

The EFFO project: Linking micro and macro levels to prepare health care workers for outbreak situations

Efficiency by transcultural training and networking

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Background

The Ebola outbreak demonstrated gaps on the macro level. On the micro level the most vulnerable persons were consulting and treating patients without sufficient protection. This first line of defense must detect suspected cases in order to initiate isolation, contact tracing, laboratory confirmation, communication and to deliver reliable data for surveillance. In public health the role of

health care workers (HCW) has not been the focus in recent years. For this crucial part of mitigation in the context of the West African Ebola outbreak, EFFO was initiated in September 2014 by the RKI and the German permanent working group for the management of highly contagious diseases (STAKOB) and is financed by the German Federal Ministry of Health.

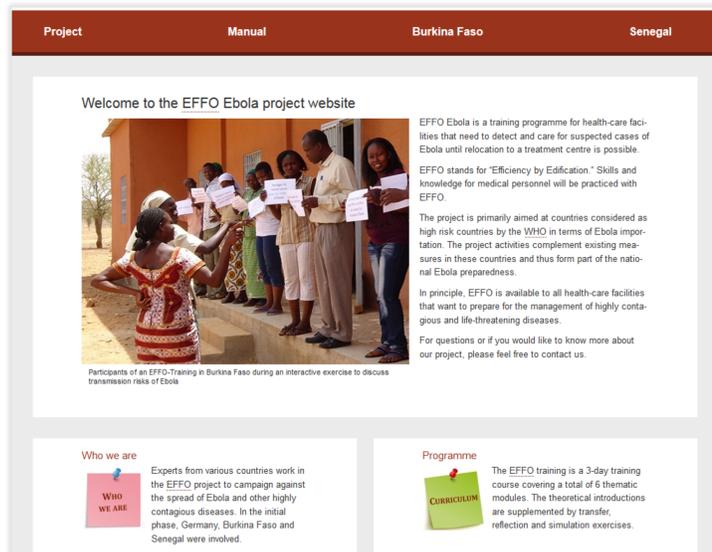
Objectives

The EFFO project aims

- To prepare HCW in order to identify and manage patients with highly contagious diseases
- To strengthen health care facilities by training
- To provide further support such as supervision and equipment for infection prevention and control
- To build a trusted network of medical personnel which is able to function and train during outbreaks beyond borders.

Preliminary Results

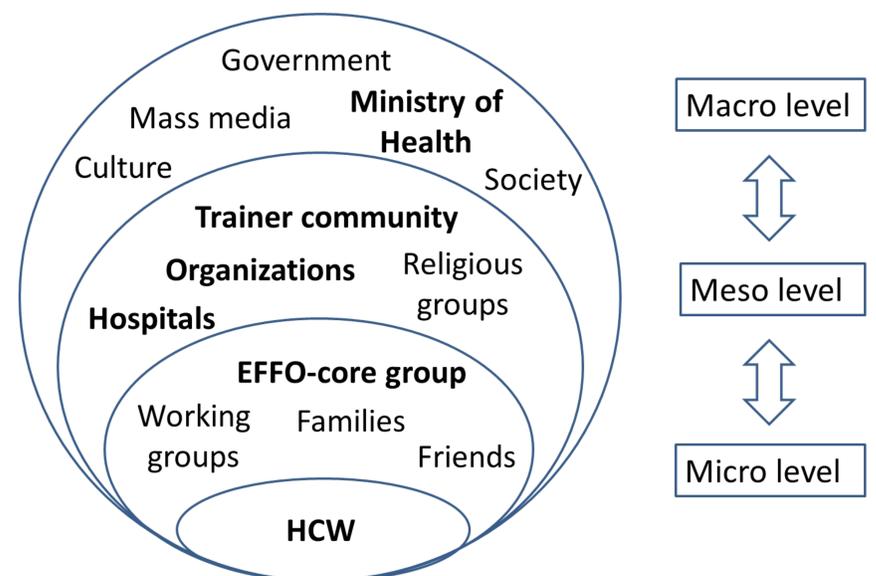
The project started with a transcultural training program developed by experts from Germany, Burkina Faso and Senegal in a participatory and iterative process. The program was conducted in different regions and facilities. The public EFFO-website provides a platform for information and feedback. Via internet, the program is transparent for organizations such as Ministries of Health, WHO, trainers and participants. Workshops and participation in conferences have been strengthening the network as well as encouraging the exchange of experiences from supervision. E.g. in Burkina Faso 435 HCW in different facilities were trained. The facilities include district hospitals, primary health care centers and others. Supervision was conducted by a church organization in Burkina Faso and is supported by the German team. 10 physicians build the trainer core team in Burkina Faso. Some of the trainers are linked to activities of the Ministry of Health. The transcultural approach seems to be promising and further exchange is wanted.



Website for information, feedback, networking and transparency

Method

The training concept is comprehensively embedded on multiple levels. The project structure created by organizations with diverse cultures and expertise on the meso level links individuals and governmental stakeholders. While participants on the micro level contribute by developing and improving the training program, the general support is provided by supranational initiatives and governments on the macro level.



Levels relevant to the EFFO project inspired by Bronfenbrenner. Exchange and coordination between the levels are crucial for outbreak management. In bold: Direct EFFO project stakeholders.

Discussion

EFFO stands for Efficiency by Edification and constitutes a holistic approach, a process to build a sense of community within the anticipated network of trainers to prepare HCW. Respect for human diversity, individual well-being and the combination of quantitative and qualitative research are essential elements in creating a transcultural program. Taking care of patients is not only a moral

question but also essential for motivating infected persons to seek medical advice, leading to isolation for public health reasons. Individual health and population health are closely linked and should never be conceptualized separately. Unfortunately, even now the key role of HCW still seems to be a neglected dimension in many lessons learned.

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