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DREF operation update Bangladesh: Cold Wave

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Emergency appeal n° MDRBD012 GLIDE n° CW-2013-000001-BGD Operation update n°2 20 February 2013

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) 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 and Red Crescent emergency response. 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.

A total of CHF 296,678 was allocated from IFRC DREF to support the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) to provide immediate assistance of 30,000 blankets distribution to 15,000 cold affected families across 21 districts. The DREF also supported additional 9,000 blankets as preparedness stock.

This operation is expected to be implemented for three months, and will therefore be completed by 3 April 2013. A Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 3 July 2013). For more information, click [here](#).

Distribution had begun with 30,000 blankets mobilized from BDRCS/International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) joint disaster preparedness stock and BDRCS's own stock. Following a call for deployment, ten national disaster response team (NDRT) members were deployed on 5 January 2013 for ten days to assist BDRCS concerned units in beneficiary selection and distribution. During the distribution, BDRCS/IFRC conducted a needs assessment in the most affected districts. Report of the assessment has been shared with the humanitarian country task team (HCTT) as a reference for humanitarian response decision by the response agencies to increase the assistance coverage. With the help from NDRT, the BDRCS district units have completed distribution of 30,000 blankets from DREF contribution by 17 January 2013. Apart from DREF contribution BDRCS distributed another 14,000 blankets received through in-kind donation (IKD) from the in-country Movement partners, business community, corporate sectors and individuals. Process for replenishment of 30,000 blankets is in progress.



Blanket distribution in Jamalpur district by BDRCS district unit.
Photo: Bangladesh Red Crescent Society.

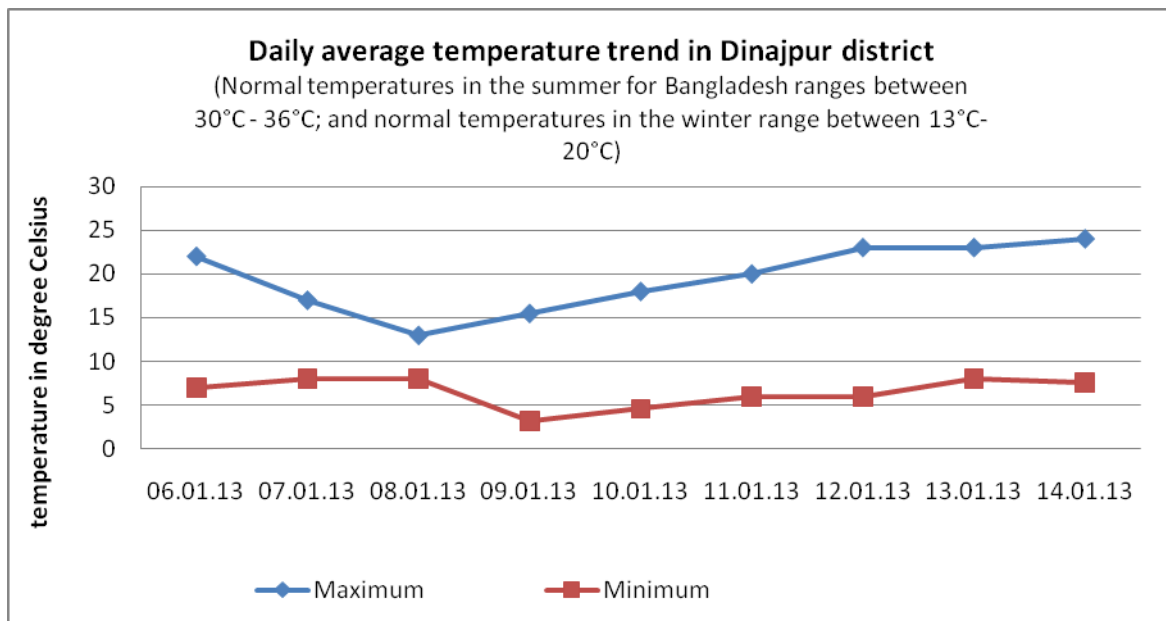
IFRC, on behalf of BDRCS, would like to extend gratitude to all donors and partners for their generous contributions. Details of the contributions to this DREF can be found on www.ifrc.org/dref.

The situation

Bangladesh experienced cold weather (temperatures dropped to 7°C - 9°C) since mid-December 2012, affecting the poor people, particularly in 22 districts (Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Dinajpur, Nilphamary, Lalmonirhat, Rangpur, Kurigram, Gaibandha, Bogra, Joypurhat, Naogaon, Nawabganj, Rajshahi, Natore, Sirajganj, Pabna, Mymensing in the north, Moulvibazar in the east and certain districts in the south, namely Kushtia, Jessore, Faridpur and Madaripur). The average temperature recorded in the cold affected area was between 16°C - 25°C during the December and January period. The cold wave struck the northern districts of the sub-Himalayan regions of Bangladesh, claiming more than 72 lives as per the assessment data of the BDRCS and local administration, mostly children due to hypothermia. Hospitals in the affected districts reported an increase in the number of admissions for cold weather-related illness, particularly children, women and the elderly. Poor and homeless people are more susceptible to the cold wave as they do not have the means to keep themselves warm.

Furthermore, the cold wave has caused crop and other natural resource losses, which will have a longer term negative impact on Bangladesh's economy. Winter crop failures will result in greater poverty, poor dwellings, and seasonal unemployment (especially agricultural or farming sectors). According to the representative of the Dinajpur district meteorological office on 9 January 2013, the minimum temperature of Dinajpur in 2013 fell to 3.2 degree Celsius (on 9 January) which is the lowest in the last four decades. It was estimated that temperatures may reach a high of 3 degrees Celsius, while projection up to 12 January shows that temperatures in Dinajpur will remain below 5 degree Celsius.

Later, an average temperature trend graph was produced for Dinajpur district on 15 January which showed that the minimum temperature remains far below than the normal winter temperature range.



The movement of vehicle on roads and highways remains restricted as thick layers of fogs covered the air reducing visibility. Due to this heavy fog, ferry services, port schedule and air traffic schedules were heavily disrupted as of 10 January 2013. A large number of passengers suffered extreme hardship, as trucks, buses and private cars remain stranded. Around 400 loaded trucks and 200 passenger buses were stranded on both sides of the river.

The most vulnerable people to the cold wave are the marginal poor of rural area. The government has no such estimation or indication about the total number of affected people as the damage is not visible like floods or cyclones. There has been some consensus among district level Red Crescent representatives as well as some government officials that BDRCS can take the total number of vulnerable group feeding (VGF)

card holder people as the total most vulnerable due to the cold wave as these populations are considered to be the marginal or ultra-poor of society. In terms of geographical settings, people residing near river or bodies of water can be considered as the most affected as cold winds and fog are concentrated more in these areas. In terms of severity of the cold wave, women, children and the elderly are the most affected. The poverty rate in the country stands highest in the northern districts of Rangpur and Rajshahi where more than 50 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line as per the map prepared jointly by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), World Food Programme and World Bank. According to the map, the north-western districts imply the largest proportion of the population below the poverty line. These populations are the most vulnerable as their capacity and arrangement to protect them from cold wave is not enough. In this context the needs are:

- Warm cloths like blankets, shawl, woolen cap.
- Basic medical support for the children and older people suffering from cold related diseases, especially in the area lacking basic health facilities.
- Short term agricultural support to the marginal farmers to restore IRR1 paddy and potato cultivation.

The government has allocated 313,608 blankets throughout the country. However, the government assistance is inadequate to cover a large number of affected populations. In addition to the government distribution, several humanitarian organizations including university students, business community and local NGOs have responded to people affected by the cold wave by providing warm clothes to the rural and urban poor.

Bangladesh is not a severely cold-prone country except during the short winter season when the average temperature remains 13°C-20°C. People of Bangladesh were used to this cold but when the mercury dropped to single figure temperature, then the cold weather comes as a disaster. This phenomenon has been happening in the last few years, but this year the duration of the single figure temperature has been long and also triggered chilly winds which have carried fog. In particular, the situation in north and north-western is severe. Initially the response was fragile, and then it improved.. It is time to take necessary action to consider this cold wave as a disaster and take preparedness and response action because this event will happen again in the coming years due to the climate change effect.

Coordination and partnerships

BDRCS with support from IFRC has established coordination with in-country Movement partners and traditional donors like DG Echo for providing assistance to the cold wave affected population. A total of 20,000 blankets from BDRCS stock and 10,000 from the BDRCS/IFRC joint stock have been dispatched immediately as the impact intensified. BDRCS/IFRC has coordinated with other humanitarian agencies as Muslim Aid, Action Aid, UNDP and the DG Echo to keep track on the updates to support affected population to avoid any duplication on the ground. IFRC has updated BDRCS's response to the humanitarian cluster on early recovery to guide a coordinated response. Distribution information has been sent to the government's disaster management information centre (DMIC).

Discussions were also held with Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief in targeting geographic locations. BDRCS units of most affected districts in Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions, have maintained contact with district administrations for identifying remote locations uncovered by the government or other organizations. BDRCS national headquarters have communicated with the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) to monitor the weather pattern changes. BDRCS is collecting situation updates from different agencies including the network for information, response and preparedness activities on disaster (NIRAPAD). Since BDRCS/IFRC is active members of the Disaster Emergency Response (DER) group, information and operation updates have been shared with other humanitarian agencies and the national government in order to avoid any distribution overlap.

Humanitarian cluster on early recovery has been updating the 3W mapping to plot the gap and facilitate a coordinated response. BDRCS/IFRC conducted an assessment in the most affected districts and the report has been shared in the HCTT meeting.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

BDRCS and IFRC have been closely monitoring the situation. The BDRCS response department conducted an assessment on the situation through its units offices located in northern, eastern and north-eastern parts of the country. Discussions had been held between IFRC and DG Echo on the current cold wave situation in the country as well as possible interventions. A total of 20,000 blankets from BDRCS stock and 10,000 from the BDRCS/IFRC joint disaster preparedness (DP) stock have been dispatched immediately as the impact intensified. NDRT members have been deployed to assist local units for response operation. BDRCS request for possible response to the cold wave situation in the country was discussed in the Movement partners' coordination meetings. During this reporting period BDRCS distributed 44,000 blankets throughout the country including the DREF contribution of 30,000 in 21 most affected districts.

Progress towards outcomes

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

Outcome: 75,000 severely affected people or 15,000 families receive blankets (two blankets/family) in 21 districts.

Output: Families received blankets are better protected from the effect of cold wave

Activities planned:

- Door to door assessments.
- Beneficiary registration.
- Dispatch and transportation of blankets by BDRCS to the distribution sites.
- Storage and distribution of blankets, especially at unit level.
- Distribution of blankets by trained Red Crescent Youth volunteers.
- Regular detailed monitoring and reporting of distribution of blankets.
- Procurement and replenishment of 39,000 blankets through IFRC Asia Pacific Zone Logistic Unit.

- A total of 20,000 blankets from BDRCS stock and 10,000 from the IFRC/BDRCS joint stock have been dispatched immediately for distribution to cold wave affected 15,000 families in priority districts of northern Bangladesh. These 30,000 blankets will be replenished through the DREF.
- In addition to the 30,000 blankets available, BDRCS has launched an appeal to the nation for donation either in the form of cash or IKD from potential local institutions like banks, garments factories, and mobile phone companies as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) wings by which they have provisions to support vulnerable people. As of 30 January 2013, BDRCS has distributed around 14,000 blankets for 7,000 families received as IKD from the business community, CSR, individuals, etc in the central and western parts of the country.
- Distribution of blankets has started from 4 January 2013 in three most affected districts of Panchagar, Thakurgaon and Dinajpur where blankets were dispatched by BDRCS as priority basis. Following a call for deployment, ten NDRT members were deployed on 5 January 2013 for ten days to assist BDRCS concerned units in beneficiary selection and distribution. Distribution of 30,000 blankets in 21 districts has been completed on 17 January 2013.

Tab: District-wise allocation

Sl	Unit	NoF (Number of families)	Status
1	Panchagar	1,000	Distribution completed
2	Thakurgaon	500	Distribution completed
3	Dinazpur	1,000	Distribution completed
4	Rangpur	1,000	Distribution completed
5	Lalmonirhat	500	Distribution completed
6	Kurigram	1,000	Distribution completed
7	Nilphamari	500	Distribution completed
8	Gaibandha	1,000	Distribution completed
9	Rajshahi	500	Distribution completed
10	Rajshahi City	500	Distribution completed
11	C.Nawabganj	1,000	Distribution completed

12	Pabna	500	Distribution completed
13	Natore	500	Distribution completed
14	Gopalganj	500	Distribution completed
15	Manikgonj	500	Distribution completed
16	Jamalpur	500	Distribution completed
17	Sirajgonj	500	Distribution completed
18	Jessore	1,000	Distribution completed
19	Magura	1,000	Distribution completed
20	Jhenaidah	500	Distribution completed
21	Chuadanga	1,000	Distribution completed
	Total	15,000	

- During the distribution BDRCS/IFRC conducted a need assessment in the most affected districts. Report of the assessment has been shared with the HCTT as a reference for humanitarian response decision by the response agencies to increase the assistance coverage.
- In terms of geographical settings the people residing near rivers or bodies of water were considered the most affected as cold winds and fog concentrate more in these are. In terms of population type, women, children and the elderly are the most affected.
- VGD /VGF beneficiaries of the government social safety net programme who belong to the lowest poverty line were considered most for blankets.
- BDRCS concerned district units and Red Cross Youth were engaged in beneficiary selection and distribution of blankets.

Table: PoA-distribution of blankets and replenishment (Dec-Feb 2012)

Activity	Time frame			Remarks
	Dec	Jan	Feb	
Rapid assessment				
Mobilization of unit volunteers for selection of beneficiaries				
Dispatching of 30,000 blankets from BDRCS/IFRC stock				
Selection and registration of beneficiary families				
Mobilization of NDRT				
Distribution of beneficiary card				
Distribution of blankets				
Procurement of blankets for replenishment				
Reporting/updates				
	<i>Update</i>	<i>Update</i>	<i>Update</i>	

Contact information

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2. Click [here](#) to return to the title page

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 (NGO's) 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.

Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2013/1
Budget Timeframe	2013/1-4
Appeal	MDRBD012
Budget	APPROVED

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

I. Funding

	Disaster Management	Health and Social Services	National Society Development	Principles and Values	Coordination	TOTAL	Deferred Income
A. Budget	296,679					296,679	
B. Opening Balance	0					0	
Income							
<u>Other Income</u>							
<i>DREF Allocations</i>	296,679					296,679	
C4. Other Income	296,679					296,679	
C. Total Income = SUM(C1..C4)	296,679					296,679	
D. Total Funding = B +C	296,679					296,679	
Coverage = D/A	100%					100%	

II. Movement of Funds

	Disaster Management	Health and Social Services	National Society Development	Principles and Values	Coordination	TOTAL	Deferred Income
B. Opening Balance	0					0	
C. Income	296,679					296,679	
E. Expenditure	-130,727					-130,727	
F. Closing Balance = (B + C + E)	165,952					165,952	

III. Expenditure

Account Groups	Budget	Expenditure					TOTAL	Variance
		Disaster Management	Health and Social Services	National Society Development	Principles and Values	Coordination		
	A						B	A - B
BUDGET (C)		296,679					296,679	
Relief items, Construction, Supplies								
Clothing & Textiles	278,571	114,139					114,139	164,432
Total Relief items, Construction, Supplies	278,571	114,139					114,139	164,432
Logistics, Transport & Storage								
Logistics Services		8,609					8,609	-8,609
Total Logistics, Transport & Storage		8,609					8,609	-8,609
Indirect Costs								
Programme & Services Support Recov	18,107	7,979					7,979	10,128
Total Indirect Costs	18,107	7,979					7,979	10,128
TOTAL EXPENDITURE (D)	296,679	130,727					130,727	165,951
VARIANCE (C - D)		165,951					165,951	