

CEA STRATEGY FOR AFRICA REGION | HUNGER CRISIS (FOOD INSECURITY CRISIS)

Introduction

Africa's hunger crisis is getting worse. One in five people (21%) of the population was facing hunger in Africa in 2020. In addition to the 346.4 million Africans suffering from severe food insecurity, 452 million suffer from moderate food insecurity (nearly 800 million people are affected, FAO). Hunger is one of the most undignified sufferings of humanity. To alleviate human suffering, we must rise to this challenge through collective mobilization and action—both in the immediate and long term. Our immediate collective priority is to muster life-saving support for the next six months — paying particular attention to the Horn of Africa, Central Sahel, and other hot spots across the continent.

To strengthen the response to this crisis, the IFRC has launched an emergency operation covering 14 priority countries identified out of the 23 countries on the watch list as needing immediate support to scale up lives-saving assistance to the most vulnerable affected communities. This emergency operation will provide urgent improved food and nutrition security of 7.5M vulnerable people in rural and urban areas contributing towards the goal of zero hunger 2030. This is being done through three main pillars: (1) Food Security and Livelihoods, (2) Nutrition and health and (3) water, sanitation and hygiene.

Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) activities will be a core underpinning approach within the hunger crisis response. This will ensure that the voices of the most vulnerable people are systematically used to inform community-centred action on responding to the hunger crisis. This will involve working with community committees to identify localized actions to mitigate impacts and collecting and responding to community feedback to inform national and regional hunger crisis operations and response strategies.

Objective :

The CEA activities in the hunger crisis response aim to support immediate life-saving interventions and amplify the voice of the affected people and communities to scale up hunger crisis response efforts. Support will be provided to staff and volunteers to ensure they have the knowledge, skills, and tools to engage with communities effectively and dedicated CEA processes will be established to support FSL, Health and Nutrition, and WASH interventions and use the CVA modality.

The CEA strategy

The strategy will be carried out through the five key pillars in accordance with the CEA guidelines (1) Ensure the implementation of a set of minimum CEA actions in hunger crisis emergency responses, (2) Establish a feedback system to listen to and act on feedback throughout all stages of the response, (3) Promote community-driven and sustainable

solutions to food insecurity to build community resilience (4) Strengthen coordination and experience sharing between the different countries and (5) Advocacy.

1. Ensure the implementation of a set of minimum CEA actions in emergencies

In order to place communities at the centre of the response while learning from them, minimal community engagement actions will be implemented in the various phases from assessment to final evaluation and lessons learned.

Activities:

- Regular consultations with National Societies and food crisis operations teams to monitor the integration of a set of minimum CEA actions and to support their implementation.
- Provide CEA training for staff and volunteers in all priority countries, adapted to their specific needs (for example, training on handling complaints or running a radio chat show for communities).
- Support National Societies to integrate CEA into all stages of the response
- Advocate National Societies to roll out context analysis to understand community dynamics and structures in order to establish and implement an inclusive community consultation mechanism throughout the operation
- Coordinate with the internal response pillars and with other organizations through the CEA/RCCE and/or the Hunger Crisis platform
- Help National Societies to identify and use appropriate communication channels in order to provide timely and relevant information to communities

2. Set up and strengthen a feedback system to listen to and act on feedback throughout all stages of the response

to ensure that community feedback is taken into account at the operational and strategic levels in the response to the hunger crisis and inform Red Cross humanitarian diplomacy strategic

Activities:

- Support National Societies to set up and manage feedback mechanisms, including better Information Management systems to analyse and respond to feedback.
- Encourage and help National Societies to integrate feedback and complaints from communities into monitoring to ensure that feedback is used to improve programmes and inform decision-making.
- Collaborate with PGI sector in setting up/strengthening and promoting mechanisms for sensitive feedback management
- Adapt and share with National Societies a set of harmonized feedback tools and templates for collecting, analysing, sharing and acting on feedback
- Strengthen the capacities of the National Societies who are collecting feedback data in the management of feedback based on identified needs in order to allow a complete closure of the community feedback loop
- Support National Societies produce local and high-level advocacy tools on hunger crises based on community feedback: dashboard, analysis report, deep dive
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3. Promote community-driven and sustainable solutions to food insecurity to build community resilience

To ensure that National Societies use their knowledge to build sustainable solutions and ownership of actions for positive behaviour change

Activities:

- Document and promote best practices implemented by the communities themselves in the field of health, nutrition and hygiene promotion in the context of the hunger crisis

- Support the development of community-led action plans including context-specific lifesaving interventions (Food / NFI, WASH, and Critical health)
- Promote and support the development of an exit strategy with the communities from the beginning of the implementation to ensure the sustainability of the achievements and longer-term solutions

4. Strengthen coordination and experience sharing between the different countries

Ensure a good coordination of interventions across the different countries through learning events and regular sharing of best practices and lessons learnt to capitalize on technical expertise in of CEA.

Activities:

- Organise CEA hunger Crisis bi-weekly meeting to share updates, present community data, and discuss support to the response pillar (Health & nutrition, FSL and WASH) and cross-cutting sector (PGI, NS strengthening, humanitarian diplomacy...)
- Set up and facilitate discussion channels to share information and best practices across countries
- Capture, document and disseminate case studies to highlight best practices and lessons learned across countries with food crisis operations.
- Organize regular peer learning sessions, in close cooperation with regional coordination (for long-term programs)
- Share relevant resources and documentation such as social science research or context analysis data for example with NSs
- Create effective linkages between CEA approaches and activities within the food crisis operations and those within the long-term programmes from IFRC and partner National Societies in the same countries.

5. Advocacy

Based on the evidence, make the case for strengthening community engagement and accountability in the Hunger Crisis response

- Regular advocacy seminars at the district and county level focusing on the topic with community-level activities such as school plays, and art and quiz competitions based on a tool like a book set
- advocate for the development of an exit strategy with the communities from the beginning of the implementation to ensure the sustainability of the achievements and longer-term solutions
- advocate for the integration of CEA needs (technical, HR, and financial) into the various operational plans, assessments and structures in the response to the hunger crisis
- Advocate for the inclusion of community feedback and other evidence-based data in the decision-making process at all levels

Community feedback system :

Community feedback is one of the key aspects of CEA actions in hunger crisis responses. A feedback system with accessible collection channels and fluidity in the processing of feedback would ensure that the different perceptions of communities are taken into account to better adapt interventions to their needs. In the response to the hunger crisis, it will be essential to build on the different experiences of National Societies while strengthening local capacities.

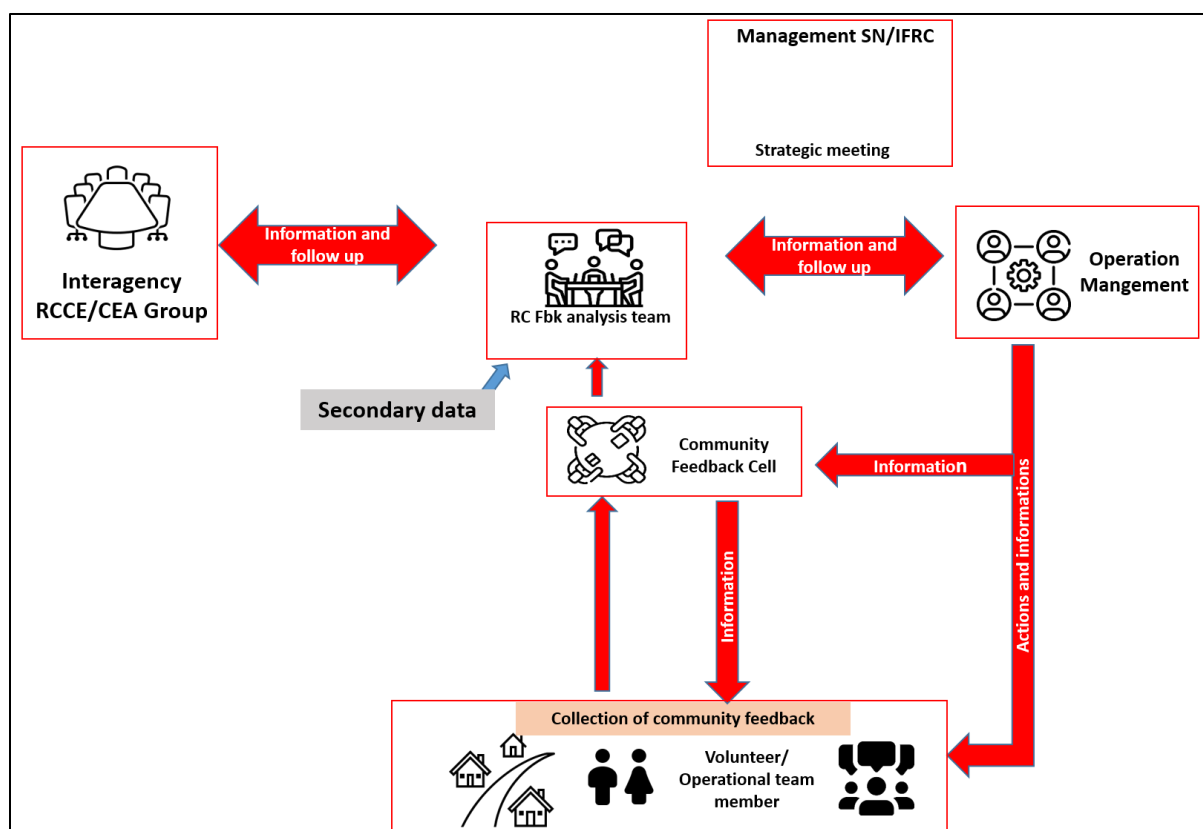


Figure 1flow of the community feedbacksystem at the national level

Collecting feedbacks :

feedback will be collected through different channels according to the preferences of the communities and the capacities of the National Societies. The different channels could be: Suggestion boxes, Toll-free lines, Face-to-face with volunteers/branch chairpersons, community meetings, Helpdesk during distributions, Social media, Call in radio sessions... The feedback received through these different channels will be recorded through harmonised tools such as a community feedback form and a kobo form. This data will then be entered and compiled at the national level in a log book/excel sheet and cleaned before sharing with the regional level through the centralized database.

Feedback analysis :

Feedback analysis is carried out at different levels in order to be able to act and respond as quickly as possible.

The first stage of analysis is at the community level through meetings with community leaders and the response team. This level allows for discussion of the salient points of the community feedback and for recommendations and actions to be proposed. These recommendations and actions are followed up through a monitoring table which is also reported at the national level. The second level of analysis is at the local level within the Red Cross movement. The second level of analysis is at the local level within the Red Cross movement, where the analysis team first identifies the main trends in the community feedback and follows up on the recommendations from the community level. This analysis also allows the team to identify recommendations in consultation with the operational actors of the pillars and the management. An analysis report will be produced with the key recommendations and a follow-up will be implemented through a table

Outside the Red Cross movement, the feedback analyses will be shared/presented at the level of the different coordination platforms on the hunger crisis theme. This will allow for the

triangulation of information and advocacy for actions beyond the scope of Red Cross activities and intervention.

To close the feedback loop, recommendations and actions taken at the national level will be shared with communities through community feedback discussion platforms and identified communication channels. The monitoring table will then be a key tool to ensure that the community feedback loop is closed.

At the regional level, the coded feedback from the different countries will be centralised in a database and will allow the generation of a dashboard that will show the different trends of the community feedback on the hunger crisis response and also the level of achievement of the actions decided on the basis of the community feedback. This dashboard and the various reports from countries will further inform the management decisions of the operation and allow the voice of the communities to be better heard. Deep dive reports can also be produced on request to better understand certain issues related to the pillars of the response.

Management of sensitive community feedback

Feedback related to violations of the rules of conduct and ethical rules of intervention of the Red Cross. The PGI team in collaboration with the National Societies will manage sensitive feedback according to a process established at the level of each National Society in order to treat such feedback with the utmost sensitivity and respect for confidentiality.

Hunger Crisis response and CEA institutionalisation :

The development of the capacity of national societies is a cross-cutting aspect of the Hunger Crisis response, and CEA's activities through this response will contribute to its institutionalization. First of all, it is a matter of being able to rely on the existing capacities in terms of CEA at the level of the SN and to fill the gaps for better positioning of CEA as a transversal approach in all the programs and operations of the NS.

Activities such as the training of volunteers and staff in CEA, the reinforcement of the feedback mechanism and communication activities will reinforce this institutionalization with achievements that will serve for other programs.

Support available for National Societies :

To ensure ongoing support for improved capacity building, the IFRC CEA technical team is putting in place the following materials

- Sharing of feedback tools with National Societies responding to the crisis
- support provided to review the coding
- Online meetings are organized to discuss adaptations to the coding framework
- Coded data is shared with the region to support NSs with visualization
- Peer-learning events and exchanges are organized to discuss challenges and successes
- Development of information products e.g.:
 - Regional online dashboard to visualize the feedback data (example [here](#))
 - Country feedback reports (template to be provided)
 - Country CEA snapshots (template to be provided)
 - Regional community feedback webinars
 - Others?
- Tools and resources for community feedback
 - Community feedback training packages:

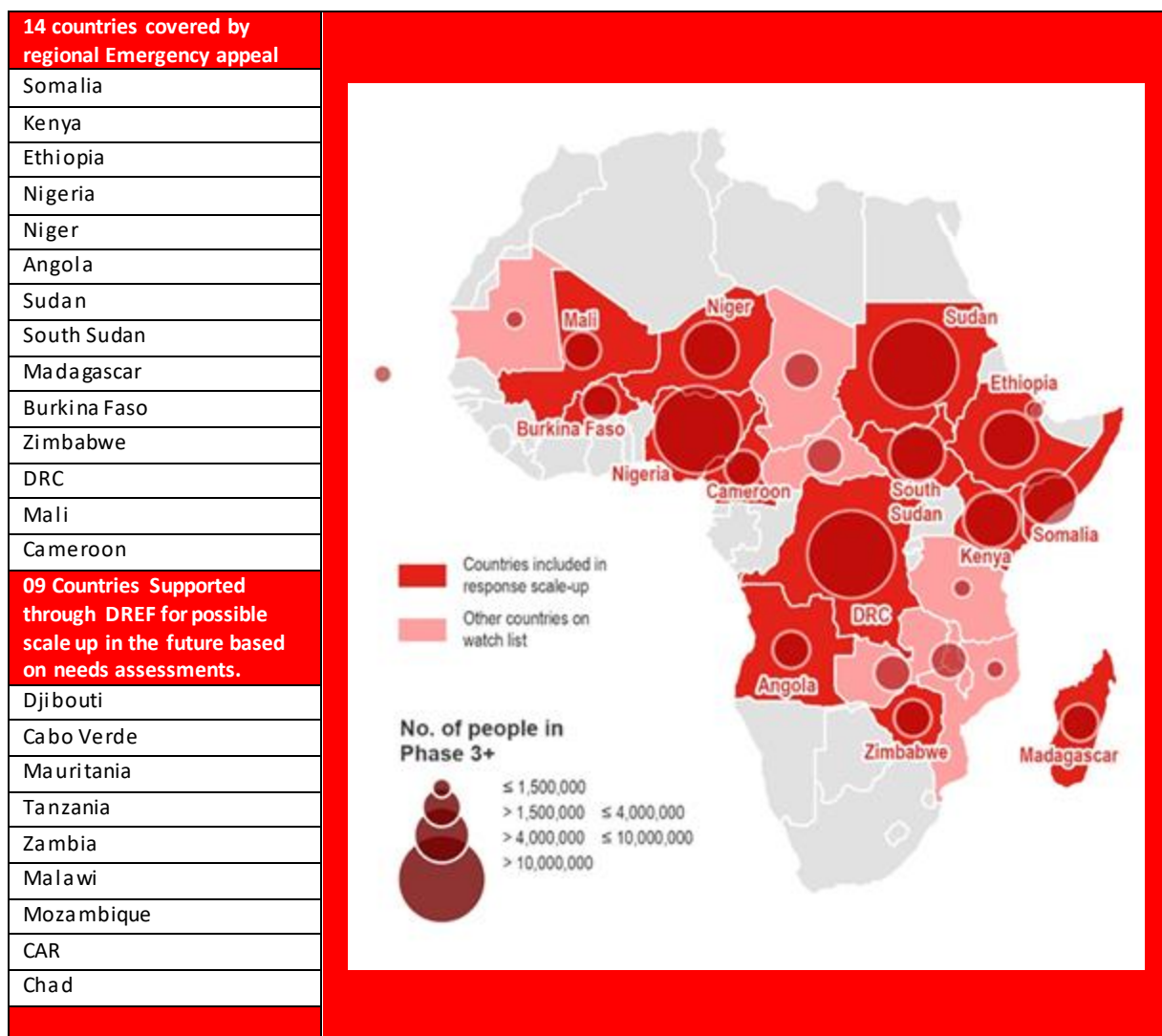
- [COVID-19 training package](#)
- Training for data collectors (NEW!)
- Training for data analysts (NEW!)
- [Feedback starter kit](#) (Coming soon!)
- Africa Region Feedback [Dashboard](#)
- [minimum standards in emergencies](#)
- [EA Manual](#)
- [Google Drive](#) for Hunger Crisis Community Feedback

REFERENCES

- Regional appeal : AFRICA REGION | HUNGER CRISIS (FOOD INSECURITY CRISIS)
- Regional Appeal Operational strategy : AFRICA REGION | HUNGER CRISIS (FOOD INSECURITY CRISIS)
- DREF for Africa's Hunger Crisis Response: Start and Scale-up (Concept note -V.2, 5.27.2022)
- A Red Cross Red Crescent Guide to Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) - Improving communication, engagement and accountability in all we do
- CEA STRATEGY FOR THE FOOD CRISIS OPERATIONS
- Hunger Crisis Response Country PoA- Zimbabwe
- Hunger Crisis Response Country PoA- Somalia

Annexes :

1- 23 Priority countries on IFRC watch list



2- CEA's Priority actions across all sectors:

Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) will be the underpinning approach to amplify affected people and community voices for informing and scaling up the response. The overall approach will ensure that ways of working encourage collaboration with people and communities through meaningful community participation, timely, open, and honest communication, and mechanisms to listen to and action on feedback throughout all stages of the response. Support will be provided to staff and volunteers to ensure they have the knowledge, skills and tools to engage with communities effectively and dedicated CEA processes will be established to support FSL, Health and Nutrition, and WASH interventions and use the CVA modality.

- Carry out context analysis and community mapping to understand community structures, groups, power dynamics, capacities, social and cultural values, vulnerabilities and needs. This also includes understanding community's priorities and preferences.
- Conduct periodic perception surveys to measure the level of community satisfaction with interventions and whether it's meeting the needs and priorities of communities.
- Develop a communication strategy outlining what information will be shared, when, with whom it will be shared and with which channels. Ensure preferred and trusted two communication channels are used for receiving information and sharing feedback.
- Systematically share information on intervention plans, progress, activities, selection criteria and distribution processes, delays and challenges, as well as people's rights and entitlements.
- Organise community meetings with key representatives and community leaders to discuss how to manage community expectations regarding the selection criteria and distribution mechanisms.
- Establish durable mechanisms to hand over more decision-making power to communities, for example through community committees or representatives. Discuss ongoing operational issues and ask for community input to key decisions. Check that the committee is trusted and performing its role as the bridge between all ground in the community and the National Society.
- Establish, or work with existing, representative community groups or committees to develop community-led actions plans to implement local solutions to mitigate impacts and support community committees to implement these action plans.
- If service providers (including financial service providers for cash transfers) are used for the delivery of assistance, then their staff should be trained on CEA and PGI, understand the principles, respect diversity, and sign the Code of Conduct.
- Set up and strengthen systems to collect, analyse, respond to and act on community feedback data using preferred feedback channels for receiving and responding to feedback that have been identified with the communities. The Feedback Starter Kit provides useful guidance on how to set up and strengthen community feedback mechanisms.
- In collaboration with PGI counterparts set up a system for managing and responding to sensitive and serious complaints, this includes integrating a referral pathway into the community feedback mechanism to ensure safe, dignified and timely referrals
- Ensure feedback received from communities on sectoral interventions/modalities (including CVA), service providers, challenges, satisfaction, and other themes is used to inform decision-making and guide improvements to the response.

- Update information shared to communities based on the evolving beliefs, fears, rumours, concerns, questions and suggestions in communities.
- Collaboration with local health center managers for follow-up, consultation of patients
- Appropriation of good practices and advice acquired by mothers

Food security and livelihoods

- Ensure the context analysis and mapping exercises include questions that help to understand communities' coping mechanisms, attitudes and practices towards farming, access to animal health clinics, etc. During feasibility assessments ensure that people have the opportunity to specify their preferences in receiving cash e.g. mobile money transfer, prepaid card, or physical cash.
- Engage with vulnerable groups (e.g. elderly, pregnant and lactating women or people with disabilities) to identify possible barriers in registering or accessing cash assistance and discuss solutions to the barriers identified.
- Empower communities to realize their own capacities and seek local solutions to employ climate smart agricultural strategies
- Use social and behaviour change approaches to influence positive attitudes and practices of communities in herd management, animal health and destocking
- Ensure awareness raising messages on livestock management and destocking are well understood, and channels used to communicate information are accessible to different community groups
- Ensure feedback received on food security and livelihoods interventions, including related to financial service providers, animal care, distributions as well as challenges and satisfaction, are used to guide improvements to FSL interventions including CVA modalities.

Nutrition

- Ensure the context analysis, mapping exercises and other assessments include questions to better understand the determinants of malnutrition (e.g. economic, accessibility and availability of food, cultural influences, attitudes and beliefs, etc.), access to health services, health seeking behaviours, etc.
- Develop risk communication strategies in collaboration with nutrition partners and Ministry of Health to communicate health risks, identify information gaps/needs and address stigma associated with diarrheal diseases, malnutrition and other health issues
- Engage with community members and groups in developing behavioural change and health promotion messages and materials
- Encourage men to support mothers during the PD Hearth session from the point of view of ingredient intake, the availability of mothers and the commitment of mothers to respect the standards accused for xxx days and continue the good habits in their households.
- Through social mobilization activities and mass communication campaigns such as household visits, community dramas, mobile radios, interactive radio shows, TV shows, social media, and WhatsApp groups, encourage positive behaviours and address rumours, beliefs, fears and stigma
- Build community capacity and social capital to engage in, identify and build solutions to nutrition and health problems and issues. This could be implemented through local partnerships with community leaders, traditional healers, influencers, groups and

local networks. The problem/solution tree from the eVCA toolkit could be used or topic 8 on preparing a community action plan from eCBHFA.

- Engage with different community groups and health service providers to identify areas for improvement within nutrition facilities and services to ensure quality healthcare and equal access.
- Ensure feedback received on nutrition and health interventions, including related to nutrition facilities and services, health promotion, challenges and satisfaction, are used to guide improvements to the programme.

WASH

- Ensure the context analysis, community mapping and other assessments include questions on communities' practices and socio-cultural context related to WASH c. to inform effective social and behaviour change approaches.
- Use participatory approaches such as FGDs and dialogue sessions to listen to people's preferences and requirements on the design and location of WASH facilities.
- Work with community leaders and a diverse range of community groups to identify and support them to implement local, practical solutions to improve WASH infrastructure and behaviours.
- Organise community meetings and workshops to discuss how WASH facilities will be maintained and managed and agree on a handover plan of the facilities.
- Ensure hygiene promotion messages are well understood by communities, key messages are adapted to the audience and that channels used are accessible to different community groups
- Ensure feedback received on WASH facility operation and maintenance, distributed materials, hygiene promotion activities, challenges, satisfaction etc. are used to guide improvements to the programme.

Amplifying voices and perspectives of affected people to drive humanitarian action

- Use story-telling approaches to generate human insights and gather evidence into how the hunger crises is impacting communities (this can be done using the Most Significant Change methodology, the IFRC's Indaba app or the Dignified Storytelling Handbook)
- Develop local and high-level advocacy tools on hunger crises (PROFILE, Cost of Hunger studies, RENEW multimedia presentations)
- Organise advocacy events and seminars at the national and district level