
Emergency appeal n° MDRLS003 GLIDE n° OT-2012-000155-LSO 27 November 2012

Period covered by this Ops Update:
15 October 2012 – 20 November 2012

Appeal target (current): This emergency Appeal seeks CHF 1,119,000 in cash, kind, or services to support the Lesotho Red Cross Society (LRCS) to assist 8,000 beneficiaries (1,600 households) for 9 months, and will be completed by July 2013.

Appeal coverage: 0% [<click here to go directly to the updated donor response report; or here to link to contact details >](#)

Appeal history:

- An [Emergency Appeal](#) was launched on 15 October, 2012.
- CHF 100,000 was allocated from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the National Society to start up activities and be able to provide immediate assistance. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.
- A detailed household needs assessment was undertaken between 16 – 20 October 2012 with the support of the British Red Cross Household Economic Security (HES) Analyst to consolidate and deepen the understanding of the existing food security and livelihoods to feed into planning and implementation of the 9 month emergency appeal.
- An [Operation update](#) was issued on 31 October 2012, to provide further information on the situation and the needs that were given in the Emergency Appeal document as a result of the Household Economic Survey (HES) workshop.



People have been depending on their homestead garden for a long time with more seeds needed for reseeded - Photo/LRCS

Summary: While food prices, especially maize meal, continue to soar, the official number of people currently in need of food is 725,515. Most of the affected people are struggling to plant their fields due to scarcity of agricultural inputs despite government initiative to subsidize such inputs. Most of the inputs come from South Africa in quantities that are not enough to cover the whole population.

During the reporting period, an in-depth needs assessment was undertaken with the support of the British Red Cross Household Economic expert. In preparation for the assessment, a training workshop was conducted on Household Economic Security assessment to strengthen the capacity of the National Society in this area.

As a result of the support from the British Red Cross funded HES expert, the needs have been further analysed. Food sources, income sources and expenditure of each wealth group (very poor, poor, middle and better off) in each livelihood zone (e.g. highlands, lowlands etc.) were explored and the impacts of each hazard on the food and income sources across the wealth groups and livelihood zones.

Disbursement of the DREF allocation has now taken place and implementation of activities can begin.

LRCS is aiming to distribute food aid to a total of 1,600 families (8,000 beneficiaries) in a period of six months, and further strengthen household livelihood recovery through provision of agricultural starter packs for both field and garden crops. To build the community resilience, the appeal operation will also cover disaster risk reduction activities which include climate change adaptation techniques.

To date, no funds have yet been received for this appeal. Donors are strongly urged to provide the necessary support, as needs are critical and on-going. In particular, the window for preparing fields and planting new crops is short and needs to be capitalised on immediately in order to ensure that families have new crops and therefore on-going food supplies.

The situation

While food prices, especially maize meal, continue to soar, the official number of people currently in need of food is 725,515. Most of the affected people are struggling to plant their fields due to scarcity of agricultural inputs despite government initiative to subsidize such inputs. Most of the inputs come from South Africa in quantities that are not enough to cover the whole population.

The country is continuously experiencing below normal rainfall which also makes it difficult to start planting.

The appeal was launched on 15 October; however implementation has been compromised by the late disbursement of funds. DREF funding has since been disbursed.

Meetings were held between LRCS and WFP, FAO and UNICEF to establish areas of collaboration. Though no conclusion reached yet, there is a possibility of partnering with WFP for food distribution in one district (Mokhotlong) in the northern part of the country. The discussion is to continue in the week of 19 November 2012.

Agricultural production has dramatically decreased across Lesotho in recent months and severe food insecurity is affecting all ten districts of the country, including the mountainous areas, the foothills and the low lands. More than 725,000 people are at serious risk of food insecurity.

The Government of Lesotho (GoL) declared an Emergency Food Crisis on 9 August and launched an appeal for M 303,872,392 (USD 37,984,049), to support the distribution of approximately MT 61,885 of maize (using current rural maize prices). The Prime Minister has also officially called for international assistance through an UN flash appeal for USD 151 million launched on 13 September 2012. Currently the GoL is undertaking a massive targeting exercise in the 10 districts through the Disaster Management Authority to establish a proper distribution intervention. In support of these national efforts, LRCS launched an appeal amounting to CHF 1,119, 000 million.

The appeal was launched based on the information obtained through the Lesotho VAC assessment and LRCS's own experience and assessments via their divisional and branch network. The LRCS response will focus on five of the most vulnerable districts, where needs are great including already existing expertise and capacity in dealing with food insecurity and provision of other integrated support to vulnerable communities. The five districts are Mokhotlong, Mafeteng, Quthing, Thaba-Tseka and part of Maseru (Foothills). There is no overlap of these operational areas with those in other affected districts where other actors who are working.

LRCS has already been providing integrated food security and home-based care / prevention programmes (for PLWHA) in the five districts, with support from partner National Societies. Therefore, this appeal will enable the scaling up of such food security activities and provide emergency and longer-term assistance to a wider group of vulnerable people in these communities.

Coordination and partnerships

Remain as reported in the [Emergency Appeal](#)

National Society Capacity Building:

LRCS has significant capacity in emergency operations, the most recent being the floods occurring early in 2011 and the first phase of the food insecurity operation from February to June 2012. The society has also been working in longer-term food security for some time, through an integrated approach of building food security in target communities integrated with home-based care and support to the most vulnerable in the communities, particularly those suffering from HIV/AIDS.

As part of this programme – already set up in the five most vulnerable and targeted districts of Mokhotlong, Thaba-Tseka, Mafeteng, Quthing and Maseru – LRCS has set up a system of working with volunteers (lead farmers) in the community. The farmers are selected by each community and trained in agricultural practices, up-to-date techniques, food preservation, agricultural conservation, small livestock management and food & nutrition, thereafter passing the techniques to direct and indirect beneficiaries across the whole community. They also support and monitor the subsequent implementation of the improved farming techniques in the community. This is done in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, who support this work through resource centres and their outreach workers.

The agriculture extension model of lead farmers has yielded positive results for food security and through this emergency appeal, LRCS wants to extend the reach and impact of this approach to provide more urgent support to a wider number of communities and community members.

LRCS has permanent Divisional offices, with active committees, divisional secretaries and Disaster Action Teams comprised of at least five people per team, in all the ten districts of the country. In the five affected districts, there is further human capacity comprised of Food Security and Home Based Care officers and volunteers with extensive knowledge on community mobilisation, beneficiaries' selection, verification and registration with extended skills in food distribution and post distribution monitoring.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

CHF 100,000 has been allocated from the DREF to the current emergency appeal to allow the LRCS to start up relief activities and provide assistance to some of the most vulnerable communities. The funds have been disbursed and activities on the ground will pick up shortly.

The Household Economic Security (HES) assessment and training workshop was conducted in Lesotho to consolidate and deepen existing analysis of food security and livelihoods. The HES expert spent 5 days with the national society. The workshop combined theory and practice over five days and focused on strengthening analysis and planning for the 9 month appeal. The methodology used during the assessment included collection of primary and secondary information, field visits and observation. Tools used include direct interviews with key informants (local authorities, lead gardeners and care facilitators) and communities (focus groups disaggregated by gender).

Among the main findings of the assessment was that;

- Community priorities entail improved knowledge on production, storage and marketing; conservation agriculture; stronger community based organisations for savings, loans, and production; income generating activities; inputs such as seeds and tools.
- Middle and better off households are more directly affected by drought related production losses while poorer households are indirectly affected through loss of food or income earning opportunities from agricultural labour for the middle/better off.
- Market purchase is an essential food source for all households and availability of food is never a problem, even in drought years. However, poorer households have access problems because of their comparatively limited purchasing power, especially with food prices increasing.
- Very poor and poor are most affected by agricultural production shocks because their production is already low and losses can be total, whereas middle and better off households can have other holdings, food reserves, etc. This includes drought and frosts (where they lose seed stock that other households might have in reserve).
- Middle and better off households cope with agricultural losses to food and income sources by storing reserves and not selling, in addition to utilising household labour instead of employing poorer households. Hiring others for domestic work and giving gifts are also both reduced.
- Poorer households cope with reduced agricultural labour, domestic work, and gifts by increasing what they can and depending more generally on sharing within the community – even from other poor households.

- Very poor and poor affected more by livestock diseases because of the potential to lose all of the few animals they have, whereas other households lose a portion of their stock. This is happening this year because of drought.

Progress towards outcomes

Start-up activities have commenced with the disbursement of the DREF funds.

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)	
Outcome: 1,600 food insecure families in the five regions are provided with emergency assistance for a period of three months with on-going evaluation to determine if further assistance is required	
Outputs (expected results)	Activities planned
1,600 households (8,000 people) are provided with appropriate food items distribution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide initial support for assessment and planning through the Africa Zone Food Security coordinator and the HES delegate from British Red Cross; • Deploy HES delegate to assist LRCS in training and conducting a detailed emergency needs and capacity assessments in Mokhotlong, Thaba-Tseka, Maseru, Mafeteng and Quthing to start up the operation; • Develop beneficiary targeting strategy and registration system to deliver intended assistance; • Procure food for food distribution through local sources (regional if there are pricing issues); • Deliver food distributions to beneficiaries in coordination with other actors (13.5kg maize meal, 1.8kg pulses, 0.9 gms vegetable oil, 0.45 gms salt per person per month); • Monitor and evaluate the relief activities and provide reporting on relief distributions.

Logistics

Outcome: text (bold) paste the original outcome (or if revised)	
Outputs (expected results)	Activities planned
LRCS, with support from the Africa Zone, has coordinated the procurement, storage, transport and distribution of relief items, ensuring efficient delivery to beneficiaries at final distributed points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient and cost-effective procurement of food and seeds locally (or in the region if prices rise) meeting procurement standards and procedures; • IFRC logistics delegate to support the tender and selection process for seeds and food purchases along with national society counterpart • Provision of logistics support to LRCS branches to deliver the appropriate assistance (vehicles for transportation of goods and monitoring, warehouse rental/storage etc); • Control of the efficient movement of goods to the end user; • Provide logistics technical capacity through short-term delegate and/or RDRT support.

Progress and challenges:

As the operation has only recently been initiated, to date, assessment and start up activities have been undertaken. A Plan of Action has been prepared and is being shared internally for feedback and will be ready for publishing shortly.

Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

LRCS through its Communications Manager and with technical support from the IFRC's Southern Africa regional office (SARO) will conduct awareness and publicity activities including field trips to sensitise the public and the media on the situation on the ground and the humanitarian response provided by the National Society.

The SARO will play an important role of linking together across all food security operations in the region to ensure that these activities are replicated where possible and that lessons learned are applied and advocated to PNS, government and non-government fora.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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For Performance and Accountability (planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting)

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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

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The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.