VillageReach

Climate & Health

Reducing Inequities in Primary Health Care through Climate Resilience

VillageReach's goal is to reduce inequities in access to quality primary health care among the most under-reached communities. With nearly 25 years of experience transforming health care delivery to reach everyone, VillageReach is well-positioned to support health systems in adapting to and mitigating the health effects of climate change, which disproportionately affect these communities.

Climate change has been identified as "the biggest health threat facing humanity" by the World Health Organization[1] (WHO) and may push an estimated 132 million people into extreme poverty by 2030[2]. Climate change is a threat multiplier, with the potential to undermine and reverse decades of health system progress and exacerbate challenges around social determinants of health, including gender disparities. Our 2030 strategy focuses on designing responsive primary health care systems to improve health products and services' accessibility to the hardest-to-reach communities, which includes effectively responding to climate-induced shocks and stressors.

VillageReach brings expertise across six of the ten components of the WHO Operational Framework for Climate Resilient and Low Carbon Health Systems[3]. Many of our solutions and programs already support communities at the nexus of climate and health, with others well-equipped to extend their impact in these areas.

- **Climate-Related Emergency Preparedness and Management:** VillageReach works with governments to strengthen health systems to prepare for and manage public health emergencies. Since 2021, VillageReach has supported Mozambique's Ministry of Health to operationalize its **Public Health Emergency Operations Center (PHEOC)**. VillageReach has also supported climate and health-related emergencies in Malawi by pivoting the **Health Center by Phone Solution**, called Chipatala Cha Pa Foni (CCPF) to address emerging events. In 2023, CCPF was used after Cyclone Freddy to connect callers to frontline responders, ambulance dispatch and counselors while providing psychosocial support. This solution is currently being replicated in Zambia for cholera prevention, surveillance and treatment.

[1] World Health Organization. (2023). Climate change and noncommunicable diseases: connections.
[2] World Bank. (2020). Revised Estimates of the Impact of Climate Change on Extreme Poverty by 2030.
[3] World Health Organization. (2023). Operational framework for building climate resilient and low carbon health systems. Geneva: World Health Organization. License: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

- **Assessments of Climate and Health Risks:** VillageReach has an extensive history of understanding risks and barriers to accessing care and designing solutions that can overcome those barriers. Our participatory approaches give communities and health workers the opportunity to participate in the identification, implementation and evaluation of community-driven solutions. Through the **Washington State Health Equity Program,** VillageReach provides technical assistance to three Health Districts in Washington State, U.S., on climate and health-related assessments and co-designing solutions to address identified risks and barriers.

- **Climate Resilient and Low Carbon Infrastructure, Technologies, and Supply Chain:** VillageReach has worked with governments to build responsive supply chains that are equitable, people-centered, resilient and sustainable. Since 2016, VillageReach has been at the forefront of introducing outsourced drone transportation into public health supply chains through our **Drones for Health Solution**. Electric drones have been used in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Malawi and Mozambique to transport health products to hard-to-reach communities, increasing resilience while reducing carbon emissions. We are also partnering with PATH to develop a playbook on Waste Management best practices for immunization products based on learnings from COVID-19 in DRC and Côte d'Ivoire.

- **Climate-Smart Health Workforce:** VillageReach collaborates with governments to ensure emergency response teams and community health workers (CHWs) have the training, resources and products they need for health care delivery. Through our **PHEOC** program, we support the professionalization of national and provincial public health emergency response teams to rapidly respond to crises and safeguard communities. As CHWs are often the first point of care for under-reached populations most impacted by climate change, we equip them with the skills to generate service demand within their communities, empowering them to conduct research to identify pockets of need.

- **Integrate Risk Monitoring and Early Warnings:** We design health information systems that can provide health workers and supply chain professionals with the tools to aggregate and interpret data on climate change and disease surveillance. By providing clear visibility into risks, hazards and epidemiological trends, health information systems become the foundation for data-driven decision-making. Our **Lab Sample Transport** program is vital to disease surveillance through end-to-end sample management across 15 African countries. VillageReach offers a comprehensive solution from collection at health facilities to transportation, storage and data quality, providing data accuracy through training programs, geolocation tracking and centralized notification systems.

- **Climate-Informed Health Programs:** Many health programs lack the systems to routinely capture data on the needs and preferences of under-reached communities, hindering the ability to create climate-informed health programs that meet the current and future needs of the populations most impacted by climate change. VillageReach's **Community Insights to Action (CITA)** approach aims to drive systems-level change by routinely capturing, analyzing and integrating insights from under-reached communities into PHC systems. This enables programs to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change in alignment with the dynamic needs of populations.

VillageReach's commitment to radical collaboration positions us to partner with like-minded organizations that focus on complementary aspects of climate change and resilience.

To learn more or explore a partnership, please contact:

Kim Hill, Senior Manager, Supply Chain, **kim.hill@villagereach.org**
Gabriella (Gabo) Ailstock, Manager, Supply Chain, **gabriella.ailstock@villagereach.org**