



TECHNICAL OVERVIEW

Mpox Emergency Response

Mpox is a viral infectious disease caused by an orthopoxvirus in the same family as smallpox and has emerged as a growing public health threat in several African countries. It spreads through close physical contact with an infected person, contaminated materials or infected animals. Symptoms typically begin with fever and swollen lymph nodes, followed by a painful rash that can spread across the body. While many infections are mild, Mpox can cause severe illness, complications in children and long-term scarring.

In well-resourced health systems, outbreaks can often be contained through rapid detection, safe isolation and clear public communication. In fragile settings, the risks are significantly greater. Limited infection prevention systems allow health facilities to become sites of transmission. Weak laboratory networks delay confirmation. Fear, stigma and misinformation can discourage early care-seeking and isolation.

Mpox represents not only a clinical challenge but also a systems challenge. Containing outbreaks requires strong surveillance, resilient health facilities and trusted community engagement to detect and respond quickly.

IMA World Health operates at that intersection, supporting countries to contain outbreaks while strengthening the health systems that underpin global health security.

IMA's Role in Outbreak Response

IMA World Health works in complex, conflict-affected environments where infectious disease outbreaks are both more likely and more difficult to contain. Through long-standing partnerships with ministries of health, district health management teams and community organizations, IMA World Health can respond rapidly when outbreaks emerge while reinforcing national response systems.

IMA World Health's Mpox response integrates three connected priorities:

- strengthening infection prevention and control (IPC) in health facilities
- expanding surveillance, laboratory coordination and safe case management
- equipping communities through risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) to support prevention and early referral

By integrating these approaches, IMA World Health helps countries contain active outbreaks while strengthening health systems to better prevent and manage future public health threats.

In Practice

Democratic Republic of Congo

Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo remains one of the most complex outbreak environments globally. IMA World Health's response in North and South Kivu focused on strengthening health facility readiness, expanding treatment capacity and reinforcing community-based surveillance to reduce transmission risk.

Between August and November 2024, IMA World Health conducted infection prevention and control assessments across health facilities in Goma, Karisimbi and Nyiragongo health zones to strengthen outbreak preparedness and reduce facility-based transmission. This effort resulted in **82 health facilities assessed**, **31 facilities strengthened** after receiving low IPC scores, and **744 hygiene kits distributed** to improve infection prevention. IMA World Health also trained **60 health workers and community responders** and supported **22 response coordination meetings**, helping strengthen early detection and outbreak response capacity.

Through the U.S. Government-funded MOMENTUM Integrated Health Resilience project, IMA World Health expanded Mpox surveillance, contact tracing and treatment capacity across North and South Kivu. Between October 2024 and December 2025, IMA World Health trained **346 frontline health workers**, supported **two Mpox Treatment Centers** in Mugunga and Miti-Murhesa and **safely managed 1,483 Mpox cases**, including 126 confirmed cases treated between October and December 2025, the majority among children. These investments significantly strengthened clinical management and safe isolation capacity in high-risk areas.

With funding from Lutheran Disaster Response of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), IMA World Health established and operationalized the Kanyaruchinya Mpox Treatment Center in Nyiragongo health zone between August 2025 and January 2026, replacing the non-operational Munigi site and restoring critical treatment capacity. The center was equipped with isolation tents, **40 infection prevention and control-compliant beds** and a **6,000-liter water supply system** to meet national and World Health Organization standards. Between September and December 2025, the center delivered **clinical and psychosocial care to 543 patients**, **trained 22 healthcare providers** in Mpox case management and infection prevention and delivered approximately **two tons of medical supplies and equipment** to support treatment operations, while achieving 100 percent laboratory testing for suspected Mpox cases.

IMA World Health also strengthened community surveillance and prevention through integrated water, sanitation and hygiene interventions across the Nyiragongo health zone. These efforts reached **35,259 people**, including **63 community health workers trained**, **10,818 households visited** and **3,799 households decontaminated**, with **77,900 liters of water chlorinated to reduce environmental transmission risks**. Together, these interventions contributed to a **95 percent reduction in cholera cases** in targeted communities, with confirmed cases declining from 20 in September to one case in November.

Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone experienced sustained Mpox transmission during 2025 and early 2026, with 5,442 confirmed cases recorded nationally. From February to April 2025, IMA World Health partnered with Movement toward Peace and Development Agency (MOPADA) to strengthen prevention and surveillance in border districts including Kailahun and Pujehun, which share porous borders with Liberia.

The response focused on strengthening public awareness, community engagement and infection prevention capacity. IMA World Health supported **12 radio discussion programs**, produced two local-language jingles and three television programs, installed **15 billboards and distributed 3,000 prevention materials** to promote Mpox awareness and early reporting. Community engagement activities included **11 community meetings and town halls and the training of 40 community volunteers**. To strengthen health facility readiness, IMA World Health **trained 100 health workers** in infection prevention and control and distributed **1,500 IPC materials** to peripheral health units, while integrating Mpox prevention messaging into 14 school health clubs. Kailahun and Pujehun recorded among the lowest confirmed case totals nationally.



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