

David Deng is state surveillance officer for Northern Bahr el Ghazal, a position he has held since 2010. As a surveillance officer his major role is to investigate and confirm rumours of disease outbreaks. A technical team, including epidemiologists and other medical officers, then confirm or dispel the rumour. If the team confirms the alert, the community is quickly informed and response actions start immediately.

For investigations to be carried out, two key things are required: 1) transport facilitation to conduct surveillance and collect reports; and 2) communication tools, in case the available transport cannot reach some destinations.

To address this, WHO, with support from USAID, has provided bicycles and motorcycles to surveillance officers to facilitate collection of data and information from health facilities. This has improved reporting in 58 out of 70 facilities within the state.

David says that the provision of transport has enabled the surveillance officers to be in close contact with communities and health facilities. They can now visit the community at least three times a week. This strengthens the community surveillance system, because not all cases are reported to health facilities.

Some facilities still have access problems because of the poor road network. To solve this problem, facilities have been provided with radio and satellite telephone communication equipment. This enables facilities in areas that cannot be reached to by road to send in their reports.

As a result of this initiative, health facilities in Northern Bahr el Ghazal state whose previous reporting completeness rate was less than 50% have improved up to 80%.

'Thank you to WHO, with the financial support of USAID, for assisting Northern Bahr el Ghazal state to strengthen our surveillance system" says David.

Saturday 4th of May 2024 06:31:42 PM