

9. Pooling to pull together – experiences and challenges faces implementing a public health response to AWD outbreak in Ethiopia

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Julian Parker started the presentation showing a GIS animation of a Cholera spread in Ethiopia. This starting point was used as a reflection on the importance of a fast response regarding this disease and the use in convincing communities of the risk to their villages.

Jessee Kinyanjui Wainaina followed with a presentation on how an inter-agency group (led by an NGO) came together to develop an emergency community education and engagement plan with more targeted specific messages. These messages were endorsed through the Federal Government AWD task force sub-committee on the environmental health aspects of the outbreak.

- Pointed out factors:

- o The community part of the response and their views used in the design of the intervention strategy.
- o The scale of the outbreak and the speed of spread mean that conventional strategies (such as recommending people to build latrines) are not really appropriate.
- o Also people were not initially convinced of the seriousness of the messages when they were the same as those given in general hygiene education.
- o Messages were therefore repackaged to be specific to the outbreak and simple and achievable by people themselves.
- o Channels of communication were diversified for message dissemination.
- o Usefulness of GIS (Geographical Information Systems) systems for planning actions and communicating with communities to persuade them of the seriousness of the outbreak in relation to their villages.