

MALI

EPIDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Communities at the heart of our work

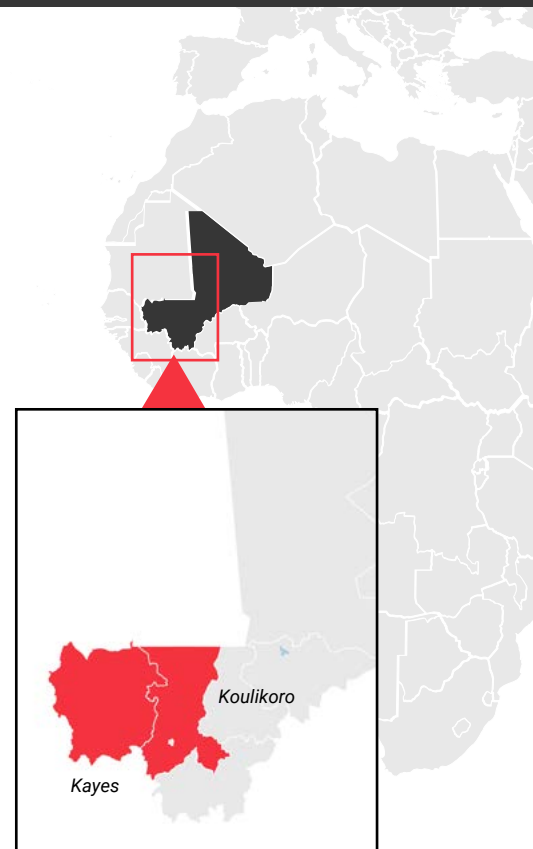
Epidemics begin and end in communities. When communities are engaged and trained in epidemic preparedness and response, they can stop outbreaks and ultimately save lives.

Early detection, early action

Ongoing insecurity and violence, chronic food insecurity, natural disasters and displacement has created major humanitarian and health needs. The country has long struggled to contain preventable infectious diseases such as malaria, pneumonia and diarrhoea as well as zoonotic diseases. Mali's child mortality rate is among the highest in the world, with one in ten children dying before their fifth birthday.

Mali Red Cross, with support from the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and funding from USAID, has been helping communities prepare for and prevent the spread of diseases. Volunteers are sensitizing communities about health risks, with a focus on epidemic-prone diseases including diarrhoea, measles and yellow fever. Focused in Kayes and Koulikoro regions, Red Cross works with governments, communities, local responders and humanitarian partners to prepare for and respond to epidemics.

Through an extensive network of community-based volunteers, Mali Red Cross is providing critical information in the local and hard-to-reach areas in coordination with other actors including the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Agriculture. This is designed to help stop diseases from spreading by detecting them early and at community level, before an outbreak occurs.



■ Programme focus areas



OUR WORK



Preparing communities

We are ensuring communities have critical information about the spread of diseases and how to prevent them, systems to detect outbreaks, and mechanisms that ensure information sharing and community engagement. Activities include:

- Engaging communities through house-to-house visits and group discussions.
- Engaging, training and collaborating with community influencers, such as imams and traditional healers.



Preparing first responders

Mali Red Cross has over 16,000 volunteers across the country which gives extraordinary reach into communities. In their supporting role to the government, they are often central to emergency responses amid outbreaks. Activities include:

- Strengthening partnerships with different sectors and ministries.
- Training and readying community-based volunteers.



Preparing stakeholders

Epidemics not only threaten lives but all aspects of society, including trade, transportation and education. We work with key stakeholders in epidemic preparedness and response. Activities include:

- Helping prepare animal and human health sectors to respond.
- Engaging, training and collaborating with schools, teachers and students on critical epidemic preparedness messages and referrals.



Preparing communities for an outbreak at community level

Mali Red Cross volunteers have ramped up health awareness activities in Kéniéba and Koulikoro, providing critical health messages on priority epidemic diseases including measles, yellow fever, viral haemorrhagic fevers, rabies, and anthrax to prevent diseases outbreaks. Conducting group sessions with community leaders, imams, traditional healers and schools in epidemic preparedness.

Volunteers have been responding to and referring cases to health facilities and the animal health services.

More information: media.ifrc.org/ifrc/community-epidemic-pandemic-preparedness

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