

‘CONFIDENCE IN HEALTH CARE ESSENTIAL IN FIGHTING CORONAVIRUS’

According to a study on the control of the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone in 2014, a contagious disease can be fought more successfully if the population has confidence in the healthcare system. A valuable lesson for the fight against the coronavirus.

Wageningen development economist Maarten Voors and American colleagues researched the influence of Community Care Centres (CCC) in Sierra Leone during the epidemic. These CCCs were essentially small field hospitals with a maximum of eight beds, staffed by local health workers providing information and education on preventing and controlling the Ebola virus. The rural population

trusted these centres more than the larger treatment centres, where over 100 Ebola patients were treated under a much stricter safety regime. In villages that had a community care centre, residents were more willing to get tested, which made fighting the virus more successful.

Researcher Harro Maat of the chair group Knowledge, Technology and Innovation did a quantitative study of the Ebola outbreak. He confirms that faith in the healthcare system played an essential part in decreasing the epidemic.

The lessons from the Sierra Leone situation are relevant to the current coronavirus crisis, Voors states. ‘Confidence in health insti-



▲ Community Care Centre in Sierra Leone.

tutes is also essential in controlling the outbreak. Without that trust, the sick will go into hid-

ing, making it impossible to get a grip on the outbreak and respond with adequate measures.’ **AS**