



DREF Bulletin
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Final Report
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JAMAICA: FLOODS

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: 28 November 2006 to 28 January 2007.

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

- CHF 25,000 (USD 20,757 or EUR 15,723) was allocated from the Federation's DREF on 28 November 2006 to respond to the needs of this operation.
- This operation was implemented in 2 months, and was completed by 28 January 2007. In line with Federation reporting standards, the DREF Bulletin Final Report (narrative and financial) was due 90 days after the end of the operation (by 28 April 2007).

Interim Financial Report attached, Final Financial Report to be attached in due course

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.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- *In Jamaica: Yvonne Clarke, Director General, Jamaica Red Cross, email: yvonneclarke@jamaicaredcross.org, phone: + (876) 984 7860-2, fax: + (876) 984 8272*
- *In Panama, Stephen McAndrew, Head, Pan American Disaster Response Unit, email: stephen.mcandrew@ifrc.org, phone: (507) 316-1001, fax: (507) 316-1082*
- *In Trinidad: Thomas Doyle, Disaster Management Delegate, Pan American Disaster Response Unit, Port of Spain, thomas.doyle@ifrc.org, +1 868 798 9493, fax +1 868 627 9627*
- *In Geneva: Luis Luna, Federation Regional Officer, Americas Department, email: luis.luna@ifrc.org; phone 41.22.730.4274; fax 41.22.733.03.95*

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian](#)

[Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

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

For five days - between 22 and 26 November 2006 - large areas of Jamaica were subjected to excessive rainfall as a result of an upper level trough and cold front in the vicinity of the island. The north-eastern parishes of St Ann, St Mary, and Portland were mainly affected by this weather system. The entire town of Port Maria in St Mary- a town which is below sea level - was under water, leaving its citizens marooned in business places and homes, making it impossible for even essential services such as the police to respond to the needs of the population. Even rescue vehicles were unable to cross the high waters, which lead the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) to declare a disaster situation.

The death of one woman was reported in Portland when her home was destroyed by a landslide. Several main roads were blocked and suffered structural damage due to the unusually heavy levels of water flowing across and under them. The combined assessment of the government agencies (Ministry of Labour and Social Security – MLSS - and ODPEM) and the Jamaica Red Cross revealed that approximately 1,000 persons were seriously affected. 800 persons sought shelter in designated churches and schools. Others stayed with families and friends whose homes were located on higher ground. The police station and other business places were evacuated as well. In St Thomas, Portland, St Ann and St Mary three houses were completely destroyed, 42 houses sustained structural damage and 958 houses showed minor damage and loss of household effects. The Jamaica meteorological service lifted the flash flood warning for the areas affected on Sunday 26 November, after the waters had subsided.

During a press briefing at Jamaica House on 11 December, the Minister of Information and Development explained that the Cabinet had taken a decision to offer assistance to the victims of the flooding in St Thomas, St Mary, Portland and St Ann. The assistance would come in cash: 30,000 Jamaican dollars (some CHF 555) for those whose homes were totally destroyed; 20,000 Jamaican dollars (some CHF 370) for those who had the structure of their houses damaged, but not destroyed, and 10,000 Jamaican dollars (some CHF 185) for those with minor house damage and loss of household effects. The total amount approved by the Cabinet was 10.5 million Jamaican dollars (some CHF 194,000) to be distributed amongst 1,003 families in the affected parishes.



**Debris and garbage were left behind by the floods.
Source: International Federation**

In the beginning of December water levels had considerably receded, which allowed villagers to gradually return to their normal lives and seasonal activities. Volunteers of local branches visited the affected communities during December and January and reported that rehabilitation was gradually achieved.

Coordination

The Jamaica Red Cross closely coordinated its activities with the governmental institutions such as ODPEM and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security in order to increase efficiency and to prevent duplication of efforts.

Other agencies such as Adventist Relief Agency (ADRA) and the local Parish Disaster Committees collaborated to ensure an effective response. An agreement was reached on the tasks to be undertaken by each agency. The provisions of hot meals and support for rebuilding destroyed homes were assigned to the agencies equipped to provide those services. The Jamaica Red Cross agreed to assist in search and rescue activities and with the provision

of basic food and non-food items for the duration of a month after the event. The local Red Cross branch in St. Mary was activated to provide the immediate response including delivery of the items while the neighbouring branch of Portland provided human resource capacity to carry out the needs assessment. Headquarters of the National Society maintained close contact with these branches to ensure the needs were adequately met and any new and emerging concerns could be addressed.

From the onset of the emergency, constant support and guidance was provided by the International Federation through its Sub-Regional office in Trinidad and Tobago as well as through its Pan American Disaster response Unit (PADRU), which resulted in the allocation of funds from the Disaster and Relief Emergency Fund (DREF).

Analysis of the operation – achievements and impact

Jamaica Red Cross (JRC) was called on November 24, 2006 to assist with shelter and relief efforts. JRC National headquarters immediately mobilized volunteers from local branches in St Mary and Portland, ensuring direct response to the emergency situations by supporting activities such as rescue and evacuation, first aid care and needs assessments. The finalization of the assessments revealed that over 400 families (approximately 2,000 persons) were displaced after sustaining loss of homes, livestock and household effects due to water damage. The primary needs were therefore determined to be mattresses, blankets, water, food, clothing and tarpaulins.

An important part of the response - which was highly appreciated by the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) - was the need assessment carried out by Red Cross volunteers. It was difficult to complete this task, as a limited number of individuals was trained and well-informed on the communities and their people. Therefore, it was an exceptional achievement for the Red Cross volunteers to efficiently and effectively assess and analyze the needs and the extent of the damage. The results were shared and the MLSS was then able to utilize this in the determination of the apportioning of benefits as outlined by the parliamentary declaration stated above.

Furthermore, the JRC provided initial response by dispatching 30 mattresses, 100 blankets and ten tarpaulins to displaced persons in Port Maria, St Mary. However, this response was insufficient to meet the emergency needs. Therefore the JRC started local procurement procedures of food and water from its virtual warehouse for the preparation of food packages to be distributed to the affected communities. The Jamaica Red Cross was also instrumental in the manning of shelters for the short duration of time they were occupied.

The National Society, with the assistance of the Federation's Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) achieved the following objective:

Humanitarian relief

Objective 1: 200 of the most affected families (approximately 1,000 persons) benefit from the distribution of food, water and non-food items, as well as provision of psychosocial support to assist them to recover from the effects of the floods.

Based on available resources and the level of the need JRC assisted 155 families (approximately 700 persons). The number of persons in each family was not uniform – some had as many as eight members while at the other end of the scale a few had three members. It was therefore necessary to pro-rate the delivery of packages. Hence it required 200 food packages to adequately address the needs of the 155 families. The other items distributed are recorded in the table

| Relief items | Quantity |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Food packages | 300 |
| Mattresses | 135 |
| Hygiene kits | 167 |
| Blankets | 164 |
| Water | 275 |

| | |
|------------|----|
| Tarpaulins | 17 |
|------------|----|

The National Society, assisted by the local branches, started - on 26 November 2006 - distributions of non-food items such as mattresses, hygiene kits, blankets, bottles of water and tarpaulins. The food packages were procured some time after and were distributed from the Red Cross headquarters to the affected St Mary parish on 2 December, as well as after the Psychosocial Support activity on 28 December 2006.

Psychosocial Support

As requested by the affected population during the needs assessments, the psychosocial team of the National Society provided psychosocial support in the form of a Christmas activity. Approximately 200 families who lost all their material belongings participated in a Christmas activity that was carried out on 28 December 2006. The activity aimed to take away some of the anguish the families were experiencing at that time.

During the Christmas activity a general Psychosocial Support intervention was carried out by the Jamaica Red Cross Psychosocial Support Team with the help of a Power Point presentation with an aim to provide the affected families with coping skills to deal with their loss. Afterwards, three members of the team conducted individual sessions with those who expressed the desire to do so. The 200 families were then treated to refreshments, de-stressing techniques and one-on-one counselling as necessary. After the session they were treated to blood pressure checks, cooked meals, ice cream, drinks and pastries. The remaining 100 food packages were also distributed to some of these families.

The event was recorded by Television Jamaica and broadcast on February 5 2007 on the Ray of Hope programme.



Psychosocial support by the JRC during the Christmas activity. Source: International Federation.

Communications and Public Advocacy

An initial bulletin alerting of this situation was posted on the Federation's Disaster Monitoring and Information System (DMIS) on 26 November 2006, followed by further updates. Two press releases were issued and distributed to national and local media. Furthermore, two radio interviews with national media and a television broadcast of the psychosocial support activity took place in order to increase awareness and better understanding of the mission of the Jamaica Red Cross and the activities undertaken by the Red Cross in general.

Impact

During the emergency operation, 155 of the most affected families saw their basic needs met through the timely distribution of relief items. The nature of the disaster was such that at the onset and during the period of flooding, people were traumatised and distraught by the loss of their property. During this period they needed and received attention from Red Cross volunteers which provided reassurance that they would be assisted even if the help was not immediately to hand.

The timing of the distributions was coordinated in order to ensure that goods were provided when people needed them the most. Hence water, tarpaulins, hygiene kits, blankets and food packages were appreciated in the first phase of distribution. Water distribution averted a potential public health crisis as the purity of the water supplies was compromised. The maintenance of a wholesome sanitary environment was facilitated through the hygiene kits and blankets provided a temporary place to rest comfortably since beds were destroyed by mud and water. Field monitoring visits were undertaken during January by volunteers of the local branches and beneficiaries indicated that the distribution of relief items alleviated the anxiety they experienced and gave them hope and reassurance that their situation would be mitigated.

The implementation of psychosocial support activity is in line with the aim of the Federation to increase beneficiary input in the development of disaster response activities. At least 75 of the beneficiaries that attended the Christmas activity indicated that they considered the techniques provided during the psychosocial support intervention as very useful.

Constraints

The St Mary Branch of the Jamaica Red Cross has limited capacity in terms of size, capacity and number of programmes. Additionally it is located in a parish which is comparatively low income and geographically located in an area which is prone to flooding. The limited number of volunteers available in this branch severely limited the progress of the operations and it was therefore necessary to utilize the services of the neighbouring branch and National Headquarters personnel.

Due to the fact that some of the volunteers of the local branch in the affected area, did not have the right equipment, some delay in procedures such as picture- taking when the emergency occurred or the timely provision of operation reports, were experienced. JRC is aware of this constraint and has been taking steps to address the problem through capacity building workshops for the members and planned strategies for resource mobilization.

Lessons learned

The press releases, radio interviews and broadcasting of the psychosocial support activity accounted for a better understanding of the mission of the Jamaica Red Cross Society and the activities the organization undertakes in serving affected communities. Based on the several responses from the Jamaican public the continued relation with public and media has certainly improved the image of the Federation among the communities and local authorities.

The emergency made it even more important to address the need for institutional strengthening of the JRC local branch in the affected area. Capacities in disaster management, suitable equipment and a broader base of volunteers are still somewhat limited. The major lesson learned - and the deficiency that needs to be addressed immediately - is the recruitment of competent individuals who can work in the branch and be available in times of disaster. When the human resource base is expanded there is greater potential for improving the lives of the vulnerable in the parish. The experience resulted in some of the victims committing to become members of the Red Cross while the publicity gained through the newspaper articles and television broadcasts stimulated a significant increase in the number of new members.

In addition, further dissemination of standard Federation disaster response systems and tools is required. However, the experience gained in this operation did strengthen the capacity of the local branch in the affected area.

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

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

MDRJM001 - JAMAICA - FLOODS

Interim Financial Report

| Selected Parameters | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Reporting Timeframe | 2006/1-2007/04 |
| Budget Timeframe | 2006/1-2007/12 |
| Appeal | MDRJM001 |
| 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 | | 25,000 | | | | 25,000 |
| B. Opening Balance | | 0 | | | | 0 |
| Income | | | | | | |
| <u>Reallocations (within appeal or from/to another appeal)</u> | | | | | | |
| <i>DREF</i> | | 25,000 | | | | 25,000 |
| C3. Reallocations (within appeal or | | 25,000 | | | | 25,000 |
| C. Total Income = SUM(C1..C6) | | 25,000 | | | | 25,000 |
| D. Total Funding = B + C | | 25,000 | | | | 25,000 |

II. Balance of Funds

| | Health & Care | Disaster Management | Humanitarian Values | Organisational Development | Coordination & Implementation | TOTAL |
|----------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------|
| B. Opening Balance | | 0 | | | | 0 |
| C. Income | | 25,000 | | | | 25,000 |
| E. Expenditure | | -24,668 | | | | -24,668 |
| F. Closing Balance = (B + C + E) | | 332 | | | | 332 |

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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) | | 25,000 | | | | | 25,000 | |
| Supplies | | | | | | | | |
| Clothing & textiles | 10,250 | | | | | | | 10,250 |
| Food | 4,500 | | | | | | | 4,500 |
| Water & Sanitation | 1,750 | | | | | | | 1,750 |
| Medical & First Aid | 625 | | | | | | | 625 |
| Other Supplies & Services | 3,750 | | | | | | | 3,750 |
| Total Supplies | 20,875 | | | | | | | 20,875 |
| Transport & Storage | | | | | | | | |
| Storage | 750 | | | | | | | 750 |
| Total Transport & Storage | 750 | | | | | | | 750 |
| Personnel Expenditures | | | | | | | | |
| Regionally Deployed Staff | 1,625 | | | | | | | 1,625 |
| Total Personnel Expenditures | 1,625 | | | | | | | 1,625 |
| General Expenditure | | | | | | | | |
| Information & Public Relation | 125 | | | | | | | 125 |
| Professional Fees | | | 438 | | | | 438 | -438 |
| Total General Expenditure | 125 | | 438 | | | | 438 | -313 |
| Program Support | | | | | | | | |
| Program Support | 1,625 | | 1,603 | | | | 1,603 | 22 |
| Total Program Support | 1,625 | | 1,603 | | | | 1,603 | 22 |
| Operational Provisions | | | | | | | | |
| Operational Provisions | | | 22,627 | | | | 22,627 | -22,627 |
| Total Operational Provisions | | | 22,627 | | | | 22,627 | -22,627 |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE (D) | 25,000 | | 24,668 | | | | 24,668 | 332 |
| VARIANCE (C - D) | | | 332 | | | | 332 | |