

DREF operation update



Benin: Severe storms

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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 and 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.

Period covered by this update: 5 May to 31 May, 2009.

Summary: CHF 21,010 (USD 19,798 or EUR 13,744) was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 5 May, 2009 to support the Red Cross of Benin in delivering assistance to some 300 beneficiaries.

The Red Cross of Benin (RCB) continued to provide assistance to the people affected by the severe storms that caused heavy material damage in Challa Ogoï community of Ouessè. The National Society procured some building materials for distribution to 60 selected most affected households. The National Society organized a training session for 10 selected Red Cross volunteers to carry out distribution and sensitization on good hygiene and sanitation practices in the affected community. The Red Cross collaborated with the local chiefs and authorities for an effective intervention. No major constraints have been recorded during this reporting period apart from the difficulty the volunteers have faced to get to the venue for the training.

The operation was expected to be implemented over two months and completed by 4 July, 2009. In line with Federation reporting standards, the Final Report (narrative and financial) is 90 days after the end of the operation (by 3 October, 2009).

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Some of the construction materials procured for distribution /Red Cross of Benin

The situation

The severe storms that occurred during the last week of April 2009 in Benin caused heavy material damage in Challa Ogoï in Ouessè community of the Collines region. An estimated 95 residential houses including a school had their roof partially or completely destroyed by the storms. The heavy downpour that followed the storms resulted in the collapse of some of the mud made houses. According to the RCB, more than 800

persons including children and elderly were affected with over 475 were accommodated by family members or friends. Some 95 houses have been severely affected by the disaster.

The situation in some households sheltering the affected people was becoming of concern as their houses were overcrowded. They were living in very poor conditions and the rain was exposing them to epidemics such as malaria, cholera, diarrhea and some other water borne diseases. The local authorities called for humanitarian assistance. The local branch of the Red Cross carried out a preliminary assessment to know the extent of damages and discussed with local authorities as for the assistance to the most affected families.

Coordination and partnerships

The Red Cross of Benin as the only humanitarian organization assisting the affected community held meetings with local authorities, community leaders and the head of the affected primary school. The meetings focused on the assistance to the community and the elaboration of a plan of action for its intervention. A meeting was held with the Mayor to share the plan of action. In appreciating the RCB's actions, the Mayor promised to provide some tons of cement to support the efforts of the Red Cross.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Progress towards objectives

Relief distributions (basic non-food items)

Objective: To assist 60 selected households (300 persons) and the community school to improve their living conditions through the distribution of construction materials to repair their houses and the school building.

Activities planned

- Procure and distribute 840 corrugated iron roofing sheets, 900 pieces of wood, 70 kg of assorted nails, 150 rolls of wire;
- Conduct refresher course for 10 volunteers on relief distribution methods;
- Ensure that beneficiaries make effective use of the items received.

Progress and impact

The Red Cross of Benin made tender for some construction materials. The National Society applied its administrative and financial procedures during the process. It procured 840 corrugated iron sheets, 900 pieces of wood, 70 kg of nails and 150 rolls of wire. These items were distributed to the selected 60 households and the school identified as the most affected areas by the disaster.

The Red Cross conducted one-day training in distribution techniques of non-food relief items to 10 Red Cross volunteers. These volunteers selected from the local branch of Ouèssè have increased their knowledge on the identification, registration of beneficiaries and the distribution techniques based on the International Federation standards and best practices. The training enhanced the participants' skills in the use of some distribution tools. The training also strengthened the capacity of the local branch on how to carry out a relevant analysis of disaster in their community to prepare a small scale contingency plan.

For a better organization of the distribution, the RCB conducted another assessment to update the registration list. The identification and registration of the 60 selected households were carried out on the basis of the following criteria: vulnerability, household affected with children under five, pregnant women and the elderly. After this exercise, the National Society displayed the list of the selected households on a public notice board.

Challenges: The local branch of the Red Cross had not been very active before the disaster. The affected community is also in a remote area with villages that are far from one another. All these challenges impacted on the training conducted as the selected volunteers had to travel from their different villages to attend the training session.

Sanitation, and hygiene promotion

Objective: To contribute to improving the knowledge of the community in good hygiene and sanitation practices.

Activities planned:

- Sensitize the target population on good hygiene and sanitation behaviour;
- Conduct refresher training in hygiene and sanitation promotion for 10 Red Cross volunteers;
- Sensitize the target population on environmental issues such as tree planting;
- Carry out monitoring visits to ensure continuation of good hygiene and sanitation practices in the target community.

Progress and impact: The Red Cross strengthened the capacity of 10 selected Red Cross volunteers in water, hygiene and sanitation promotion. They also enhanced their knowledge in sensitizing the community people on tree planting and its environmental importance. This was helpful during the sensitization phase of the operation related to good hygiene and sanitation.

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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