

# Evidence for stronger health systems after conflict and crisis

The ReBUILD  
Research Consortium



The ReBUILD Consortium is an international health systems research partnership which has addressed the previously neglected area of health systems research in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS). From 2011 to early 2019, ReBUILD has produced a large body of original research on issues including health financing design in FCAS, health workforce incentives and organisation post conflict, health systems resilience, gender equitable health systems, and aid effectiveness. The aim has been to support evidence-based policy and practice for improved access of the poor to effective health care and to reduce health costs burdens in settings affected by conflict and crisis. ReBUILD has become a source of leading expertise in this field, establishing rich partnerships with research collaborators, policy makers, international organisations and networks.

## ■ Why is this work important?

The proportion of the world's poor living in fragile and conflict affected settings is large and growing, projected to reach over 60% by 2030.<sup>1</sup> The health challenges in these settings are massive, and need to be addressed if progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals is to be made. But health systems themselves are severely affected by conflict, with the disrupted supply of health care services unable to meet the changed health needs and demands of the population.

Against this background, the ReBUILD team is keen to continue to share the knowledge and insights gained from their work. This brief gives a brief overview of ReBUILD's research projects, with links to outputs and further information.

## ■ ReBUILD's research and outputs

ReBUILD's research from 2011 to 2016 predominantly focused on the post-conflict settings of Cambodia, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zimbabwe, working with national partners in these countries. The scope of this work was expanded thematically and geographically through the work of affiliate partners and by further core research from 2017 to 2019, to include a number of additional conflict-affected settings.

The research themes and projects are listed here, with links to resource lists. As well as its original research, ReBUILD has produced synthesis outputs drawing on wider research,<sup>2</sup> to inform specific health systems challenges in conflict and crisis-affected settings.



## Human resources for health

ReBUILD's work on human resources for health looked at how the decisions made in the post-conflict period affect the longer-term pattern of attraction, retention, distribution and performance of health workers. Research projects include a large body of work on **health worker incentives** and **health worker deployment systems**, with additional projects on the **effects of the Ebola outbreak on health workers** in Sierra Leone; **health workers' remuneration in Sierra Leone**; **health worker recruitment and deployment in Timor Leste** and **community health workers** in fragile and conflict-affected settings.<sup>3</sup>



- List of resources from ReBUILD's work on human resources for health: <http://bit.ly/Rebuild-HW>
- Overview brief: *Establishing a responsive and equitable health workforce post conflict and post crisis*: <http://bit.ly/Rebuild-workforce-brief>

## Health financing

ReBUILD's research on health financing has explored **how conflict and post-conflict policies have affected equitable access to healthcare** for the most vulnerable households, as well as the implications of **conflict-related demographic change**. A significant new body of research has explored **performance-based financing in fragile and conflict-affected settings**, and further projects have looked at **contracting models in Cambodia** and **universal health coverage with equity in Zimbabwe**.<sup>4</sup>

- List of resources from ReBUILD's work on health financing: <http://bit.ly/Rebuild-financing>

## Gender and post-conflict health systems

Gender has been a core theme running through all ReBUILD's research, and ReBUILD's pioneering research to explore opportunities and challenges for **building gender responsive health systems in post-conflict contexts** has been developed into '**Building Back Better**',<sup>5</sup> a set of resources to help better address gender in these contexts. ReBUILD has been a core partner in **RinGs 'Research in Gender and Ethics'** – a collaborative research initiative to galvanise gender and ethics analysis in health systems research and strengthening.<sup>6</sup>

- List of resources from ReBUILD's work on gender: <http://bit.ly/Rebuild-Gender>

## Aid effectiveness in the transition from emergency to development aid

This research explored the link between **governance and aid effectiveness in strengthening post-conflict health systems** in northern Uganda. It has contributed to ReBUILD's overview materials on **health systems 'institutions' in conflict and crisis-affected settings**, and on **health systems in the humanitarian-development interface**,<sup>7</sup> as well as specific publications.

- See <http://bit.ly/Rebuild-Aid>

## Health systems resilience

One of ReBUILD's affiliate projects applied a systems dynamics approach to explore **factors that influence the resilience of health systems in contexts of adversity**. ReBUILD has further explored the concept of resilience to produce an **overview brief on resilience of health systems during and after crisis**<sup>8</sup> and a collaborative short briefing note on health systems resilience addressing key questions for donors.

- See <http://bit.ly/Rebuild-Resilience>

## Additional research

Further projects from ReBUILD's affiliate partners have explored **psychosocial support and service provision for adolescent girls** in post-conflict settings,<sup>9</sup> building on the Overseas Development Institute's wider work on this theme,<sup>10</sup> and used appreciative inquiry to explore **what works in Cambodia's obstetric referral system**.<sup>11</sup>

## ■ Synthesis and cross-cutting outputs

ReBUILD has produced several cross-cutting synthesis outputs on health systems in conflict and crisis-affected settings, including two series of briefing papers.

A set of four briefs synthesises ReBUILD's research up to 2016, with findings and recommendations around three core 'themes' of **health workers, communities and health financing and health systems institutions**.<sup>12</sup> A video summarises the key aspects of these themes.<sup>13</sup>

A second set of 11 briefs, **Health systems during and after crisis: evidence for better policy and practice**,<sup>14</sup> draws both on ReBUILD's and wider research to address several key questions around health systems in conflict and crisis-affected settings.<sup>15</sup>

The series covers issues of **resilience of health systems, inclusivity and equity, universal health coverage, types of health system provider, political economy, state-building, sustainability, research capacity, responding to humanitarian crises, performance-based financing, and establishing an effective health workforce** – all focusing on the particular issues in conflict and crisis-affected settings. These briefs are also available in French.<sup>16</sup>

- See <http://bit.ly/Rebuild-briefs>.



1 OECD (2015) States of Fragility 2015 – Meeting post-2015 ambitions, OECD Publishing, Paris.  
2 See <http://bit.ly/Rebuild-briefs>  
3 See <http://bit.ly/HR4health>  
4 See <http://bit.ly/health-financing>  
5 See [www.buildingbackbetter.org](http://www.buildingbackbetter.org)  
6 See <http://bit.ly/Rebuild-Rings>  
7 See <http://bit.ly/Rebuild-institutions-brief>  
8 See <http://bit.ly/Rebuild-resilience-brief>  
9 See <http://bit.ly/Rebuild-psychosocial>  
10 See <http://bit.ly/ODI-adolescents>

11 See <http://bit.ly/Rebuild-obstetrics>  
12 See <http://bit.ly/Rebuild-theme-briefs>  
13 See <http://bit.ly/Rebuild-intro-video>  
14 See <http://bit.ly/Rebuild-briefs>  
15 These priority research questions were identified in a research needs and challenges study carried out by the Health Systems Global Thematic Working Group on Health Systems in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States. See <http://bit.ly/Rebuild-HSRpaper>  
16 See <http://bit.ly/Rebuild-français>

## More on ReBUILD

For full details and all outputs, visit:  
[www.rebuildconsortium.com](http://www.rebuildconsortium.com)

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## Core ReBUILD partners

Core ReBUILD partners throughout the programme have been:

Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, UK

Institute for Global Health & Development, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, UK

Makerere University School of Public Health, Uganda

College of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences, Sierra Leone

Biomedical Research and Training Institute, Zimbabwe

## Continuing the work

Beyond the ReBUILD programme, active ongoing work on health systems in fragile and conflict-affected settings is being conducted by:

The Health Systems Global Thematic Working Group on Health Systems in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings

- See <http://bit.ly/TWGFCAS>

The UHC2030 Technical Working Group on Fragile Settings

- See <http://bit.ly/UHC2030-Fragile>



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