



MALAWI: FLOODS

INTERIM FINAL REPORT

No. MDRMW001
26 October 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 over 185 countries.

In Brief

Period covered by this Interim Final Report¹: 31 January 2006 to 31 May 2006.

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

- CHF 99,826 was allocated from the Federation's DREF on 31 January 2006 to respond to the needs of this operation. Refer to <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/06/MDRMW001.pdf> for the DREF Bulletin.
- This operation was implemented in four months and was completed by end of May 2006.

This operation was aligned with the International Federation's 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.

Background and summary

In the months of December 2005 and January 2006, Malawi experienced heavy rains which caused flooding in the lower Shire valley, central region as well as the northern region. The flooding affected 37,431 households in the following districts: Nsanje, Chikwawa (lower Shire), Mangochi and Machinga (southern region), Ntcheu (central region) and Nkhatabay (northern region). A total of 1,794 houses were destroyed and the displaced people sought shelter in schools or at homes of relatives living in upland areas which were not affected by the floods. Most of the destroyed houses were made from poor local materials such as wooden poles and mud.

During the same period, Blantyre, Mangochi, Chikwawa and Nsanje districts in the southern region were affected by a cholera outbreak. A total of 852 cholera cases and 20 deaths were reported and confirmed by the Ministry of Health (MoH). These figures could be higher because some cases in remote areas were not reported.

Following the floods, the Malawi Red Cross Society (MRCS) conducted an assessment of the damage caused in the affected areas. The findings indicated that there was need for shelter, water supply and sanitation interventions in all the flooded districts. Red Cross volunteers were mobilized to conduct health and hygiene sensitization and assisted in the registration of beneficiaries and distribution of relief items.

¹ This Interim Final Report is being issued without the financial report. A Final Report, comprising of the final financial report and this narrative report, will be issued in due course.

Coordination

In response to flooding disaster, the Federation regional delegation in Harare assisted the national society (NS) to access CHF 99,826 from the Federation's DREF. The regional delegation technical department provided technical support to MRCS in water and sanitation (WatSan), health and hygiene promotion.

The government's department of disaster preparedness took a coordination role during the response and facilitated the establishment of a good coordination mechanism. Stakeholders in the humanitarian sector also participated at the coordination meetings. UN agencies that were involved in the operation included the World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Coordination meetings focused on providing updates on developments, assessments, areas requiring more attention and developing plans of action.

While MRCS provided part of the temporary shelter, cholera prevention kits as well as blankets, other agencies also responded. Save the Children US provided flour, blankets, buckets cooking oil, beans and plastic sheeting (in Mangochi only); UNICEF provided tents, plastic sheeting and blankets and WFP provided food to the affected households. The government of Malawi, through its disaster preparedness department, provided kitchen utensils and temporary latrines.

Analysis of the operation - objectives, achievements and impact

Provision of cholera prevention kits

The MRCS provided 15 tins of chlorine for water treatment (each 50kg) and 2,500 buckets to the affected communities in all the districts except Blantyre. The response by MRCS focused on prevention and only areas which were hit by both floods and cholera were targeted, hence Blantyre was not an operation area. The cholera kits were distributed through hospitals; the hospital personnel in turn trained the communities affected by cholera on how to use the kits.

MRCS collaboration with the government hospitals had an added advantage because of their expertise on the use of chlorine and a network of staff offering health extension services in the affected communities. Therefore, government health workers have a better understanding of the communities. Red Cross volunteers who reside in the affected areas also participated in the sensitization of the communities in collaboration with the government health extension workers.

Provision of temporary shelter materials

The NS planned to distribute 2,500 tarpaulins for temporary shelter but only 752 were distributed from the warehouse stocks because the purchased ones did not arrive on time. These tarpaulins were used in construction of temporary shelter for the displaced. After the floodwaters receded, they were used for roofing during reconstruction of damaged houses. The registration of beneficiaries and distribution of the materials was done by Red Cross volunteers living among the affected communities. The tarpaulins that were purchased were stocked for preparedness and future potential response.

Table 1: Relief items distributed during the operation

District hospitals	Chlorine tins (50kg)	Buckets (20 litres)	Plastic sheeting rolls (100m)	Tarpaulins
Nsanje	3	662	-	-
Mangochi	3	338	60	-
Chikwawa	3	1,500	-	752
Machinga	3	-	60	-
Ntheu	3	-	70	-
Total	15	2,500	190	752

A total of 50 blankets were distributed in Nkhatabay District to 50 affected households. The blankets were obtained from MRCS stocks donated by AJASA in a bilateral agreement with the NS.

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Provision of temporary latrines

A total of 190 rolls of plastic sheeting were distributed to the affected households. Each household received ten metres, hence 1,900 households benefited. In all the camping sites, latrines were already constructed by the government. Thus the plastic sheeting was distributed for use in constructing temporary shelter and roofing during reconstruction of beneficiaries' houses after the floodwaters receded.

Disaster response stocks

The disaster management department of the MRCS has managed to stock the following items for preparedness, with support of the DREF funding:

- 2,500 tarpaulins;
- 15 family tents, 5 tents (with 40-50 people capacity); 2 tents (50 - 100 people capacity);
- 27 rolls of plastic sheeting (100m each);
- 5 plastic buckets (20 litres each).

Impact

- The Red Cross volunteers well-managed the camps for displaced people. This ensured that there were no waterborne disease outbreaks.
- The displaced communities were adequately sheltered and had access to clean water and sanitation facilities.
- Hygiene standards were well-maintained in the relocation camps. Affected communities had protection from adverse weather and animals.
- With housing being a basic need and a right, the affected communities were granted their rights.

Lesson learned

The DREF allocation allowed the NS to respond rapidly to the needs of the people affected by the floods. The national society was able to respond effectively and efficiently by distributing food and non-food items. The Malawi Red Cross Society recommends that relief materials should be procured through the regional delegation logistic department in order to enhance prompt response to emergency operations. However, there is need for the national society to always hold reasonable relief materials in the warehouse to facilitate immediate disaster responses.

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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.

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