

DREF operation final report



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

THE GAMBIA: FIRE

DREF operation n° MDRGM002

25 June, 2008

The International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of un-earmarked money created by the Federation in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross Red Crescent response to emergencies. The DREF is a vital part of the International Federation's disaster response system and increases the ability of national societies to respond to disasters.

Summary: The amount of **CHF 20,325 (USD 16,260 or EUR 12,783)** was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on **10 November 2006** in response to a severe fire, affecting both members of the local community and Red Cross volunteers coming to their assistance. Funds were used to respond to the medical needs of the most seriously injured, as well as to enhance National Society capacity in fire fighting.

Direct support was provided to the local hospital and families of the victims, with the provision of crucial drugs and anti-septic solutions. In addition, training was provided to 45 Red Cross volunteers in fire fighting techniques and skills. This was complemented by awareness-raising activities in disaster preparedness and mitigation, carried out with the affected community and reaching some 2,000 beneficiaries. The operation was implemented over a period of 1 month and was completed in mid-December 2006.

[<click here for the final financial report, or here to view contact details>](#)

The situation

During the night of 30 October 2006, a serious fire broke out at the Kanifing Housing Estate, in The Gambia, as a result of a gas leak, sparked by a candle. Gambia Red Cross Society (GRCS) staff and volunteers living in the area rushed to rescue the affected family and assist in extinguishing the fire. Very tragically, the gas canister exploded just as one of the rescuers was trying to remove it from the house. A number of Red Cross staff/volunteers (who had been trained in disaster management) were caught up in the ensuing flames.

As a result, eighteen victims – 17 of the rescuers and one member of the affected family – suffered third degree burns. Fourteen of the injured were admitted to the Royal Victoria Teaching Hospital (RVTH) for urgent treatment, while the remaining four were treated and discharged. Sadly, seven of the seriously injured subsequently died, including the Red Cross Volunteer Management and Branch Development Coordinator.

As of early November, seven of the people admitted to hospital remained in critical condition. Concerns were raised by GRCS and family members regarding the inadequate level of treatment being provided by the hospital (due to limited resources and lack of medication), as well as the limited financial means of the affected families – thereby preventing victims from obtaining the necessary medicines. Due to the constrained financial resources of all involved - including the National Society - the need for external assistance was agreed.

Given the magnitude of the disaster and the number of people involved, the Government of Gambia declared the fire to be an official disaster and set up a task force, with GRCS as the main stakeholder. A proposal was developed and DREF funds allocated in mid-November, in order to support the hospital with essential

medication and provide essential financial assistance to the affected families. In addition, the GRCS proposed to undertake training of its volunteers in fire fighting techniques, as well as embark on community sensitization activities on fire prevention and mitigation.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Gambia Red Cross Society staff and volunteers from the neighbourhood mobilized immediately to respond swiftly to the fire and assist the affected family. Following the disastrous explosion, which injured many of the RC staff and volunteers, additional GRCS volunteers provided support to the injured, attending to them in shifts at the hospital.

With the allocation of DREF funds, the GRCS - working in coordination with the Federation's Regional Delegation in Dakar - was able to:

- provide medical support to the hospital to aid the seven survivors;
- assist the bereaved families to recover;
- implement training for RC volunteers in fire fighting techniques; and
- undertake community sensitization activities on fire prevention.

As a result of the activities carried out under this DREF allocation, essential medication was purchased for the Royal Victoria Teaching Hospital, for treatment of the seven survivors. A training session on fire fighting techniques was developed in collaboration with the Gambia National Fire Brigade and provided to 45 volunteers from 7 administrative branches and GRCS headquarters. In addition, community sensitization on disaster prevention and local resource mobilization in disasters was carried out in the affected community, reaching some 2,000 people.

As a result of these activities, interest in the GRCS was enhanced and new volunteers expressed a desire to join the National Society. Membership registration was followed up at branch level. Overall visibility of GRCS was also enhanced with governmental authorities, and an effective collaboration established with the hospital. Furthermore, the links between GRCS, the Hospital Medical Authority and the Department of Social Health and Welfare were strengthened.

Direct beneficiaries of the activities included GRCS volunteers, the victims of the fire and their families, the Royal Victoria Hospital, and the community of Kanifing Estate, reaching a total of some 2,000 people.

Progress towards objectives

Disaster Response (Health and Care)

Objectives:

- To support the Royal Victoria Teaching Hospital (RVTH) with the necessary drugs and anti-septic solutions for the victims of the fire.
- To support the families of the victims and the community with medical bills.

Activities:

GRCS carried out the following activities to meet the above objectives:

- Liaising with RVTH to determine the required medication, in light of the hospital's limited resources and restricted availability of drugs.
- Providing one hundred and forty-one thousand dalasi (D141,000) worth of drugs to RVTH, to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of medical services to the victims of the fire.
- Providing one hundred and ten thousand dalasi (D110,000) worth of anti-septic solution to the RVTH.
- Ensuring psychological support to the families of the victims.

Impact:

Much needed medication and financial assistance was provided to the victims and their families. Furthermore, the hospital's capacity to treat the injured was reinforced and a good working relationship established between the medical authorities and GRCS.

Challenges:

- Limited medical resources of the hospital to support the victims.

Disaster Preparedness

Objectives:

- To equip RC volunteers with basic fire fighting skills
- To sensitize the Kanifing Housing Estate Community on disasters and how to mitigate or reduce their impact.

Activities:

GRCS carried out the following activities to meet the above objectives:

- GRCS disaster coordinator and disaster commission chairperson organised a coordination meeting with Branch officers.
- A coordination team was established to identify volunteers for training, develop training materials and identify resource people, and organise the training session.
- Participation of the Gambia National Fire Brigade was solicited.
- Training on fire fighting techniques was carried out, with the participation of 45 volunteers from 7 branches and from national headquarters.
- A community disaster committee was established in Kanifing Estate.
- 1,500 torch lights were distributed to households in Kanifing Estate, with assistance from the community disaster committee.
- Community sensitization was carried out with 2,000 people in Kanifing Estate by GRCS volunteers, covering basic disaster prevention and local resource mobilization as first responders in case of disaster.

Impact:

GRCS volunteers received skills training in fire fighting techniques and were able to engage in practical demonstrations. Closer links were established with the Gambia National Fire Brigade. Community members have become more aware of their role and responsibilities as first responders in case of disaster, and have been equipped with torch lights.

Challenges:

The Gambia National Fire Brigade has limited resources to respond quickly, at times lacking in fuel or water, disposing of little or no fire fighting gear and having difficulty in accessing communities given the lack of street names. The community is often unaware of these limitations and has lacked the necessary skills and resources to respond in turn.

Conclusion

GRCS was able to offer essential basic assistance to the victims and their families, following the fire and its disastrous aftermath. Links were reinforced between the GRCS, governmental authorities, the hospital and the fire brigade. In addition, disaster preparedness capacity at National Society level, as well as within the affected community, has been reinforced. Volunteers from seven branches have been trained in fire fighting skills. Some 2,000 local community members have been sensitized to their role as first responders in disaster response and have a clearer understanding of mitigation activities.

How we work

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.

The International Federation's activities 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.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

MDRGM002 - Gambia - Fire

Final Financial Report

Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2006/11-2007/10
Budget Timeframe	2006/11-2007/10
Appeal	MDRGM002
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		20,325				20,325
B. Opening Balance		0				0
Income						
<u>Cash contributions (received)</u>						
<i>DREF</i>		-136				-136
C1. Cash contributions		-136				-136
<u>Reallocations (within appeal or from/to another appeal)</u>						
<i>DREF</i>		20,325				20,325
C3. Reallocations (within appeal or		20,325				20,325
C. Total Income = SUM(C1..C6)		20,189				20,189
D. Total Funding = B + C		20,189				20,189

II. Balance of Funds

	Health & Care	Disaster Management	Humanitarian Values	Organisational Development	Coordination & Implementation	TOTAL
B. Opening Balance		0				0
C. Income		20,189				20,189
E. Expenditure		-20,189				-20,189
F. Closing Balance = (B + C + E)		0				0

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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)		20,325					20,325	
Supplies								
Food			1,210			1,210	-1,210	
Medical & First Aid	10,488		11,256			11,256	-768	
Teaching Materials	1,560						1,560	
Utensils & Tools	2,880						2,880	
Other Supplies & Services			175			175	-175	
Total Supplies	14,928		12,640			12,640	2,288	
Transport & Storage								
Transport & Vehicle Costs			731			731	-731	
Total Transport & Storage			731			731	-731	
Personnel								
National Society Staff	3,060		1,505			1,505	1,555	
Total Personnel	3,060		1,505			1,505	1,555	
General Expenditure								
Travel			488			488	-488	
Office Costs	824		3,047			3,047	-2,223	
Communications	192		143			143	49	
Financial Charges			320			320	-320	
Other General Expenses			2			2	-2	
Total General Expenditure	1,016		4,001			4,001	-2,985	
Programme Support								
Program Support	1,321		1,312			1,312	9	
Total Programme Support	1,321		1,312			1,312	9	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE (D)	20,325		20,189			20,189	136	
VARIANCE (C - D)			136			136		