

## ONLINE ACCESS FOR RUMOURS COORDINATION

*Is there a way we can mitigate rumors, pick rumors faster and provide a reason to coordinate better when these rumors are out there?*

## Location Specific Content & Feedback Community Digital Medium for Health Content

**E**pidAlert is a not for profit organisation based in Lagos and Abuja Nigeria. Formerly EbolaAlert, it was founded by Dr. Lawal Bakare during the Ebola outbreak which ravaged the entire West Africa in 2014. During the outbreak, EbolaAlert was particularly identified for the deployment of new media technology in the coordination of citizens engagement in Nigeria, helping to debunk rumors and stay connected with the response.<sup>1</sup>

Post Ebola, the organisation realized the gaps in risk communication core capacities of countries in West Africa, including Nigeria, then desired to sustain its operations. Not enough trained personnel, expensive program, dearth of smart technologies and little data to guide action.

The place of new media technologies during disease outbreaks found a specific spot in rumor management during the last Ebola outbreak; with EbolaAlert serving as a case study.

### DESIGN QUESTION

**Is there a way we can mitigate rumors, pick rumors faster and provide a reason to coordinate better when these rumors are out there?**

To answer this question we developed a technology that now serves as an alternative new media portal that helps communities become better coordinated ahead of an outbreak:

### CASE STUDY: AlertClinic

#### Mitigating Rumor with relevant information

We realized that the first step in mitigating rumors and negative messaging is to build trusted information channel where community members can find relevant information about living healthy.

#### Location Targeting

In addition to generating relevant content, we realized the need to provide location specific content to help users find what is relevant to their immediate environment.

#### Rumor Logging

Through technology, community members are provided a place to report their concerns and anxieties. They are reminded regularly of the place to coordinate rumors.

#### Community Updates

The technology also provides local news channel to support community action on health, especially as relevant to disease threats.

### IMMEDIATE OUTCOME:

**app.alertclinic.com** is now up and we were able to pick our first dozen rumors which the public health system responded to and provided support to their families. One of those is a child with multiple rashes which was suspected for measles. There is also an android app version of the portal. Number of users to date is over 2,000.