

DREF Bulletin Update



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

CAMEROON: CHOLERA IN BAFOUSSAM

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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 update: 10 May to 27 June 2006.

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

- CHF 38,000 was allocated from the Federation's DREF on 9 May 2006 to respond to the needs of this operation, or to replenish disaster preparedness stocks distributed to the affected population.
- This operation was expected to be implemented for two months; a DREF Bulletin Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation.

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.

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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.

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 current situation

In April 2006, a cholera epidemic was declared in Bafoussam, west Cameroon, after cases of cholera-related diarrhoea identified on 12 March 2006 were confirmed by the Centre Pasteur of Cameroon. The disease spread so fast that by 24 April, 79 new cases had already been recorded, including eight deaths. The spread of the disease was rapid because only a fraction of the Bafoussam population has access to potable water. For over a year now, the latrines of the Bafoussam prison, which is located up stream of the town, have been overflowing and contaminating the source of water consumed by the local population.

Following the outbreak, administrative and health authorities together with the Cameroon Red Cross Society (CRCS) conducted activities to contain its spread. These activities, conducted with the effective participation of affected communities, have had a positive impact and on 16 June 2006, the local health authorities declared that the epidemic was under control.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Immediately the outbreak was declared, the CRCS – assisted by the Federation Central Africa sub-regional office (CASRO) – launched an advocacy campaign for various authorities and partners. Activities are ongoing and the national society (NS) is looking for potential agencies capable of draining the latrines of the Bafoussam prison; this activity is funded by the British Council. 75 CRCS volunteers have been trained in behaviour change communication (BCC) while 50 associations have been identified and sensitized through traditional leaders and visits at their meeting places.



Photo right: CRCS volunteers receiving training on BCC

The local population participated effectively in sensitization campaigns, by asking questions. From 21 to 23 June 2006, a joint CRCS/CASRO team travelled to Bafoussam to assess the situation. The CRCS volunteers met with the chief of Baleng and asked him to identify sites where water points would be built for the population. A committee has been set up to manage the water points that will be built. The committee's duty will be to organize human investment and public sanitation sessions within their communities, under the supervision of the Mifi divisional committee of the CRCS.

A company, 2 Power-Konsultants, has been chosen out of four other companies to build two water points in Ndionkou and Lagouen. Engineers have been briefed on the necessity to involve the community as much as possible in every step of the project.

An environmental sanitation plan of action (PoA) has been developed. Thus, about 20 water points and five latrines have been cleaned, others have been rehabilitated and 12 water puddle pools have been drained. The CRCS volunteers also carried out refuse disposal with the contribution of local communities. A total of 9,000 people have been sensitized. In addition, the community adopted a human investment programme for environmental sanitation.

Planned activities

- Building water points for the benefit of vulnerable communities who are using unsafe water.
- Consolidating the ARCHI 2010 Strategy that was launched in Bafoussam one year ago, during a previous cholera outbreak.
- Pursuing advocacy activities to make sure that cholera does not re-occur in Bafoussam.

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