



ARGENTINA: FLOODS

**Final Report for
DREF Bulletin
no. MDRAR001
11 December 2006**

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in 185 countries.

In Brief

Period covered by this Final Report: 15 April to 15 August 2006.

History of this Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF)-funded operation:

- CHF 100,000 CHF (USD 78,417 or EUR 63,517) was granted from the Federation's DREF fund to respond to the needs of this operation, of which CHF 98,390 was used for this operation. The remaining CHF 1,610 was returned to the DREF fund at the end of the operation.

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The International Federation undertakes activities that are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

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For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

Background and Summary

In March 2006, intense rainfall in north-west Argentina led to floods and landslides affecting up to 5,000 people and a total area of 250,000 km². The rainy season lasted longer than in previous years and showed rainfall levels up to three times above average, the most affected areas being the Department of San Martin in the Province of Salta, and the areas along the banks of the rivers Pilcomayo, Bermejo, Seco and Tartagal. The rains caused rivers to overflow; consequently landslides swept homes away and damaged main roads and bridges, leaving communities isolated. 1,500 people were evacuated to shelters. Some communities affected by the floods - amongst which there are indigenous populations - were already in situations of vulnerability before the emergency as a result of various factors, such as high unemployment, a low level of education, and a lack of economic resources. According to information provided by the Argentine Red Cross (ARC), after the floods some towns experienced incidents of looting due to social tension.

In the town of Tartagal (in the Department of San Martin within the Province of Salta) alone 139 homes were lost. The Salta Province Institute of Housing assisted 367 families and, through a government housing initiative, homes will be built for affected families. A total of 750 people were re-settled in five evacuation centres, many of whom have now returned to their homes. Those unable to return home were relocated to private residences or hotels with the support of the local authorities. In order to ensure the identification of beneficiaries during this process, the ARC worked closely with Neighbourhood Centres.

Response to the emergency situation was initially difficult as roads and bridges were blocked and telephone lines were cut off. At the onset of the emergency, local authorities set up two Crisis Committees in Salta to coordinate the distribution of humanitarian aid and the evacuation of families still living in their homes which had almost collapsed. Humanitarian aid was delivered to affected communities in the form of food and non-food items, medical care was provided and an immunization campaign against dengue and influenza was set up. In addition to these activities, local authorities focused efforts on improving infrastructure, rebuilding homes, providing drinking water, channelling river waters and increasing flood defense systems.



Homes affected by the floods and landslides in Tartagal

In response to the emergency the ARC immediately carried out a Damage and Needs Assessment (DANA) which revealed the complexity of the impact on already vulnerable communities. Based on the results of the assessment, the ARC developed a Plan of Action to support the provision of basic relief items to 1,800 beneficiaries (300¹ families) from 17 communities in the area of Tartagal for a period of two months. To support the Plan of Action, CHF 100,000 was requested from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF).²

The identification of the beneficiaries was carried out through interviews and visits to the area, with an aim to ensure that the most vulnerable would benefit. Respect for diversity and gender was prominent in this process. The ARC Branch in Salta was responsible for implementing the Plan of Action with support from Headquarters. The PoA included the following activities: provision of personal hygiene kits, cleaning kits, and diapers for young children; awareness raising amongst communities on health promotion and prevention in water and sanitation, HIV/AIDS and dengue; strengthening resilience of affected families through community-based psychosocial support and disaster preparedness activities.

¹ Based on 6 people per family

² At the end of the operation, CHF 98,390 had been spent. The remaining CHF 1,610 was returned to the DREF fund.

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As part of this emergency operation, capacity building activities for the ARC were carried out which included acquiring essential working resources (PCs, digital cameras, visibility clothing, personal safety items, radio communications equipment and teaching materials) and boosting knowledge amongst staff and volunteers through training sessions that covered subjects such as:

- Basic institutional knowledge
- Financial procedures
- Personal safety
- Storage / warehouse management (SUMA system)
- Community – based psychosocial support
- Community disaster preparedness
- Water and sanitation
- Zoonosis (diseases in animals that can be transmitted to people)
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases



ARC staff and volunteers carrying out the identification of beneficiaries

Coordination

As the emergency affected a large area in the Province of Salta, coordination between actors was essential. From the onset of the emergency, the ARC worked with local authorities and a number of organizations and agencies in support of the affected communities. The ARC actively participated in the Crisis Committees that were established to respond to the emergency.

The ARC is also a member of the Inter-institutional Network of Preparation for Emergencies with other agencies such as the United Nations Children’s Fund, Caritas, White Helmets, Scouts of Argentina, Save the Children, Action Against Hunger and worked with them by sharing information, identifying gaps in the response and coordinating ARC activities. In addition, agreements were reached with The Rotary Club, the Tourism Chamber, the Argentine Armed Forces, La Purisima Parish and Union of Neighbourhood

Centres (Union de Centros Vecinales) to ensure that support to those affected by the floods will continue after the end of this operation.

Perhaps the most successful coordination effort was that which was carried out with the neighbourhood centres and Caritas in the identification of the beneficiaries, which took place through sharing information and cross referencing data and lists of those selected. This ensured appropriate selection which benefited the most vulnerable, and efforts were not duplicated by the different actors. In addition, the presidents of the neighbourhood centres participated and led activities to promote preventative measures in health and disaster preparedness within the ARC’s Plan of Action.

Organizations such as Solidary Network (Red Solidaria), Caritas and Scouts of Argentina installed donation collection centres in various locations in the capital of Buenos Aires and, in the case of Caritas, throughout the country. Aerolineas Argentinas supported the ARC by providing air transportation for equipment in the initial stages of the emergency.

Throughout the operation, the ARC was in contact with the Sub Regional office of the Federation in Buenos Aires, Argentina, with the Regional Delegation in Lima and the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) through the Disaster Management Delegate based in Lima.

In order to ensure adequate monitoring and follow up of the situation and the development of actions planned, three intermediate evaluation missions were carried out to the area in May, June and July, which served to identify the

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needs and gaps in the operation, offering further support of the ARC's Salta Branch. On 15 and 16 August, a final evaluation of the operation was carried out with the participation of ARC volunteers, representatives from local Branches and headquarters.

Analysis of the operation – achievements and impact

The following activities were carried out under the ARC Plan of Action:

Humanitarian Relief

Specific Objective 1: To provide humanitarian relief in the form of personal hygiene kits and cleaning kits to 300 families, as well as 20,000 diapers to the evacuated families that have children less than two years of age.

Three distributions took place in July. The first distribution consisted of hygiene kits and cleaning kits to a total of 300 families from 17 affected communities in Tartagal, as below:

Community	Number of families
La Loma	24
Santa Rita	10
El Carmen	7
Eva Peron	9
Tomas Sanchez	10
Tapiete	25
Tomas Ryan	21
San Silvestre	21
Lugones	10
El Milagro	26
Arturo Illia	14
Norte Grande	14
San Roque	8
Belen	48
Saavedra	21
Prov. Unidas	13
Güemes	19
TOTAL	300

Each hygiene kit included the following items: bath soap, personal hygiene sponge, tooth brush, tooth paste, sanitary napkins, toilet paper, shampoo, small towels, large towels and disposable razors.

Each cleaning kit included the following items: broom, mop, scrubbing brush, concentrated detergent, garbage bags, rubber gloves, concentrated chlorine, floor rags, 10-12 litre bucket, sponge, kitchen towel and white soap.

During a second distribution diapers were delivered and with support from remaining resources and individual donations, hygiene and cleaning kits were provided to an additional 111 families (approximately 700 people).



ARC volunteers preparing kits for distribution

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In a third distribution, thanks to the remaining resources resulting from negotiations carried out with providers, it was possible to purchase and distribute more relief items as follows:

- 532 bed kits containing: single bed blankets, single bed sheets, double bed blankets, and double bed sheets.
- 384 personal hygiene and cleaning kits.
- Bulk quantities of non food items that were distributed to homes for the elderly, schools, neighbourhood centres, and solidarity brigades.

All relief items were procured and distributed in line with Federation Standards.

Summary of the Humanitarian Aid distributed by ARC:

Kits	Quantity	Beneficiary Families	People (approx)
Hygiene	684	684	4.800
Cleaning	795	795	5.500
Diapers	111	111	300
Bedding	532	532	3.070
Total	2,122	2,122	13,670

Due to additional support available, it is estimated that a total 13,670 people benefited from the provision of humanitarian aid. However, the exact number of beneficiaries was difficult to determine due to constraints in the field. In addition, families vary considerably in size.

It was decided that the distributions would not be made immediately as a number of humanitarian agencies, local actors and the authorities provided assistance that covered immediate needs. As these operations slowed down, communities' needs remained and the ARC put its Plan of Action into effect.

Relief items were delivered to beneficiaries' homes, which required renting means of transportation. With the rented equipment, distributions were able to take place simultaneously in different communities, which accelerated the implementation of the operation: no distribution lasted longer than 12 hours.

Health and Psychosocial Support

Specific Objective 1: To improve the health conditions of 500 people staying in temporary shelters through the promotion of preventative measures related to hygiene, water and sanitation, HIV/AIDS and dengue.

The promotion of preventative health measures in affected communities proved more complicated than anticipated. First, there was an immediate relocation of the evacuees; in addition, communities showed a degree of indifference towards capacity building and community strengthening, as the need was not recognized.

In order to develop these activities in an integrated way, it was decided that training exercises would take place in neighbourhood centres, where communities could convene and could therefore be reached more easily.



Humanitarian aid being delivered to homes of the affected

In June three training sessions were held for the beneficiary communities in the following:

Training Subject	Number of beneficiaries
Community-based psychosocial support (see below for this specific objective)	314
Appropriate use of water and sanitation in the environment	318
Community Prevention and Disaster preparedness	96
Sexually Transmitted Diseases – HIV/AIDS	479

Bearing in mind that several people participated more than once, at least 997 people took part in the capacity building sessions, exceeding the expected number of beneficiaries for this activity. (These figures include beneficiary numbers for psychosocial support activities, see Specific Objective 2).

In order to carry out this activity, the following preliminary activities took place:

- Internal capacity building workshops for ARC volunteers
- Design and printing of awareness raising materials
- Distribution of awareness raising materials on water and sanitation, HIV/AIDS and dengue
- Awareness raising workshops for people in evacuation centres.

The activity itself took place through awareness raising workshops at the neighbourhood centres on the promotion of prevention measures related to water and sanitation, HIV/AIDS and dengue. Awareness raising materials (leaflets) previously produced by the community health programme and other areas were given to participants in addition to new materials produced for the training.



An awareness raising workshop held on health issues at a neighborhood centre

Representatives from municipalities and local organizations (Caritas, Rotary Club, volunteers from the fire brigade and others) actively participated in some of the training activities.

Specific Objective 2: To strengthen the resilience capacities of 500 people staying in shelters through community-based psychosocial support.

As in the previous objective, in order to carry out activities related to psychosocial support in an integrated way it was decided that these would take place in the neighbourhood centres. In order to strengthen the resilience capacities of people affected by the floods several training sessions were carried out

with the communities using methodologies such as Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA).

In order to carry out this activity, the following preliminary activities took place:

- Internal capacity building workshops for ARC volunteers
- Contacts with local health authorities responsible for the management of evacuation centres
- Visits to families staying at evacuation centres to provide psychosocial support.

Internal capacity building took place within the planned time frame and awareness raising was adjusted appropriately to be carried out in the neighbourhood centres. All evacuation centres were visited, and contact was established with the Municipal Government and those responsible for medical care at the centres. The Plan of Action stated that a recreational kit was to be used to provide psychosocial support for children; however, it was decided not to use it in light of the relocation of the affected communities.

For the full number of beneficiaries within this objective please refer to the table and text above, found under Specific Objective 1.

Impact

- 2,122 families saw their basic needs met through the timely distribution of relief items such as hygiene kits, cleaning kits, diapers and bed linen. Activities within the Plan of Action had a significantly wider reach thanks to the successful negotiations held with providers and private donations.
- The timing of the distributions was coordinated in order to ensure that goods were provided when people needed them the most.
- Health promotion activities under the PoA provided an opportunity for communities to sign agreements with other local and non-governmental health actors for further assistance.
- Gathering beneficiaries for psychosocial support activities allowed for the promotion of community organization and active participation in planning and decision-making activities.
- The ARC showed good internal coordination in the response, monitoring and evaluation of the emergency. The experience gained in this operation has strengthened the ARC's capacity.
- Internal capacity building for ARC members also included securing resources (PCs, digital cameras, visibility clothing, personal safety items, radio communications equipment and teaching materials), as well as staff training.
- As a result of this operation, 35 new volunteers joined the ARC in Tartagal and worked together with the initial 60 volunteers who were mobilized for this operation.

Constraints

- Initial identification of beneficiaries was difficult, as the nearest Operative Branch in Salta was 380km from Tartagal and a definitive, clear list of affected communities was difficult to obtain. The relocation of evacuated families also meant that beneficiaries needed to be re-identified, which in turn affected the distribution of relief items. The combination of these factors led to changes in beneficiary numbers during the operation.
- The distance from the ARC's Salta Branch to the area of operation (380 km) and inaccessibility to the area in the first few weeks, as the infrastructure was damaged, was a complicating factor.
- There is no ARC warehouse in the area to store goods for distribution.
- Social tension led to looting.

Lessons learned

The Regional Delegation's Sub Regional Office in Buenos Aires, the Regional Delegation in Lima and the Disaster Management Delegate in Lima provided Federation support to the ARC through rapid response and coordination ensuring the definition of roles and respect for local capacities.

The emergency revealed the need to have up to date Emergency and Contingency Plans in preparation for emergencies such as these, which would have allowed for faster response.

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The emergency revealed the need for institutional strengthening of the ARC's local Branches. Although local resources helped in the initial response, capacities in disaster management are still limited at the local level. This led to slight delays in the response as volunteers needed capacity building in basic disaster management techniques.

The inclusion of the community in the stages of planning, the implementation of activities and evaluation of the operation contributed to ensuring sensitivity to the communities' needs and empowerment of the community through their participation in the Plan of Action.

The management of volunteers in emergencies should be prioritized within the ARC, their participation in the planning, decision making and implementation of the operation should be fostered. The incorporation of community volunteers in this cycle contributes to increased sustainability of the actions.

Effective internal communications play a major role in the process of decision making and management of resources and the uniform positioning of the National Society.

Effective external communication increases possibilities of gaining resources for the operation, to appropriately position the Movement and promote Principles and Values at the national and international level.

Visibility in this operation allowed for the correct identification of ARC personnel, goods and humanitarian aid, bearing in mind that the operation took place in an area where the Movement previously had not been present and created more secure parameters to work within.

[Final financial report below; click here to return to the title page or contact information](#)

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

MDRAR001 - ARGENTINA: FLOODS

financial report

Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2005/1-2006/12
Budget Timeframe	2005/1-2007/12
Appeal	Mdrar001
Budget	APPEAL

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

I. Consolidated Response to Appeal

	Health & Care	Disaster Management	Humanitarian Values	Organisational Development	Coordination & Implementation	TOTAL
A. Budget		98'390				98'390
B. Opening Balance		0				0
Income						
Reallocations (within appeal or from/to another appeal)						
DREF		98'390				98'390
C3. Reallocations (within appeal)		98'390				98'390
C. Total Income = SUM(C1..C6)		98'390				98'390
D. Total Funding = B + C		98'390				98'390

II. Balance of Funds

	Health & Care	Disaster Management	Humanitarian Values	Organisational Development	Coordination & Implementation	TOTAL
B. Opening Balance		0				0
C. Income		98'390				98'390
E. Expenditure		-98'390				-98'390
F. Closing Balance = (B + C + E)		0				0

Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2005/1-2006/12
Budget Timeframe	2005/1-2007/12
Appeal	Mdrar001
Budget	APPEAL

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

III. Budget Analysis / Breakdown of Expenditure

Account Groups	Budget	Expenditure					TOTAL	Variance
		Health & Care	Disaster Management	Humanitarian Values	Organisational Development	Coordination & Implementation		
A							B	A - B
BUDGET (C)		98'390					98'390	
Supplies								
Clothing & textiles	30'049		30'049				30'049	0
Utensils & Tools	602		602				602	0
Other Supplies & Services	11'261		11'261				11'261	0
Total Supplies	41'912		41'912				41'912	0
Land, vehicles & equipment								
Computers & Telecom	1'354		1'354				1'354	0
Total Land, vehicles & equipment	1'354		1'354				1'354	0
Transport & Storage								
Storage	1'343		1'343				1'343	0
Distribution & Monitoring	404		404				404	0
Transport & Vehicle Costs	3'545		3'545				3'545	0
Total Transport & Storage	5'291		5'291				5'291	0
Personnel Expenditures								
National Staff	1'197		1'197				1'197	0
National Society Staff	9'969		9'969				9'969	0
Consultants	200		200				200	0
Total Personnel Expenditures	11'366		11'366				11'366	0
Workshops & Training								
Workshops & Training	6'746		6'746				6'746	0
Total Workshops & Training	6'746		6'746				6'746	0
General Expenditure								
Travel	8'358		8'358				8'358	0
Information & Public Relation	4'087		4'087				4'087	0
Office Costs	4'578		4'578				4'578	0
Communications	1'987		1'987				1'987	0
Professional Fees	600		600				600	0
Financial Charges	5'716		5'716				5'716	0
Total General Expenditure	25'325		25'325				25'325	0
Program Support								
Program Support	6'395		6'395				6'395	0
Total Program Support	6'395		6'395				6'395	0
TOTAL EXPENDITURE (D)	98'390		98'390				98'390	0
VARIANCE (C - D)			0				0	