

DREF operation update



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Paraguay: Dengue Outbreak

DREF operation n° MDRPY006
GLIDE n° [EP-2009-000028PRY](#)
Update n° 1
5 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: 1 April to 29 May 2009.

Summary: CHF 151,145 (USD 132,519 or EUR 99,818) was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the plan of action of the Paraguayan Red Cross (PRC) that includes delivering immediate assistance to some 5,000 families.

The Paraguayan Red Cross has been carrying out its plan of action in the communities in the Central Department and in the Department of Concepción. The plan of action is benefiting 8 municipalities and 45 communities.

The main activities accomplished and reflected in this operations update no.1 are the preparation and procurement of materials to carry out the awareness-raising campaign as well as the clean-up activities. The Paraguayan Red Cross has mapped the areas that will receive the community talks, and agreements have been made with radio stations for the awareness-raising campaign.

The International Federation wishes to thank the Netherlands Red Cross for generously replenishing DREF in the amount of CHF 22,717. 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>

This operation is expected to be implemented over three months, and will therefore be completed by 1 July 2009; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 1 October 2009).

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Community talks in the Educational Centre-Sub local branch in Ñemby. Source: Paraguayan Red Cross

The situation

The Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare (Ministerio de Salud Pública y Bienestar Social – MSPBS) decreed an epidemiological alert for dengue on 23 February 2009. To date, 3,338 cases have been

confirmed and 2,067 cases were ruled out. Rainfall is forecasted for the upcoming weeks; therefore it is important to identify and eliminate the breeding grounds of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito to avoid the spread of the vector. Temperatures will reach a minimum of 5°C; this will also contribute to the elimination of the vector since the mosquito prefers to live in the interior of homes where the temperatures range from 18 to 30 °C,

The table below shows the regions and the number of people affected:

Region	Total n° of people tested	N° of Confirmed cases	N° of Ruled out cases	N° of Suspected new cases
Concepción	795	524	64	207
San Pedro	21	1	13	7
Cordillera	112	16	73	23
Guaira	31	10	20	1
Caaguazú	409	254	102	53
Caazapá	13		12	1
Itapúa	92	3	71	18
Misiones	9	1	7	1
Paraguarí	92	20	45	27
A. Paraná	857	378	117	372
Central	2,746	1,247	976	523
Ñeembucú	27	3	20	4
Amambay	700	287	76	337
Canindeyú	14	2	6	6
Pte. Hayes	70	14	25	31
A Paraguay	3		2	1
Boquerón	6	2	4	
Asunción	1,331	576	434	321
TOTAL	7,328	3,338	2,067	1,933

During the past weeks, the numbers of cases have been declining and according to the MSPBS there have been 117 new suspected cases of which 86 have been confirmed by laboratory tests. No serious cases were recorded to date.

Since 1988, Paraguay has been affected by dengue, especially in the capital city of Asunción, and the Central, Alto Paraná and Amambay departments. Every year more dengue cases are confirmed; by 2007, a total of 2,967 cases were confirmed of which 18 were cases of hemorrhagic dengue fever. In 2008, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare confirmed 1,837 cases of classic dengue in the areas of San Lorenzo, Luque and San Pedro.

The factors relating to the resurgence of the dengue outbreak as a public health problem in Paraguay are complex and are closely associated with social and demographic changes during the past fifty years. Unplanned and uncontrolled population urban growth, especially in tropical low and medium income countries, combined with precarious housing, overcrowding, deterioration of the water supply systems, sewer systems and waste management, has created ideal conditions for the increase of mosquito transmitted diseases.

The identification of the mosquito breeding grounds implies intense monitoring at a regional and local level that includes: isolation measures, chemical and entomological blocking, opportune notification to the communities of identified breeding grounds and provision of appropriate health care.

Coordination and partnerships

Since the beginning of the emergency, the Paraguayan Red Cross has been coordinating with the International Federation's Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) for technical support for the emergency response. A PADRU disaster management delegate was deployed to Paraguay to coordinate the remaining relief activities with the PRC. The National Society has also received support from the Regional Representation for the Southern Cone.

Coordination has taken place between organizations and with the focal points of each PRC local branch, community leaders and representatives from the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. The objective of this coordination is to work at a local level in the area of prevention and response to the epidemic along with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and other organizations in the field. In addition, there is constant information-sharing with the National Emergency Secretariat (Secretaría de Emergencia Nacional - SEN).

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Paraguayan Red Cross is mobilizing its volunteers in order to support the efforts to fight the dengue outbreak led by the MSPBS. The Paraguayan Red Cross branches were strengthened through the campaigns implemented during the emergency response operations of 2007 for dengue, and 2008 for yellow fever and dengue. For more information on these two previous DREF operations, please visit the Federation website.



PRC volunteers organizing community cleaning in Barrio Santa Maria – Municipality of San Lorenzo. Source: International Federation

The PRC has been mobilizing its resources and volunteers to support the activities of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in the fight against dengue. The National Society is supporting these activities with the plan of action drawn up for this DREF operation, along with the five local branches in the Central department and one local branch in Concepcion. In addition, the PRC has been coordinating and planning its activities with relevant health centres and municipalities.

The PRC is working on similar one-year programming that is financed by the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO). The objective of this programme is to contribute to the reduction of the death rate caused by dengue and yellow fever in the departments of Asunción and Central

and to improve the response capacity of the National Society in cases of epidemiological emergencies. Additionally, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), is financing efforts to reduce dengue and yellow fever through its Community Health and Emergencies component

General processes developed as a result of activities financed by ECHO, the International Federation and DFID are described below:

1. Production of a document indicating a base line for each community (Condition of sanitary systems, number of existing clinics, level of affectation, infrastructure, etc.)
2. A database of volunteers mobilized has been drawn up for the operation as well as security measures signed by each volunteer participating in the operation. :

Local Branch	Total n° of volunteers trained
Asunción	10
Ita	40
Capiatá	40
Ñemby	15
Nueva Italia	20
Concepción	15
TOTAL	140

Data up to 29 May 2009.

3. An operative response team has been formed and two induction and management workshops have been carried out with the participation of the local PRC branches in the Central department (10 participants). In addition, the volunteer teams have designated a focal point for each local PRC branch. Each branch distributes the number of volunteers available to support the two kinds of activities: a) communities: the main activity is to organize the cleaning of the communities along with the neighbourhood commissions which carry out cleaning activities house by house; and b) schools: awareness-raising talks given to the teachers.
4. Key messages have been provided to the communities, focal points have participated in a refresher workshop concerning about the same issues relevant to the past operations to combat dengue. The same volunteers participated in the Health in Emergencies workshop and with this activity the key messages have been reinforced.

Progress towards objectives

The general objective of the proposed operation is to improve the living conditions of the population affected by the dengue outbreak through prevention measures, halting the spread of the vector. The plan of action of the Paraguayan Red Cross focuses on providing assistance to 5,000 families in the 45 targeted communities. To date, four community cleaning kits were delivered to the communities to carry out clean-up activities in coordination with the community leaders. The local PRC branch in Ñemby has received one fumigation backpack and one brushsaw.

Emergency health

Objective: 5,000 families in the municipalities of Asunción, Ita, Capiatá, San Lorenzo, Ñemby, Nueva Italia, Concepción and Horqueta have received information on vector control and cleaning of mosquito breeding groups.

Activities planned:

- Coordination with government authorities (MSPBS, SENEPA and local municipalities' offices) and non-governmental institutions.
- Development of the beneficiary targeting strategy and registration system to deliver intended assistance.
- Identification of community groups or brigades in the targeted communities.
- Procurement of cleaning kits, supplies and thermo-foggers.
- Provision of personal protection equipment to volunteers.
- Carrying out of cleaning activities in communities.
- Carrying out of awareness-raising visits and delivery of educational materials in the targeted communities.
- Monitoring and evaluation of activities and reporting on the visits to communities.

Progress and impact:

The PRC, in coordination with the Ministry of Health and local municipalities, have been performing vector control and cleaning activities. The PRC has signed an agreement with its local branches involved in the operation. Agreements have also been made between the national authorities that are participating in the

operation including the National Service for the Eradication of Malaria and Vectors (Servicio Nacional para la Erradicación del Paludismo y Vectores - SENEPA).

The affected areas were mapped by the National Society to identify specifically where the operation will be carried out.

The following PRC local branches received cleaning kits: Asunción (5), Concepción (5), Horqueta (5), Ita (2), Nueva Italia (5), Ñemby (5), Capiatá (5), and Nueva Italia (5). A total of 37 (of the 45 planned) cleaning kits were distributed to begin community cleanup activities. The remaining cleaning kits will be distributed in the upcoming week. Each cleaning kit contains: 100 garbage bags (100 lts), 1 shovel with iron point, 1 wide steel shovel, 1 rake, 1 steel wheelbarrow, rubber boots, 3 pairs of leather gloves, 50 units of masks. These 45 cleaning kits will benefit approximately 5,000 families. The thermo foggers were purchased and the trainings on the use of these machines with the Red Cross branches have started. The fumigation activities are planned to start in the coming week.

In addition, a notification was sent to the members of the National Intervention Team (NIT) to be deployed to the areas of Concepción and the Zona Central to support the activities in the plan of action carried out by the local Red Cross branches.

Challenges

Since the Paraguayan Red Cross has agreements with local authorities in each area of the operation, the relief activities have been a challenge to coordinate due to the numerous actors and processes that need to be taken into account.

Hygiene promotion

Objective: Increased awareness and prevention of dengue through the description of symptoms to the most vulnerable through an awareness-raising campaign

Activities planned:

- Obtain manuals with information on dengue prevention and common symptoms of the infection.
- Develop an emergency health training workshop focused on outbreak control for PRC volunteers.
- Develop an awareness-raising campaign (press and radio).
- Ensure coordination with the media, especially radio stations, for the dissemination of key dengue prevention messages.

Progress and impact:

Community clean-up campaigns have been carried out reaching 10 communities and benefiting 320 families (see table below):

Communities Reached	N° of Families
Central (Ita, Nueva Italia, Capiatá, Ñemby)	220
Asunción	50
Concepción	50
TOTAL	320

Printed material was distributed as follows: 20,000 triptychs with information on dengue prevention, 10,000 calendars with reminders on how to eliminate vectors has been placed throughout the communities as well as 6 banners for visibility, and street banners that will be installed when doing community work. In addition, t-shirts will be distributed. Key messages have been disseminated through radio spots in the benefited communities of the project (Ita, Ñemby, Capiatá Nueva Italia and Asunción). Dengue prevention messages have also been printed in national newspapers. The PRC also has distributed periodically flyers with key messages to the media.

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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