

Group of people looking at clipboards with information on.

# HOT - WEST AFRICA EBOLA EPIDEMIC

2015 Nominet Trust 100 Winner

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2015

## **RAPIDLY DELIVERING ACCURATE MAPS TO FIELD WORKERS**

*By Humanitarian Open Street Map Team (HOT)*

Project URL: [hotosm.org/projects/west\\_africa\\_ebola\\_epidemic](http://hotosm.org/projects/west_africa_ebola_epidemic)

Project Twitter: [@hotosm](https://twitter.com/hotosm)

Organisation URL: [hotosm.org](http://hotosm.org)

- Health
- Geolocation
- Mobile
- Open Source

As of October 2015, the WHO has reported over 11,300 deaths from the disastrous West African Ebola epidemic. Response teams first entered the region in March 2014, led by Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders; MSF). They very quickly had to get organised on the ground and understand the geography and transmission vectors the virus was using.

The outbreak was focused on Guéckédou, a city in southern Guinea of 250,000 people. A problem quickly arose in that there were no online maps of the city; as one NGO spokesperson said: "The map showed two roads maybe – nothing, nothing."

OpenStreetMap is an open source volunteer community that is seeking to map the world. An organisation has built up alongside the project called the 'Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team' (HOT), which focuses efforts on mapping areas struck by crisis, helping disaster relief efforts by providing the raw location data that is so important.

MSF contacted HOT to solve their problem. The community quickly sprung into action and in less than 20 hours had mapped three cities. The total number of map changes exceeded 16.3 million, from almost 4,000 volunteer contributors. The MSF cartographic liaison at the time was in awe, saying: "We would hardly

be able to reach the speed at which dozens, hundreds of volunteers manage to map out a zone.”

Guéckédou became the first site for an MSF isolation centre, in large part thanks to the effort of HOT's West Africa Ebola Epidemic programme and call to action. The speed and quality of the response highlights the very special potential of social technology to directly effect change and lead real-world impact.

HOT continues to work towards its vital mission, and is looking for people to get involved or donate. See the website for more.

*Last updated: 20th of October, 2015*