

DREF operation update



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Gabon: Violent winds

DREF operation n° MDRGA002
GLIDE n° VW-2009-000079-GAB
Update n° 1
09 June, 2009

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: 20 April to 30 May, 2009.

Summary: CHF 58,070 (USD 51,113 or EUR 38,518) was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 20 April, 2009 to support the Gabonese Red Cross Society in delivering assistance to some 800 beneficiaries.

The funds allocated enabled the Gabonese Red Cross Society to distribute non-food items to some 800 beneficiaries (160 families) affected by violent winds in Libreville and Mouila. Red Cross volunteers also intensified the sensitization of the populations to the measures to be taken during violent winds. In addition to the non-food items, Red Cross volunteers also distributed CFA F 10,000 (CHF 25) to each of the 160 families, which they used to buy corrugated iron roofing sheet metals and/or bags of cement to help restore the houses that have been damaged.



Distribution of NFI by the Red Cross volunteers/Gabon
Red Cross/Edou Constant, DM Officer

The major donors to the DREF are the Irish, Italian, Netherlands and Norwegian governments and ECHO. Details of all donors can be found on:
<http://www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/responding/drs/tools/dref/donors.asp>

[<click here to view contact details>](#)

The situation

Since the end of February, Gabon was exposed to torrential rains accompanied by floods and violent winds, particularly in Libreville and in the localities of Mouila council. So far, the hundreds of affected people have been assisted by the Gabonese Red Cross Society alone, with the funds allocated from the DREF. The proposed plan of action is being implemented as planned. Non-food items have been distributed, and sensitization sessions are ongoing to help reduce the risks of violent winds. There are many more affected people awaiting relief assistance, and Gabon Red Cross authorities are pursuing their advocacy activities before Government to make sure that the other vulnerable people are assisted.

Coordination and partnerships

The Ministry of Social Affairs has been sharing all the information related to the disaster with the Red Cross which, however, is the only organization assisting affected people in the field so far. Unfortunately, Red Cross action is not sufficient to meet the needs of all the victims. The crisis committee that was set up by Government to manage the disaster is not operational. This committee is yet to take its first action in favour of the affected people identified by the various ministries members of the committee. Nevertheless, Government took part in the official ceremony to launch the Red Cross operation, and congratulated the NS for their support in alleviating the sufferings of vulnerable people.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Progress towards objectives

Relief distributions (basic non-food items)
Objective: To contribute to improving the lives of 800 most vulnerable people affected by the winds in Libreville and Mouila.
Activities planned: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize a training session for volunteers on distribution techniques; • Purchase 320 treated mosquito nets, 160 tarpaulins, 160 kitchen sets, 320 blankets, 320 mats, and 1,600 balls of soap of 200g; • Distribute the NFI to the identified vulnerable; • Produce reports on distribution activities.

Progress

Forty Gabon Red Cross volunteers and five opinion leaders (heads of neighborhoods) have been trained on common distribution techniques in Libreville and Mouila. The training was facilitated by the regional disaster management team member who has been deployed in Gabon to assist the National Society in implementing this operation. All the NFI have been purchased and distributed to the 160 most vulnerable families identified as planned, on the basis of 93 families in Libreville and 67 families in Mouila. The non-food items included 320 treated mosquito nets, 60 tarpaulins, 160 kitchen sets, 320 blankets, and 1,600 balls of soap of 200g. Each of the 160 most vulnerable families have also received the sum of CHF 25 to help purchase materials for the rehabilitation of their houses that have been damaged by the violent winds. These materials included corrugated iron roofing sheets and/or bags of cement.

The following table summarizes the distribution as it unfolded in the field:

Locality	Number of families	Mosquito nets	Blankets	Cooking kits	Tarpaulins	Soap
Libreville At the headquarters of the Gabon Red Cross Society	93	253	218	93	30	427
Mouila : « Maison des Sœurs de la Trinité »	67	67	102	67	30	370
Total	160	320	320	160	60	1,600

Challenges:

An increase in the prices of tarpaulins occurred in the local market, and the funds available enabled to purchase only 60 tarpaulins instead of 160 as indicated in the initial DREF Bulletin. The National Society then had to define new criteria for the distribution. To that effect, they targeted families with pregnant women or children under five identified as the most vulnerable. The other challenge was linked with the identification of the most vulnerable because almost all the people affected are in need for assistance. Joint efforts by Government and Red Cross authorities facilitated this identification. The distribution was delayed by the rain in Mouila and some of the activities planned are ongoing.

Water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion

Objective: To contribute to promoting environmental hygiene to avoid epidemic outbreaks.

Activities planned:

- Conduct a training session for volunteers on hygiene and sanitation promotion;
- Assist the affected populations to cut the trunks of trees to retrieve their belongings;
- Assist to clean up roads blocked by the trunks;
- Organize awareness sessions on what how to face further disasters and ensure hygiene in temporary shelters;
- Sensitize populations to hygiene and sanitation rules;
- Purchase and distribute 1,600 balls of soap of 200g and 10 cleaning tools;
- Produce activities report.

Progress

Forty Gabonese Red Cross Society volunteers and five opinion leaders (heads of neighborhoods) have been trained on the techniques of communication for the change of behavior (CCB) linked with poor hygiene and sanitation conditions in Libreville and Mouila. The training was facilitated by the regional disaster management team (RDRT) member who has been deployed in Gabon to assist the National Society in implementing this operation. The trained volunteers have been carrying out door-to-door sensitization sessions on hygiene and sanitation once a week since 20 April, 2009. This activity has so far contributed to reducing the risk of diseases associated with risky behaviors.

In the absence of adequate tools like a cutting-off machine, Gabon red Cross volunteers cut off the trunks of trees blocking the way, using machetes. Ten cleaning kits have been purchased and distributed to the affected people, on the basis of three in Mouila and seven in Libreville. The populations have been using these kits for the weekly sensitization sessions, especially in the affected markets and schools of Libreville and Mouila. Out of the 1,600 pieces of soap that were purchased, 797 were distributed in the above-mentioned distribution sites, and the rest (803 pieces) were distributed during hygiene sensitization sessions in targeted places like markets and schools. This served as an incentive for vegetable sellers who now wash their vegetables before selling them. Moreover, identified hygiene focal persons in schools and neighborhoods, who also benefited from this special distribution of soap, have intensified the sensitization of their peers to the need of respecting hygiene rules. Three schools have been sensitized to hygiene rules and have appointed hygiene focal people who are conducting sensitization sessions. Four markets have been sensitized by Red Cross volunteers, and two focal points have been identified. Hygiene and sanitation activities will continue until July 2009 in all the neighborhoods affected by violent winds.

Challenges

There are many poorly kept pigsties in the neighborhoods that have been affected by violent winds, and this has created a serious hygiene and sanitation challenge. There is the need to set up hygiene and sanitation committees in those neighborhoods to help clean the environment on a regular basis. Moreover, there is also the need to continue sensitization activities as a means of promoting hygiene in all the Red Cross local committees that have been affected by violent winds.

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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