

LONDON
SCHOOL *of*
HYGIENE
& TROPICAL
MEDICINE



For most of the UK's universities, 2014-15 was a year to hold tight and try not to come off the rails as the policy helter-skelter continued.

But for the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, it was one of the most extraordinary years in its history: a moment when a small institution seized the opportunity to take an unfolding catastrophe by the scruff of the neck and put all of its expertise into action. This, of course, was the Ebola crisis during which 10,000 people died across Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea before the crisis ended earlier this year.

When the outbreak began, the school had a reservoir of expertise it could deploy alongside charities and NGOs, from teams who model the spread of disease, to student volunteers who were able to clean up datasets from the field, ensuring that the sites of outbreaks were recorded accurately.

The school set up a task force to coordinate its response, and ensured that staff who were keen and had the skills to help were able to do so without losing funding or income.

It was an extraordinary example of research expertise being deployed in real time in the real world. But the school's response wasn't only about putting people in the field. There was also a need for education to combat Ebola's spread. It established an online platform that pooled resources from anthropologists to help those on the ground understand and work effectively within the cultural context of the region. Another initiative took the form of a massive open online course—a free three-week programme aimed at health professionals, emergency response workers and students.

This was a moment for the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine to come into its own, to pause the normal business of the school to allow its world-leading experts to make

A difference in a way for which they are uniquely qualified. It did all of these things, and was the judges' unanimous choice as THE's University of the Year 2016.