



**OPERATIONAL  
RESEARCH  
SNAPSHOT**

## ***Strengthening Disease Surveillance in the Democratic Republic of Congo***

**Millions of people in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) face regular epidemics of diseases like measles, cholera, or typhoid fever.**

Médecins Sans Frontières runs the Pool d'Urgence Congo (PUC) in DRC, an emergency unit responding to epidemics in the most remote areas of the country.

Reliable monitoring and reporting of outbreaks are key for an adequate and timely response. Therefore, the PUC also aims to strengthen the peripheral capacities of the national notifiable disease surveillance system.

This operational research study looked at how MSF's efforts to build local capacities benefit the national surveillance system.





**W**hen responding to an outbreak, the Pool d'Urgence Congo also strengthens local staff's capacities to detect severe infectious diseases, helps setting up case notification registers, and ensures data are submitted from the periphery to the national notifiable disease surveillance system.



**S**trengthening the surveillance system has a direct positive effect: for seven measles vaccination campaigns in 2013 and 2014, the study showed a significant increase in notified cases of infectious diseases up to 26 weeks after the PUC's intervention.



**I**mproving peripheral surveillance during short-term emergency response is a valuable investment in detecting and containing future outbreaks and strengthening national preparedness, particularly in remote rural settings.



## IMPLEMENTATION

The Pool d'Urgence Congo continues to share knowledge with local health staff supporting the monitoring and reporting of dangerous outbreaks in remote areas.

Broader investments in strengthening disease surveillance remain necessary, yet emergency interventions have the potential to improve monitoring and save more lives. This effective approach from DRC is considered to be adapted in similar settings.

Original Study: Benedetti G, Mossoko M, Nyakio Kakusu JP, Nyembo J, Mangion JP, Van Laeken D, Van den Bergh R, Van den Boogaard W, Manzi M, Kibango WK, Hermans V, Beijnsberger J, Lambert V, Kitenge E. (2016) Sparks creating light? Strengthening peripheral disease surveillance in the Democratic Republic of Congo. *Public Health Action*, 6(2), pp. 54-9.

Pictures: Robin Meldrum/MSF, Diana Zeyneb Alhindawi/MSF, Candida Lobes/MSF, Andre Quillien/MSF



**LuxOR**  
Luxembourg Operational Research

[or.msf.lu](http://or.msf.lu)  
[fieldresearch.msf.org](http://fieldresearch.msf.org)