



**Quarter 1 Program Report Narrative**  
**Ebola Care and Treatment in River Gee County, Liberia**  
**Reporting Period: Nov. 1, 2014 – Dec. 31, 2014**  
**AID-OFDA-G-15-00017**  
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## **General Overview**

By December 31, 2014, ARC had deployed all staff required to provide clinical care to Ebola patients through operation of the Ebola Treatment Unit (ETU) in Fishtown, River Gee County and all staff members have undergone training relevant to their roles. In December, a staff housing facility was constructed and is now operational. The total number of staff based in Fishtown ready to provide care is 102, with 23 clinical staff, 55 non-clinical ETU staff, and 24 other support staff.

At the start of the contract in November, ARC did not have an operational presence in Liberia. An office and all the systems – managerial and operational – had to be established. ARC now has a small office in Monrovia with a major base in Fishtown. In order to maintain consistent management, staff members routinely rotate between Monrovia and Fishtown.

### Ebola Treatment in River Gee County:

The construction of the ETU, which is the responsibility of Welt Hunger Hilfe (WHH) is not yet complete. The current expected date of completion is January 15<sup>th</sup> 2015. The first completion date was December 4<sup>th</sup> 2014. The site, carved out of forested land with a considerable slope, brought its own difficulties. Construction has suffered from a number of delays from unseasonably heavy rain storms. Additionally, the overland journey from Monrovia to Fishtown is over 600km by road with very poor, frequently impassable, conditions for more than half of the distance. This reality has caused significant delays in the supply of materials. The design of the ETU campus had several failings from an Ebola-management perspective, specifically relating to patient flow. Modifications have been requested and will be detailed later in this report.

The specialized Ebola laboratory was to be located in Fishtown, a central point for River Gee, Maryland and Grand Gedeh counties. Construction of the Fishtown lab had started when it was relocated to Greenville in response to an outbreak in Sinoe County. Given the current trend of the Ebola epidemic, the laboratory is unlikely to be relocated back to Fishtown. Currently, the nearest laboratory is in Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County – a 4-hr drive from Fishtown. The transportation of samples is currently the responsibility of the County Health Team supported by Global Communities.

The Community Care Center (CCC) in Fishtown, which was built and is operated by Samaritans Purse (SP), was opened on December 13<sup>th</sup> 2014. To date, no case of Ebola has presented to the CCC. There have been no cases of Ebola in River Gee County since before the CCC was opened. ARC has already established a cordial working relationship with the leadership and staff of the Fishtown CCC and ARC medical staff have been welcomed to assist in the CCC as needs arise. A second CCC is currently under construction in Kanweaken, just 20 km from Fishtown and is also to be operated by SP. Given the fact that there has not been a confirmed case of Ebola in River Gee County since September 27<sup>th</sup> 2014, and the downward trend in the epidemic across the country, the Ministry of Health (MOH) is currently restructuring an appropriate strategy for the region.

As of January 1<sup>st</sup> 2015, a total of 18 Ebola-related cases have been recorded in three of the six health districts; namely Chedepo, Gbeabo and Webbo. Of the 18 cases, there were 8 deaths (2 M, 6 F), 7 suspected cases, 4 probable, and 7 confirmed. The first suspected case in River Gee County was recorded on August 22<sup>nd</sup> and first confirmed case recorded on October 2<sup>nd</sup> with no other suspected or probable case reports since that date.

There was an incident in December where a woman who had been sick for some days self-reported to the CCC. Upon seeing the staff in full PPE, she refused to enter the CCC and left town for treatment elsewhere. With this incident in

mind, ARC recognizes that there may be a negative response when the ETU opens or resistance to reporting suspected cases. The ETU construction is not yet complete and unlikely to be ready before mid-January. Nonetheless, there are plans for a set of activities to demystify the ETU in the eyes of the Fishtown community. When the construction is complete, there will be a number of open-house events, talks in public places such as markets and religious centers, community walk-throughs, and demonstrations of PPE donning and doffing procedures.

There have been a number of complimentary Ebola-related activities and services in River Gee County over the past several months. SP, WHH, Global Communities, IBIS, EHealth, and HANDS have been supporting a range of activities from hand washing bucket distribution to radio programs on Ebola prevention and treatment. ARC has developed good working relations with the County Health Team (CHT) and other partners. Should the downward trend in Ebola continue and the ETU is still under construction, ARC is planning to support the CHT with clinical services and assessment/planning for the restoration of primary health services.

### Logistics and Procurement:

ARC procured three vehicles for program operations in Fishtown (two Toyota hardtops and one Ford Ranger double-cabin pick up) and rented two vehicles for operations in Monrovia. All the vehicles are driven by ARC drivers to ensure ARC policy compliance. Supplies are transported from Monrovia to Fishtown by trucks under contract from private operators on an as-needed basis. As there is no fuel station in Fishtown, ARC has installed a store of 4000 gallons of diesel in the ARC Housing Facility.

As part of the security management for ARC assets and personnel travelling within our operational areas, ARC has conducted road tests and mapped towns and cities along the route from Monrovia to Fishtown. This mapping consists of Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates and trip timing. A comprehensive vehicle insurance policy has been drawn up in-country with Equity Assurance Company Liberia Limited for the three ARC vehicles.

Clearing items from Liberian customs has proved to be a challenge. Despite this, procurement for the emergency response was conducted throughout the reporting period, in accordance with USAID and ARC procurement policies and guidelines. The major supply items included:

- Essential medicines and medical equipment
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Three vehicles for project use
- 12 hot-weather tents with partitions for staff housing/office in Fishtown
- Construction of temporary structures for staff housing/office in Fishtown
- IT equipment and infrastructure (printers, routers, servers, and internet installation)
- Water, sanitation, and hygiene supplies, including chlorine and water testing equipment

ARC has engaged with the WFP-coordinated Logistics Cluster in order to utilize the resources available to Ebola partners in Liberia. Through the Logistics Cluster, ARC secured both ground and air transport for cargo and personnel as well as temporary storage for materials in Monrovia.

Items donated for Ebola response were secured for ARC through the Logistics Cluster, including shipping containers for storage from Maersk, temporary tents from the US Department of Defense, ETU start-up kits developed by WFP and USAID, and a spare generator from the Swiss government. In addition, the ARC warehouse in Fishtown consists of a storage tent on loan from WFP. ARC staff attend weekly meetings organized by the Logistics Cluster and maintained regular contact with cluster focal points.

Pharmaceutical supplies arrived in country on Dec 9<sup>th</sup> 2014. The clearance from the Ministry of Finance is on-going. Once cleared, the supplies will be delivered to Fishtown by the Logistics Cluster.

## **Implementation Updates by Subsectors**

### Subsector 1: Health Systems and Clinical Support

#### *Activity 1: Staff Training*

The international staff arrived in Liberia November 20<sup>th</sup>. The process of recruitment of the national staff started in mid-November and stretched to the end of the year when the recruitment in Fishtown was completed. The international posts of the Psychosocial Coordinator and the Ambulance Coordinator are the only two outstanding recruitments. The process is on-going and recruitment and arrival in Liberia is expected early in January.

All staff have been trained as appropriate to their roles. During the reporting period, the following trainings took place:

- Clinical staff completed one of two Ebola training and simulations. The first of which was conducted by the International Medical Corp (IMC) in Liberia. This training consisted of both “hot and cold zone” training: four days of lectures/simulations and three days of shadowing/mentorship. The second training was conducted by MOSHW and WHO. This was a comprehensive training, including three days of lecture, two days simulation (with Ebola survivors as actors), and three days “hot zone” shadowing/mentorship.
- A third training was conducted in Fishtown by the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), Dec. 26<sup>th</sup> - Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>. Thirty three MOH staff from River Gee County Health Team, two WHO staff based in Fishtown, and 56 newly-hired ARC staff (mainly WASH sprayers, cleaners, and other non-clinical support staff) were trained. This training enabled all the relevant medical and support personnel in River Gee County to become familiar with Ebola treatment protocols and functions of the ETU.

ARC’s first deployment to Fishtown was in early December. The first deployments placed the Site Engineer and WASH staff to help facilitate the construction of the staff housing and the WASH components of the ETU construction. The bulk of the staff was then deployed on December 22<sup>nd</sup> to be in time for the DOD training. There will also be an intensive program of practice and simulation with the staff on the procedures and operations of the ETU once the construction is completed and the facility is handed over to ARC.

#### *Activity 2: Clinical Care of Ebola Patients*

As of January 1, the ETU has not yet opened or reached a stage where dry-run simulation training can take place.

There have been no suspected, confirmed, or probable cases in River Gee County since October 2<sup>nd</sup> (90 days as of Dec 31<sup>st</sup> 2014).. Since it opened on December 13<sup>th</sup>, the CCC in Fishtown has had just this one suspected case.

Supplies required to care for Ebola patients have been pre-positioned in Fishtown. The ETU Kit and the Nutrition Kit have been delivered and are stored in the warehouse at the ARC housing facility. The pharmaceutical supplies arrived in country on Dec 9<sup>th</sup>. The clearance from the Ministry of Finance is on-going. Once cleared, the supplies will be delivered by the Logistics Cluster.

#### *Activity 3: Infection Prevention and Staff Safety*

Infection prevention measures are yet to be operationalized. Staff have been trained in the safety procedures, and the important simulation exercises will take place when the ETU construction is completed.

ARC has been in constant contact with WHH at the ETU site to ensure that the design and structures will allow for all the necessary safety procedures to operate smoothly. At this stage ARC has requested and received approval for the construction to include the following:

- Addition of a Psychosocial Building for discharge patients
- Controlled passageway to morgue for deceased body transport
- Additional exit door from showers to Psychosocial Building
- Window added for dispensing medications to the red zone of the ETU

#### *Activity 4: Operation Management of ETU*

The original staffing plan was designed for a 60-bed unit. This was later reduced to a 10-bed unit. Consequently, there are three doctors (rather than six in the original plan); three physician assistants (rather than six in the original plan); and no nurse practitioner was hired. There are two WASH specialists, two psychosocial workers (international to arrive in early January), 13 registered and licensed practical nurses (RN/LPN), and 17 sprayers. Supporting the clinical staff, there are eight managers and administrators for the ETU. Given, the current trend of the epidemic, this technical capacity is considered to be sufficient. Ambulance support is currently being provided through Global Communities.

The construction of the staff housing facility was originally planned to be built by WHH. Later, the plans changed and ARC took on the construction and engaged a subcontractor. It is a tented facility with a concrete base and a few semi-permanent structures (timber frame and iron sheet walls and roof) with crushed rock paths. The main storage area is a MSU tent donated by WFP. The facility is located near the center of Fishtown. Construction began in early December and is almost completed. The last remaining construction of note is drilling the borehole and connecting the water system. The tents that were to serve as the living quarters were ordered in November have not yet been delivered to Liberia. In the interim, the DOD was able to provide 12 general purpose tents. The tents arrived on December 25<sup>th</sup> and were erected in the following few days. In the meantime, ARC staff were housed at guest houses in Fishtown. All ARC staff are now housed in the staff housing facility. The specialized tents for staff housing are expected in January.

#### *Activities 5: Management of Solid Waste and Handling of the Bodies of the Deceased; 6: Institutional Hygiene Promotion; and 7: Maintenance of Latrines and Hand Washing Points*

Plans related to water, sanitation, and hygiene are prepared and will be operationalized when the ETU is open. All staff have been hired and trained in these activities. The first training was through the DOD and subsequent trainings were led by the ARC WASH Specialist. Two weeks prior to opening the ETU there will be an intensive refresher program of practice and simulation with the staff on the procedures and operations related to WASH.

All required WASH supplies, such as PPEs, chlorine, buckets, basins, and brooms are in stock in the warehouse in the ARC Housing facility. This includes:

- 52 drums chlorine 45kg/drum
- 1 month supply of full PPE, including coveralls, hoods, goggles, gloves, aprons, respirator masks, and gloves
- 58 20L Ebola buckets to use as hand-washing stations
- Various water and sanitation supplies for 2 months, including puncture-proof bags, cleaning solution, plastic sheeting, bio-hazardous waste disposal bags, anti-bacterial soap, and anti-bacterial alcohol-based hand sanitizer (65%)

Relating to activity five, a modification to the design of the ETU has been proposed by ARC. Bodies of the deceased will now exit the ETU without passing alongside the suspected case area (as in the previous design). There are discussions underway with the Fishtown authorities as to location of the burial site.

#### *Activity 8: Maintenance of the Water Supply System at the ETU, Water Testing and Treatment*

The water source at the ETU is a concern. The site of the ETU is on raised ground with rocky sub terrain. It is not ideal for a high-yielding water source. The borehole drilling machine has not yet arrived on site. Until the drilling starts all the concerns on water sources are speculation.

As the site is located on a hill, the red and green zones were swapped so that the green was up-slope of the red and care had to be taken regarding the water flow, rain water control, and septic tank. After one heavy storm in mid-December, the septic tank that was partially built was destroyed by storm water run-off. Drainage and rain water run-off control may be a practical challenge during the rainy season.

## **Additional Information:**

The original plan was to open an ARC office in Harper that would operate as the main administration base and procurement/logistics hub. However, as a result of the following developments the Harper hub has been put on hold and staff to be deployed to Harper were re-assigned to Fishtown or Monrovia.

- The Logistics Cluster has significantly strengthened in recent months, and now provides door-to-door services for the ETU.
- Forward Logistics Bases (FLB) in Zwedru and Harper that can now both serve Fishtown (Harper: primary; Zwedru: alternate). Both FLBs have sufficient space to store any ARC supplies.
- The ETUs are re-supplied through an ETU kit system. The cluster packs the supplies from the national stores and transports the kit directly to the ETU.
- The route via Harper by sea does avoid the long road journey but has other complications. Each ship consignment would need to be packed and weighed by ARC. Currently, ARC does not have any warehouse space or packing/weighing equipment. The shipping, loading, journey, and off-loading will take about six days (in comparison to a two-day road journey).
- The vast majority of procurement will be done in Monrovia.
- Given that the Logs Cluster will provide the majority of the necessary supplies ARC does not need a large logistics/procurement capacity of its own in Harper, Maryland County
- The road from Fishtown to Harper is equally as bad as that to Zwedru in Grand Gedeh County and is currently impassable despite it being the dry season. As a result, the Harper office will not be able to provide daily support to the Fishtown facilities as was originally planned.
- The IT team advised that the server be located in Monrovia where all back-up services are located.

### *Looking forward to next quarter:*

The construction of the ETU is expected to be completed by mid-January however; ARC has limited involvement in this phase of the process. After the structure is complete, the MOHSW will conduct the case management and WASH assessments. ARC is prepared to make any final modifications to the structure and/or layout to fully comply with any MOHSW requirements. Once an opening date can be confidently predicted, ARC will undertake an in-house refresher for all staff. Training and simulation will take place, and the ETU stocked with supplies (now stored in the ARC Housing Facility). Simultaneously, activities to demystify the ETU will be carried out with local leadership and the nearby community.

The re-establishment of ARC in Liberia and the building of and deployment to the operational unit in Fishtown has been done at a swift pace. While management systems are in place, they will only become fully established once the ETU is completed. Asset/stock management and fleet management will continue to be monitored closely. In the next month ARC plans to open an account at the only bank in Fishtown – Afriland Bank – to strengthen the financial management system.

In anticipation of a welcome fall in the Ebola cases and gradual weakening of the epidemic, ARC is planning to re-direct its capacity in the short-term and to re-program for the medium term in consultation with OFDA and MOHSW. While *ARC will remain prepared to swiftly operationalize the ETU once it is built*, we will be engaging in negotiations with OFDA to appropriately modify the current grant agreement. Going forward, assessments will be conducted in areas that are directly related to the latter stages of the Ebola epidemic such as strengthening health services, WASH, school-reopening and livelihoods. ARC plans, through close collaboration with the River Gee County Health Team and County Education Team, to make assessments of needs and opportunities. The information that is collected will form the basis of a proposal for grant modification.