

CASE STUDY · MALAWI

Community Engagement in the Malawi Cholera Response — A Success Story

How gender-responsive community engagement turned the tide in hard-to-reach communities during Malawi's cholera outbreak.

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Brief

Malawi's record-breaking cholera outbreak was ultimately contained not only in treatment centres but in communities, and this success story documents the community-engagement model that made the difference. It describes how risk-communication and community-engagement teams worked through trusted local structures — faith leaders, women's groups and community health workers — to shift behaviour around water, sanitation and care-seeking. It highlights the deliberate gender-responsive design that ensured messages reached women, who carry most household water and care responsibilities. The story reports what changed in the affected districts, distils the transferable elements for other outbreak-prone settings, and links to the GENPAR framework and the regional cholera contingency plan.

Trusted structures

Engagement worked through faith leaders, women's groups and community health workers rather than around them.

Gender-responsive design

Messages and channels were deliberately designed to reach women, who bear most household water and care responsibilities.

What transfers

The elements most likely to work elsewhere are separated from the context-specific, ready for reuse.

How to cite this work

RECOMMENDED CITATION

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