



MRCS distribute chlorinated water to community members in Blantyre. IFRC

Rapid insights for Malawi Cholera Response

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Miki Tsukamoto, Strategic Planning Department, IFRC Geneva
Vincent Kiplangat, PMER, RO Africa

introduction

A rapid desk review was carried out by Geneva's Strategic Planning Department and RO Africa's PMER using the IFRC Evaluation Databank to focus on evaluative initiatives related to IFRC's cholera response in Malawi. The idea behind this effort is the quick capture of lessons learned that could be vital in preparing and addressing the current emergency affecting Malawi, as well as to serve as part of any desk review for any upcoming evaluative initiatives to follow. It is clear that this review will not include all the documents available on IFRC's response in Malawi, as well as that some of these lessons learned and/or recommendations may have already been addressed. It is hoped though that the quick capturing of these lessons learned will provide an overview that could help the operation in capitalizing on opportunities, assisting in understanding any potential barriers/challenges in such an operation, and providing useful information that will facilitate the transitioning of emergency response into annual plans under the Unified Planning Process.

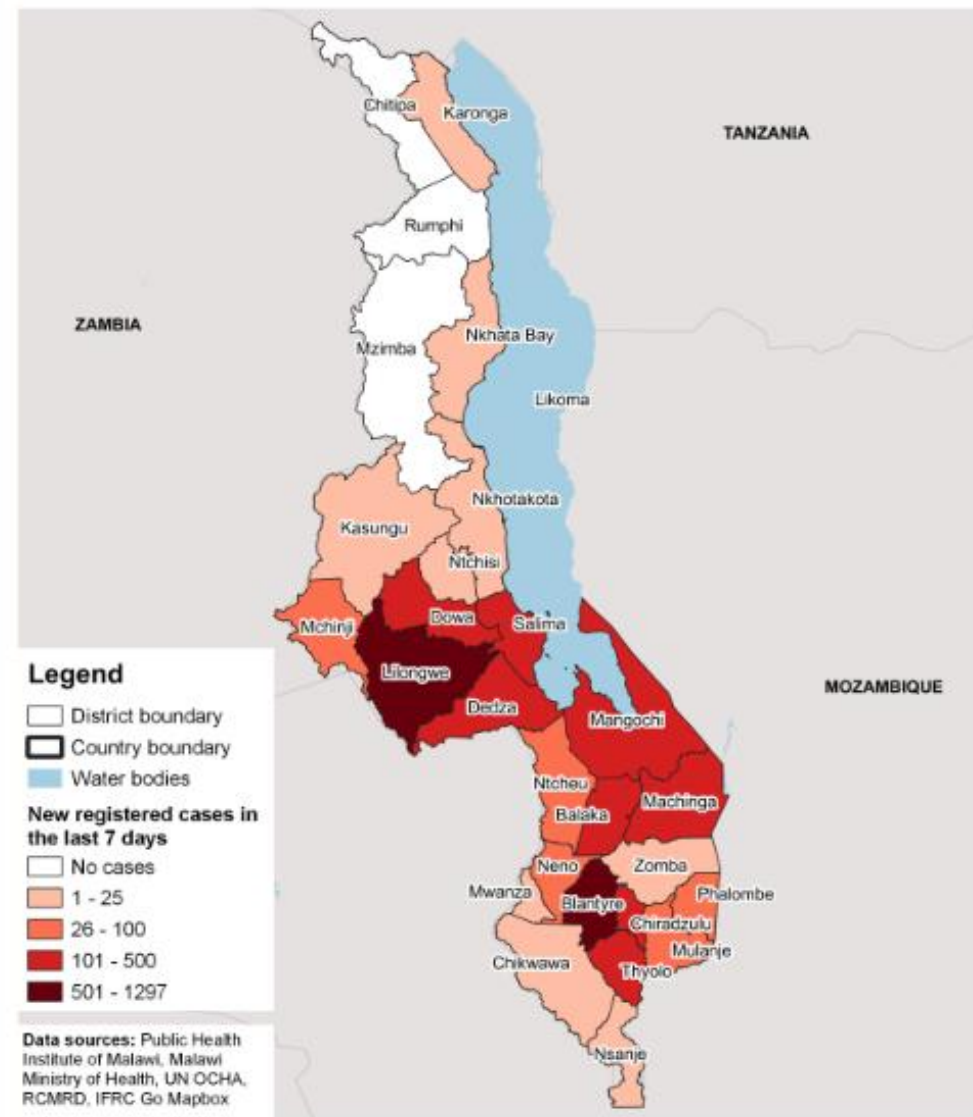
Lessons from neighboring countries

- ✓ It is important to undertake a thorough assessment of the preferred and practical mechanisms for disaster-affected people before setting up any mechanism. These assessments should be done in collaboration with key players such as telecom companies, government departments, and other service providers. {Zambia}
- ✓ Project monitoring and evaluation design should be strong enough to enable the determination of impact. There was a need to have a dedicated project M and E framework and plan. {Zambia}
- ✓ A unified and comprehensive support strategy needs to be developed by all Movement components, aligning activities in response to the disasters' institutional recovery planning in one masterplan and overcoming silo-tendencies. {Mozambique}
- ✓ External coordination should be a standard practice for IFRC. In terms of reputation, media presence, and funding, without negatively impacting the IFRC operation. {Mozambique}
- ✓ A database of active volunteers can be developed and updated at the beginning of the seasons where disasters occur to enable quick mobilization in the event of a disaster. (Mozambique)

the cholera response



NEW CHOLERA CASES LAST 7 DAYS BY DISTRICT EPI Week 6 - 06 Feb - 12 Feb 2023



context in Malawi

Malawi is currently battling its worst cholera outbreak in two decades after the Ministry of Health (MOH) found a case in the Machinga district in the southern region of the country, likely in the aftermath of storm Ana and cyclone Gombe. Initially limited to the southern part of the country, the disease has now spread across 29 health districts throughout Malawi, putting at risk over 10 million people including more than 5 million children. On 5 December 2022, the President declared a public health emergency.

The main risk factors of the outbreak are unsafe water, poor sanitation, and lack of hygiene. And due to the high rate of transmission, the disease is now affecting people across multiple geographical areas. Compounding the crisis, communities experiencing high rates of poverty often have limited access to sanitation and are therefore at increased risk of infection. Despite efforts to slow the outbreak, the numbers are rising faster, with a case fatality rate of 3.2%.

The MRCS will focus its response on interrupting transmission and improving case management of cholera at the community and facility levels in the affected districts. The core objectives of the operation are to:

- ✓ Prevent and control the spread of the cholera outbreak at the community and facility levels in the affected districts, interrupting the chain of transmission.
- ✓ Reduce morbidity and mortality due to cholera by supporting improved case management at the facility and community levels in the affected districts.
- ✓ Improve the availability of safe water and sanitation facilities - WASH solutions to ensure the use of safe water, basic sanitation, and good hygiene practices in cholera hotspots.

There has been a **DREF allocation** of CHF 1 million and an Emergency Appeal for Malawi with a **Federation-wide Funding Requirement** of CHF 5.2 million, which includes an **IFRC Secretariat Funding Requirement** of CHF 3.5 million.

mandates

The Malawi Red Cross, was established in 1966 by an Act of Parliament and admitted to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in 1971. It has acted as an auxiliary to the public authorities since its inception. It supports the national authorities in disaster preparedness, risk reduction and response, and is a key national humanitarian organization involved in strengthening Malawi's legal and policy framework for disaster risk management.

As a volunteer member organization with 33 divisions and a network of more than 76,000 volunteers, the National Society is present in all 28 districts of the country and responds to multiple disasters and crises. At a national level, it has a pool of 120 trained national disaster response team members specialized in different fields, including: water, sanitation and hygiene; relief support; first aid; community engagement and accountability; shelter; nutrition; food security; livelihoods; protection, gender and inclusion; data management; and communications.

The Malawi Red Cross is also part of the IFRC network New Way of Working initiative, which is piloted in 14 countries. It aims at establishing a new model of membership coordination, working over multiple years to instill a thorough change management in the ways of the IFRC network. The IFRC network works together placing the National Society of the country at the centre. It also is part of the four IFRC Pan-African initiatives focusing on Tree Planting and Care; Zero Hunger; Red Ready and National Society Development.



mandates-continued



The **IFRC**, through its country cluster delegation in Harare, supports the Malawi Red Cross with strategic and operational coordination, National Society development and humanitarian diplomacy, including strengthening its auxiliary role. It also supports accountability as a cross-cutting theme.

In recent years, the IFRC has supported the Malawi Red Cross through the provision of various DREF and Emergency Appeal operations in response to floods, disease outbreaks and tropical storms



ICRC

The **ICRC** contributes to the Restoring Family Links and Safe Access and Communications programmes.

opportunities

- ✓ For recurring climatic-related hazards, opt for new medium-/long-term modalities (e.g. cash for asset, e.g. irrigation or small livestock schemes)

challenges

- ✓ Overstretched National Society capacity
- ✓ There is a need for greater encouragement of knowledge and communication exchange between different operations. Information exchange between emergency response (DREF operations) and recovery preparedness (EA operations) should be strengthened.

key insights – analysis and planning



Scenario Planning

- Ensure differences (i.e. cultural, gender and age) are taken into account when setting up and running camps. Proper security needed for affected population. Important to have necessary resources in place.
- Ensure MRCS has a contingency plan in place and that it is regularly updated, with support provided through South Africa RO if needed (including the prepositioning of stock).



Response and Recovery Planning

- Better connect and enforce emergency with medium/long-term recovery.

Preparedness, Plans and Budgets

- Ensure the proper budgeting and planning in DREF responses.

Key insights - coordination



Coordination with local community level responders

-Strengthen MRCS participation, support and relationships with national and regional disaster forums, as well as with other stakeholders.

Key insights – operational capacity



Mapping of NS capacities

- Build capacity of the National Society on the national and district level.
- Strengthen the National Society's knowledge in program management and DREF system processes, including in effective planning and budgeting, communication, capturing relevant vulnerability data and indicators, setting targets and increasing quality of monitoring and evaluation.
- Ensure that the National Society has access to current valuable reference documents (i.e. IFRC list of minimum financial documents required), Stress to specific MRCS departments (finance, logistics, programmes) the necessity of adhering to IFRC procedures at the beginning of every disaster response and throughout the operation.



Activation of Regional and International Support

- An operations manager (or capable NDRT/RDRT) is strongly recommended to be deployed in future DREFs to support National Society.

Cash Transfer Programming (CTP)

If the operation decides to embark on a cash transfer programming, the following should be considered:

- Roll out of a market survey to reflect fluctuating food prices, as well as to ensure there are sufficient means to cover any potential high cash transfer programme.
- Customize the generic IFRC cash transfer guidelines to country specific contexts.
- Use information, education and communication (IEC) tools to raise awareness of the CTP (e.g. advertisements, brochures, leaflets)
- Send SMSs informing the affected population of cash transfer services the day before the launch of the cash transfer programme. Ensure that the individual(s) are aware of any potential costs and/or transaction fees.
- Strengthen community feedback mechanisms during a cash transfer programme depending upon the needs and possibilities in the local context (toll free numbers, suggestion box, using volunteers etc)
- Include sustainability components (e.g. re-investing cash) in future CTP.

Key insights – operational capacity (2)



NS-Specific Areas of Intervention

CEA

- Ensure efficient and continuous communication with the affected population (e.g. status, progress and challenges)
- Include the voice of the communities in programming. Design the operation with the communities.
- Important for there to be flexibility when working towards a bottom-up process in operations with the communities.
- Build in a formal system for complaints and feedback mechanisms throughout all activities (not just registration, verification and distribution) in future DREF planning, monitoring and operations. Include how complaints will be followed up and addressed.

Key insights – operations support



Communication in Emergencies

- Strengthen MRCS/IFRC financial and Disaster Management inter-departmental and inter-office communication.
- Important to have fluid interactions and communications amongst teams.

Operations, Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning

- Link the monitoring and evaluation activities with the programme implementation.
- Ensure there is systematic data collection in assessments, registration, selection and distribution.
- Ensure program monitoring and evaluation is ongoing throughout the operation (including in assessment, registration and pre/post distribution). Use proper planning, and monitoring and evaluation tools throughout the operations (capturing demographic and vulnerability data, as well as other key indicators).
- Translate future DREF documents (or a key summary) into the local language and share with all stakeholders including the government, district, cluster participants, responding organizations, community leaders and volunteers.

Staff and Volunteer Management

- Consider volunteer motivation when planning and implementing DREF responses.

Communication in Emergencies

- Strengthen MRCS/IFRC financial and Disaster Management inter-departmental and inter-office communication.
- Important to have fluid interactions and communications amongst teams.
- Work peer to peer at the regional level with fluid interactions and communications.

Operations, Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning

- Link the monitoring and evaluation activities with the programme implementation.
- Transfer skills and knowledge in DREF processes and programme management on a day-to-day basis to the National Society.
- Ensure there is systematic data collection in assessments, registration, selection and distribution.
- Ensure program monitoring and evaluation is ongoing throughout the operation (including in assessment, registration and pre/post distribution). Use proper planning, and monitoring and evaluation tools throughout the operations (capturing demographic and vulnerability data, as well as other key indicators).
- Translate future DREF documents (or a key summary) into the local language and share with all stakeholders including the government, district, cluster participants, responding organizations, community leaders and volunteers.

resources

[Are We Ready to Engage Communities in Humanitarian Programming](#)

[Evaluation of the Food Insecurity Cash Transfer Programme \(Malawi\)](#)

[Malawi Floods DREF Review and Lessons Learnt Report](#)

[Real-Time Evaluation Mozambique: Tropical Cyclones Idai and Kenneth \(2019\)](#)

[Mozambique Floods Final Evaluation Report](#)

[Final Evaluation Report for Zambia Drought Emergency Response](#)

IFRC Contact Information

For further information on this Rapid Insight, please contact:

Miki Tsukamoto

Coordinator-Monitoring and Evaluation

IFRC Strategic Planning Department

Office of the Secretary General

MS Teams/Email: miki.tsukamoto@ifrc.org

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International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

P.O. Box 303

CH-1211 Geneva 19 Switzerland

Tel: +41 22 730 42 22 Fax: +41 22 733 03 95



An IFRC delegate and a MRCS volunteer build a latrine in Lilongwe. IFRC