

The Boom and Bust Economics of Ebola

Background

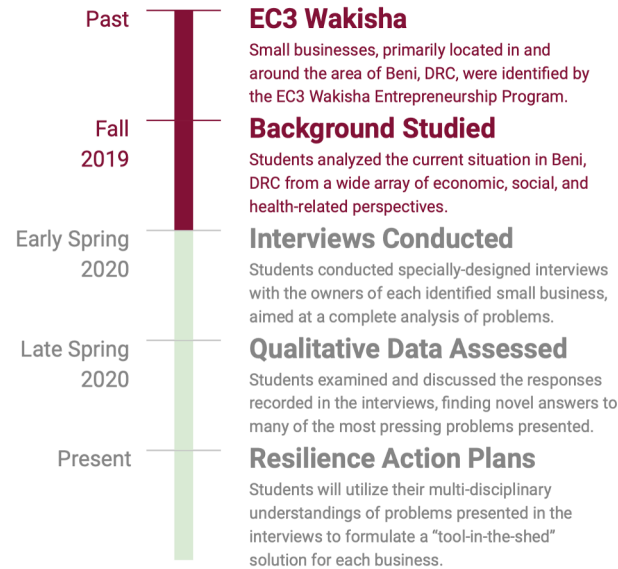


International disease response in the developing world is often conducted via a top-down model with a focus on foreign aid and expertise being dispatched to the affected country. While this can bring much needed supplies, knowledge, and personnel into a community experiencing an outbreak; the focus on bringing in outside agencies and workers, along with the Western paradigm through which the response is conducted, can create unintended consequences for affected communities. Little research has been conducted on how the influx of foreign money affects local businesses—either negatively or positively—and what happens to those businesses after the outbreak is over and the money is withdrawn from the region.

As an interdisciplinary team, we aimed to gain a more complete understanding problem in Beni, DRC: the epicenter of an Ebola outbreak and foreign aid response.



Analysis



Additional Products

- Policy brief for NGOs, government entities, and policy makers providing lessons learned and guidance for future interventions
- Video presentation highlighting the project

Implications & Discussion



A complete analysis of the situations that small businesses face such as in North Kivu, DRC may serve as an opportunity to develop a more sustainable economic environment for local businesses to thrive in health response situations. By focusing on small business economics rather than its more macro-economic relative, an answer to the question of how to recover from an influx and then efflux of foreign aid could be found.

With the most recent outbreak and eventual pandemic of COVID-19, the issues observed in this project find a relevancy in countries outside the DRC. The effect that this outbreak has already had on small businesses presents current and future economic problems that require complex solutions. A resilient course of action for local businesses is, as such, highly pertinent.

