thought those who blame others will NOT come to forgiveness

Conclusions – Need for research
- Most persons in Liberia have been affected by the Ebola crisis on physical, psychological, existential, spiritual and social dimension
- How many have recovered?
- How many need support for recovery?
- Social (Re)Connection might be crucial for recovery
- For psychosocial support, current needs should be considered, not the artificial category “survivor”
Positive Impact of Ebola & Response

- Focus on what matters most: people
- Volunteering
- Caring
- Hand washing
- Support from abroad: Liberia is not alone
- Work and career opportunities in EVD response

Psychological

- Forgetting, lack of concentration
- Avoidance
- Not able to work
- Crying a lot
- Pain in the body
- Sadness, Anger, Despair
- people “dying in their hearts”
- Identity problems

Existential

- Economic
  - Loss of Bread winner / children to take care of old
  - Loss of crops/income
- Education
  - 7 months break
  - Lack of money to continue
- Living space
  - Excluded from community/neighbourhood
  - Orphaned children moving in
- Break down of health facilities

Cultural / Spiritual

- Disconnect with the dead – unsatisfied spirits
- Loss of faith / increased faith
- Norm changes for greetings / burials?
- Self blame for not respecting the dead
- Changes in social structure/power dynamics

Social

- Conflicts / Blaming
- Lack of social support
- Envy
- Change in social structure
- Changed way of interacting
- More distance
- Exclusion
- Broken relationships
Physical

- Persons who died are not there
- Post-Ebola syndrome: problems with eyes, concentration, hearing, joints...
- Untreated sicknesses: health system
- Teenage pregnancies
- Psychosomatic problems (Pain), people “dying in their hearts”