



CEA Capitalisation Workshop in Mali

As the workshop title suggests, the Malian Red Cross (MRC) aims to integrate learning from experiences into all its community engagement and accountability (CEA) activities.

Held on May 30-31, 2024, the workshop focused on capitalization and lessons learned. It provided an opportunity to assess CEA activities across various projects and evaluate how the CEA BOOST project has promoted this comprehensive approach at the MRC level. Over two days, the workshop confirmed significant achievements by the National Society. The insights gained will be invaluable for future planning, helping integrate experiences into improved action plans and strategies.



This internal workshop involved active participation from project implementation teams and incorporated insights from governance and leadership. Projects such as PRECO, RECOM, AMOPA II, PA, PPP, the emergency appeal, SAM, SMPS, RLF, AECID MIGRATION, and CEA BOOST were reviewed to understand the current state of CEA. Partners including the Netherlands Red Cross, Belgian Red Cross, Luxembourg Red Cross, Danish Red Cross, Canadian Red Cross, ICRC, and IFRC contributed to the workshop, which saw participation from around 50 staff members, volunteers, trainees, Secretaries General, and Presidents. The local communities were not involved in this phase to maintain an internal focus.

Key activities and highlights

The workshop highlighted organizational capacity through activities that encouraged participation, listening, community building, and personal reflection. These included:

- **Open Debates:** Allowed participants to express themselves, share views, and identify common messages.
- **Working Groups:** Discussed issues and lessons learned based on case studies and personal experiences.
- **Plenary Reports:** Presented and debated main issues, suggestions, and plans identified by the groups.



The CEA highlights for the Mali Red Cross included the use of a timeline tool for strategic foresight. This tool helped participants understand the importance of strategic thinking, capitalize on experiences, and facilitate participatory planning to address identified gaps. Activities were grouped by year, allowing different groups to highlight the actions taken by the MRC.

Achievements and institutional knowledge

The National Society has successfully developed and retained its staff over several years, ensuring the transfer of institutional knowledge and achievements. Although this hasn't been the case for all CEA positions, many managers have benefited from various CEA training courses.

Discussions revealed that since 2010, the CRM has had strong capacity to work with local structures, particularly community committees. These committees provided crucial community consultation in decision-making, contributing significantly to feedback collection and project collaboration.

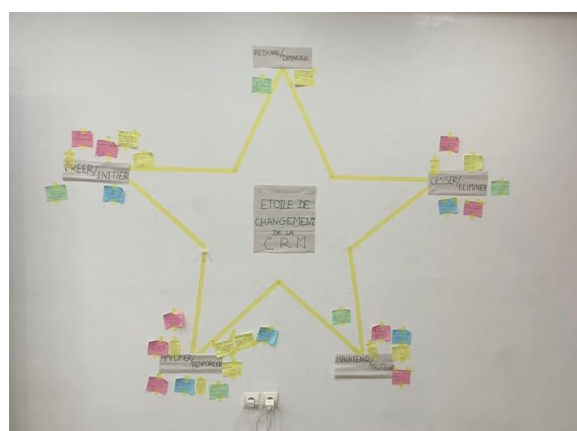
The transition of the BENCOM project during the 2015 Ebola response focused on community participation, evolving collaboration with the community, and emphasizing two-way communication. This shift, particularly in health-related projects, has become more prominent.

Training and capacity building

The understanding of CEA among CRM staff developed through training courses starting in 2018, initiated by the IFRC. These courses provided structured tools for National Societies, with support from partners like the Danish Red Cross and the Canadian Red Cross. The CEA BOOST project in 2020 marked another milestone, with focal points for CEA being recruited and participating in training sessions organized by IFRC. These sessions emphasized processing and managing community feedback.

Timeline sessions and future planning

The timeline sessions allowed participants to share knowledge and address implementation challenges, documenting CRM's progress and determining how to sustain and improve achievements.





Analysis of achievements and challenges

Participants analyzed successes, failures, challenges, good practices, lessons learned, and innovations. Working groups focused on specific themes such as planning, monitoring, evaluation, implementation, coordination, institutionalization, knowledge management, and capitalization.

Regarding the institutionalization of CEA, the MRC has offered training courses at the branch level and created several SOPs to operationalize themes, enhancing feedback mechanisms. However, inadequate post-training follow-up hindered implementation outcomes. There was a widespread belief in the need for management support to drive progress.

Coordination and visibility

Requests were made for improved internal coordination on all CEA-related matters. A working group is consulting on its terms of reference. The MRC is represented in platforms established by various ministries to emphasize community participation and engagement. However, the activities and achievements within CEA are not adequately showcased in MRC's published articles. More frequent sharing of success stories and case studies is needed.

Challenges and recommendations

Participants identified several challenges, including:

- Lack of a policy document
- Poor operationalization of mechanisms
- Limited dissemination of reporting channels
- Insufficient training for complaints management committees
- Absence of a CEA periodic monitoring system
- Inadequate funding for the CEA mechanism
- Poor dissemination of the CEA mechanism at the community level
- Lack of localized translation for community tools
- Coordination issues between national and local levels
- Inadequate engagement of CEA trainers in follow-up and support
- Participants discussed desired changes and transformations, using the change star method to pinpoint areas for improvement. Recommendations included improving policy documents, operational mechanisms, and funding, as well as enhancing coordination and training.

Planning

Two levels of planning were proposed: short-term planning until the end of the current year and long-term planning. These plans will be developed based on specific ideas raised during the workshop, influencing the formulation of the CRM CEA strategy and urging partners to align their planning with identified needs.