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Emergency appeal operation update

Gambia: Food insecurity

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Emergency appeal n° MDRGM008
GLIDE n° OT-2012-00046-GMB
6-month summary update
11 December, 2012

Period covered by this Ops Update: June to November 2012 (cumulative narrative and financial). The emergency appeal has been extended by one month bringing the timeframe to 9 months instead of 8 to enable the completion of planned activities. The date for the submission of the final report remains unchanged and will be available at the end of March 2013.

Appeal target (current): CHF 1,100,051.

Appeal coverage: 64% (excluding DREF allocation of CHF 185,974) [<click here to go directly to the updated donor response report>](#)

Appeal history:

- This **Emergency Appeal** was initially launched on 27 April 2012 for CHF 1,859,746 in cash, kind, or services to support Gambia Red Cross Society (GRCS) to assist 8,500 households (51,000 beneficiaries) for 8 months and to be completed by the end of December 2012. As a start up of the operation CHF 185,974 was allocated from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' (IFRC) Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (**DREF**) to support this operation. Un-earmarked funds to replenish DREF are encouraged.
- The **Revised Emergency Appeal** launched on 2 July 2012 reduced the budget to CHF 1,100,051 to assist a reduced number of 5,778 households/34,668 beneficiaries within the same timeframe.
- This **Operation Update** reports on the progress made from April to November 2012 and informs of the extension of operation timeframe by one more month to the end of January 2013 (a total of 9 months) in order to finalise the implementation of the vegetable communal gardens and other planned activities.



Rice seedlings ready to be replanted by Naffie Kanyi, a beneficiary in the Lower River region. Photo: Birna Halldostottir/IFRC

Summary:

Following the launch of the Emergency Appeal in April, funding arrived in June and subsequently the first activity to take place was the training of 48 Red Cross volunteers on data collection, beneficiary registration and relief distribution including 15 local community members that were also trained during the relief distribution.

The objective was to reach 34,668 beneficiaries/5,778 households to receive rice seeds and fertilizer vouchers in the North Bank and Lower River regions in the month of July, in time for planting during the main rainy season. However, an additional 8,191 beneficiaries received this support as well; bringing the total figure of beneficiaries to 42,859 instead of 34,668. The reasons are due to some households being much larger than the six person head count that was estimated per family and also includes some students from religious schools and some vulnerable beneficiaries that had been left out during the beneficiary identification process.

For the health activities 146 volunteers were trained to follow up on the malnutrition activities. The operations are now in the recovery period and activities are focused on women-run community vegetable gardens. These vegetable gardens will allow them to diversify their nutritional intake and also be an opportunity for income generating activities to help build household resilience.

120 volunteers were also trained on hygiene promotion, screening and referrals to health facilities and of malnourished children up to 5 years old, using the mid upper arm circumference (MUAC); a total number of household visited was 12,537 in which 25,918 children have been screened for malnutrition.

[<Click here for an interim financial report; here for contact details>](#)

The situation

The erratic nature of the unevenly distributed rainfall during the 2011/12 cropping season led to a significant decline and low quality of agricultural production across much of Gambia. This resulted in decreased food security for households using basic coping mechanisms, increasing their vulnerability to food insecurity.

In response to the situation, the Gambia Red Cross Society with the support from the IFRC began an operation to support 34,668 beneficiaries started by DREF funding to support the emergency operation. The immediate priority was to mitigate the impact of the food shortage at household level in North Bank and Lower River regions by implementing a targeted relief and recovery twin-track operations focused on preventing malnutrition, decreasing the use of negative coping mechanisms and increasing resilience at community level. The immediate needs was covered through the distribution of food rations, thanks to a bilateral local field agreement (LFA) with WFP, to cover household food rations which was done simultaneously with the purchase and distribution of quality rice seeds and fertilizer to the targeted 34,668 beneficiaries. The seeds and fertilizer were procured locally; the rice seeds were purchased directly from farmers since there were no other seeds on the market and the fertilizer was obtained through the government authorized supplier. There were germination tests done on the seeds by the representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture in the different regions.

The distributions reached an even greater number of beneficiaries than was originally planned; with a cumulative beneficiary population reaching a total of 42,859¹ people with rice seeds and fertilizer in the two regions.

The longer term recovery focus will concentrate on:

- Women groups with vegetable gardening who will receive infrastructure support, training on group dynamics, vegetable garden production and scheme management techniques.
- Additional procurement and distribution of improved seeds.
- Set-up of the community gardens with proper fencing to keep out sheep and goats.
- Building new concrete-lined hand driven wells.
- Building the National Society capacities at headquarter and branch level in food security expertise throughout the operation.

¹The 8,191 additional beneficiaries are explained by the following: some schools of up to 100 children were counted as a household; some families go far beyond the 6 person per household count and some people were absent or simply missed-out at the time of beneficiary identification.

Coordination and partnerships

Discussions took place between May and June with WFP and GRCS after WFP had launched a request to all NGOs and other local humanitarian agencies to enter in a partnership for food distribution in the different regions of Gambia. In the original Emergency Appeal GRCS, the West Bank region had been targeted but due to the lack of funds this region was left out in the revised appeal. The LFA has allowed 11,000 additional beneficiaries to receive the needed support in that region.

The other key partners of the Red Cross include the office of the Vice President, the National Disaster Management Agency, the National Nutrition Agency, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture, the office of the regional Governors, the Gambia Groundnut Cooperation and the beneficiaries' village development committees. This operation has provided visibility for GRCS with its humanitarian activities.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The twin-track approach which combines both relief and recovery operations focused on preventing malnutrition, decreasing the use of negative coping mechanism and increasing resilience at community level. GRCS decided to focus on the two vulnerable regions of North Bank and Lower River, and through the LFA with WFP on the third region for food distribution only.

The immediate needs focused on distribution of household food rations. There was provision of rice seeds and fertilizer to enhance the recovery of farmer families by allowing them to plant soon after the start of the rain season and relieve them from using their scarce resource. This allowed households to build up their resilience for the next harvest season.

Throughout the intervention GRCS and Spanish Red Cross have also been working on food security operations in North Bank (NB) and Lower River (LR) regions. GRCS was supported by the Ministry of health and the Spanish Red Cross with some hygiene promotion materials.

The Participating National Societies (PNS) that have contributed to the appeal are the Canadian, Icelandic, Japanese and Monaco Red Cross Societies for which GRCS and the IFRC are most grateful.

Progress towards outcomes

- GRCS reached the targeted 1,600 beneficiaries in LRR and NBR with food ration of 12kg of rice/per person per month and 2 litres of oil / person per month for the last four months (July and October).
- The Spanish Red Cross through its bilateral agreement with GRCS was able to provide food assistance support to 733 families (around 4,400 beneficiaries) with rice and oil for a period of 4 months based on the same package food ration.
- Some 11,000 beneficiaries received food assistance (through the bilateral LFA with WFP in West Coast region).
- A total of 42,859 beneficiaries received rice seeds and fertilizer in time for planting.
- 48 Red Cross and 15 community members were trained on relief distribution techniques, beneficiary data collection and registration.
- 120 volunteers were trained on hygiene promotion, screening and referrals to health facilities and of malnourished children up to 5 years old, using the mid upper arm circumference (MUAC); a total number of household visited was 12,537 in which 25,918 children have been screened for malnutrition.
- Productive working relationship was developed and maintained throughout the operations, with the authorities in Gambia, UN Agencies as well as all stakeholders involved in food security.
- Capacity building and knowledge transfer with the Spanish Red Cross on data management and logistics and with IFRC on procurement, logistics systems and deployment of a regional disaster response team member (RDRT) specialized in food security to support the operation was done.

Food security, nutrition and livelihoods

Outcome 1: 5,778 most vulnerable households (34,668 beneficiaries) receive rice seeds and fertilizer vouchers in the North Bank (NBR) and Lower River (LRR) regions in the month of July.

Output 1 (expected results)	Activities planned
<p>Appropriate quality rice seeds and fertilizer vouchers are distributed to 5,778 vulnerable households, (34,668 beneficiaries).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beneficiaries selected by the volunteers trained will access to both immediate lifesaving relief and longer term recovery interventions; • Procurement, storage, transportation and distribution of rice seeds for 5,778 vulnerable households, (34,668 beneficiaries) @ 25kg rice seeds/household; • Beneficiaries will exchange Red Cross vouchers to obtain fertilizer from government suppliers (50kg/household); • Government agricultural extension workers, in partnership with Red Cross volunteers, will provide education on best practices for planting and use of provided commodities; • Monitor and evaluate the intervention's effect on beneficiaries' household food security.
<p>Outcome 2: 267 households (1,600 beneficiaries) receive food assistance during 4 months in the North Bank and Lower River regions.</p>	
Output 2	Activities planned
<p>Immediate food needs of 267 vulnerable households (1,600 beneficiaries) will be met in 2 moderately affected districts of the Lower River Region and the North Bank Region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct beneficiary identification through GRCS volunteers; • Deployment of regional disaster response team (RDRT) specialised on food security (3 months) to facilitate assessment and beneficiary selection as well as to support and monitor food and seeds distribution; • Implement beneficiary identification and targeting strategy and registration system to deliver intended assistance, based on community participation and vulnerability criteria; • Conduct monthly distributions of rice and oil to selected beneficiaries for 4 months; • Monitor and evaluate the relief activities and report monthly on relief distributions.

Progress output 1:

- 48 volunteers were trained on relief distribution, screening and beneficiary data collection.
- 2,889 bags of rice seeds and 5,788 bags of fertilizer were procured and distributed to 42,859 beneficiaries in Lower River and North Bank regions.
- The seeds were purchased directly from the farmers, who are the only suppliers in Gambia. The Ministry of Agriculture



Food and rice seed distribution in Sabaa, North Bank region. Photo: Birna Halldostottir/IFRC

coordinated both the procurement of rice seeds and the fertilizer and carried out germination test on seeds. The authority's professional extension workers trained framers on appropriate method of planting in the farms.

- The fertilizer was purchased from the only government authorized suppliers (Gambia Groundnut Cooperation) company.
- Monitoring and evaluation were conducted on the impact of the seed and fertiliser distribution and the report has been finalised. The findings reveal that overall the intervention of GRCS and its partners have been successful. The good lessons learned will be used in future interventions.

Progress output 2:

- The 48 trained volunteers conducted a beneficiary selection and registration that was completed on time for the food and seed distribution. The data collection from the respective 24 and 20 communities of LRR and NBR were analyzed and used to plan the implementation.
- One RDRT member experienced in food security was deployed for two months in Gambia to support GRCS in the beneficiary assessment at the beginning of the operation and for the 1st distribution. Due to limited funding the RDRT could not be extended to three months.
- The beneficiary selection and registration was based on the Venn diagram methodology.² Beneficiaries were selected according to the following vulnerabilities that received no other assistance: single women headed and pregnant women households, families with malnourished children under 5 years old and above; families with disabled, sick or elderly members.
- A fully funded Icelandic Red Cross operations coordinator was put at the disposal of the IFRC to support GRCS since June and was able to follow the four distributions that were completed as follows:
 - ✓ 1st distribution from 4 July and 6 July 2012
 - ✓ 2nd distribution from 6 to 8 August 2012
 - ✓ 3rd distribution from 12 to 15 September 2012
 - ✓ 4th and final distribution from 5 to 8 October 2012

² <http://homepage.usask.ca/~wiebeb/Venn2.html>

- Two monitoring teams were deployed by GRCS to assess the proper use of the rations that were given in the first distribution. The assessment revealed 90% compliance to the eligibility criteria. Necessary adjustments were made to assure 100% compliance in the subsequent distributions.
- The targeted beneficiaries received food rations through ration cards for each family based on the family size and nutritional requirements.
- Monitoring and evaluation was also done on the impact of the food, seed and fertilizer distributed to the beneficiaries of the food security operation and the report has been finalized as mentioned earlier.

Challenges: Despite the training, the first distribution was slow due to the lack of experience on the part of volunteers in such a major relief operation; this improved in the subsequent three distributions. The other challenge was that the volunteers could not do the distribution wholly by themselves, even though with the support of the branch officer.

The heavy rains of August through to October flooded some of the crops. A few rice fields were completely submerged making it difficult for women to work. The work in the rice fields is done by women. A significant number of the farming population have suffered from prolonged food insecurity this year due to the combined factors of floods and last year's crop failure. Some crops were washed away by the heavy rains or covered by sand deposits. Some farmers replanted resulting in the late maturity of their harvests. The excess rains also stunted the growth of millet and maize.

With the rains, many of the farmer families had their small food stocks moulding and were exposed to increased vulnerability when faced with submerged fields, particularly in the North Bank and the Lower River regions. These two regions with Central River were the most affected regions with altogether 700 hectares of damaged farmland recorded. This means a significant number of the farming population may still suffer from prolonged food insecurity due to the combined factors of this year's floods and last year's crop failure.

Emergency health	
Outcome 3: In the West Coast, North Bank and Lower River regions mortality rates of children under 5 will be reduced through effective and timely referral systems and screening of 5,778 households (approximately 10,000 children) to ensure that vulnerable children are accurately diagnosed and treated and mothers of children under 5 will have received nutritional training through cooking demonstrations.	
Output 3	Activities planned
Assisting the screening and referral of malnourished children under 5 to existing health facilities in 30 communities until the end of the lean period (September 2012). Nutritional training through cooking demonstrations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for volunteers on malnutrition screening and referral and on delivery of messages on nutrition and health; • MUAC screening of every child under 5 and pregnant and lactating women at every distribution point; • Extension of key messages on best practices about nutrition and their proper use; • Screening of malnourished children, pregnant and lactating women; • Conduct at least 2 cooking demonstrations per village with mothers in 30 villages to improve nutrition practices; • Screening in the communities where the GRCS is distributing seeds and tools

	and referral to existing health/nutrition centres.
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Progress output 3:

- 120 volunteers were trained on hygiene promotion, screening and referrals to health facilities for malnourished children up to 5 years old using the MUAC method during regular home visits.
- Volunteers were also trained on home visits, information dissemination and proper referral and follow up as part of the National Society community based health and first aid (CBHFA) programme.
- Additionally, 26 volunteers were trained and attached to 26 health facilities to support those malnourished children referred from the communities. These volunteers also informed their fellow community volunteers of the status of the children discharged from the health facilities for follow up.
- Since during the start of the food distribution in June 2012, trained volunteers have been screening all the children in the three regions where food was distributed. A total number of household visited was 12,537 in which 25,918 children were screened for malnutrition and out of this number 177 were found to be “yellow” (moderate acute malnutrition/MAM) and 48 “red” (severe acute malnutrition/SAM). All the children qualified as red have been referred to major health facilities monitored up by GRCS volunteers. All the parents of children marked as yellow received advice on proper diet.
- The volunteers made weekly home visits to deliver nutrition and hygiene promotion messages. During home visits the volunteers consult both pregnant and lactating mothers. Those found sick were referred to the community health nurses (CHN) and/or village health worker for primary treatment and nutrition advice. Volunteers continue to give nutrition education especially on nutritious foods found in the community that are easily available.
- Cooking demonstrations at household level continue. However, group demonstrations were never done due to lack of funding.

Challenges: Some volunteers were assigned to support communities a long distance away from their base, which incurred additional costs in transport fares. The CHNs supervising the volunteers have been overloaded with work and the volunteers are sometimes left without supervision. On the cooking demonstrations, group demonstrations were never done due to lack of funding.

Hygiene Promotion

Outcome 4: To promote hygiene among the 30 most vulnerable communities in the West Coast North Bank and Lower River regions during 4 months.

Output 4	Activities planned
5,778 households (34,668 beneficiaries) will have taken part in at least 4 sessions of hygiene promotion to encourage behaviour change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptation, print and distribution of existing hygiene promotion materials; • Delivery of hygiene promotion sessions and distribution of soap and hygiene promotion material at distribution points; • Evaluation of behaviour change components will be undertaken to demonstrate effectiveness.

Progress output 4: 120 volunteers trained on hygiene promotion and message dissemination.

- The 120 trained volunteers are delivering hygiene messages in 104 communities in North Bank, Lower River and West coast regions.

Challenges: Due to budget constraint there was no distribution of soap and the hygiene promotion materials are inadequate.

Disaster Preparedness and Risk Reduction

Outcome 5: To improve the National Society’s capacity on community, branch and national levels in preparedness, risk reduction and response to future food crisis and to build

the resilience of 1,500 households (9,000 beneficiaries) through disaster risk reduction activities.	
Output 5	Activities planned
15 staff and 50 volunteers have knowledge in food security and develop skills to strengthen livelihood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build the capacities of 50 volunteers and 15 staff in food security assessment, detecting and analyzing signs of food insecurity. • Build the capacities of 50 volunteers and 15 staff on and food security planning and project implementation. • Deployment of 15 GRCS staff to supervise, guide and monitor the implementation of activities.
Up to 1,500 households (30 women groups with 50 participating women each and their household members) receive seeds and tools and have access to other agricultural inputs for communal vegetable gardening.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a rapid assessment of garden facilities in targeted communities to determine the condition of the existing facilities and effectiveness of structures and come up with recommendations for support. • Identification of 30 communities and women groups (50 women each) to benefit from vegetable gardens (in communities with cropping potential). • Coordinate and work in close collaboration with extension workers from Ministry of Agriculture in capacity building and monitoring activities. • Procurement and distribution of assorted seeds, tools, fertilizer and other required hardware for the women groups' communal gardens. • Support water infrastructure (e.g. well rehabilitation, drip irrigation systems etc.), • Strengthening of management committees to make sure beneficiaries will have sustainable access to seeds and tools.

Progress output 5:

The 15 staff and 50 volunteers have not yet benefited from capacity building on food security assessments, to be able to master the detecting and analyzing signs of food insecurity.

The low funding has allowed only four gardens in four communities to be identified for the women groups and the planning for the women community gardens started with consultation meetings with partners at national level (FAO, Ministry of Agriculture, Community Development, Department of Water Resource and the Women Bureau) as well as consultation meeting with the regional partners which took place in November.



A woman is watering her vegetable garden in Suwarah Kouda. Photo: Birna Halldostottir/IFRC

A detailed plan of action and budget has been finalized and the work has begun in December.

Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

The IFRC regional representation in Dakar supported GRCS with a communication assistance to help GRCS produce reports and publication.

A press conference was organized and many partners together with the authorities attended. GRCS has benefited from wide national television coverage.

An IFRC delegation comprising of governance and senior management from Geneva, the Zone office and the Dakar regional representation visited Gambia in August to visit the food security implementation in the field, and to meet with GRCS and the Gambian authorities. More info on this visit can be accessed on YouTube.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this report, please contact:

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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 \(NGOs\) 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.



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.
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MDRGM008 - Gambia - Food Insecurity

Appeal Launch Date: 30 apr 12

Appeal Timeframe: 30 apr 12 to 31 dec 12

Interim Report
I. Funding

Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2012/4-2012/10
Budget Timeframe	2012/4-2012/12
Appeal	MDRGM008
Budget	APPROVED

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

	Disaster Management	Health and Social Services	National Society Development	Principles and Values	Coordination	TOTAL	Deferred Income
A. Budget	1,100,051					1,100,051	
B. Opening Balance	0					0	
Income							
<u>Cash contributions</u>							
<i>Icelandic Red Cross</i>	338,075					338,075	
<i>Japanese Red Cross Society</i>	61,400					61,400	
<i>Red Cross of Monaco</i>	12,012					12,012	
<i>The Canadian Red Cross Society</i>	234,236					234,236	
C1. Cash contributions	645,723					645,723	
<u>Inkind Personnel</u>							
<i>Icelandic Red Cross</i>	44,500					44,500	
C3. Inkind Personnel	44,500					44,500	
<u>Other Income</u>							
<i>DREF Allocations</i>	185,974					185,974	
C4. Other Income	185,974					185,974	
C. Total Income = SUM(C1..C4)	876,197					876,197	
D. Total Funding = B + C	876,197					876,197	
Coverage = D/A	80%					80%	

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	876,197					876,197	
E. Expenditure	-614,024					-614,024	
F. Closing Balance = (B + C + E)	262,173					262,173	

Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2012/4-2012/10
Budget Timeframe	2012/4-2012/12
Appeal	MDRGM008
Budget	APPROVED

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

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)		1,100,051					1,100,051	
Relief items, Construction, Supplies								
Construction - Facilities	193,312						193,312	
Food	75,628	161,490				161,490	-85,862	
Seeds & Plants	379,147	193,058				193,058	186,089	
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	18,330	72				72	18,257	
Utensils & Tools	15,653						15,653	
Total Relief items, Construction, Su	682,069	354,620				354,620	327,449	
Land, vehicles & equipment								
Computers & Telecom	6,083	42,089				42,089	-36,006	
Office & Household Equipment	2,498						2,498	
Total Land, vehicles & equipment	8,581	42,089				42,089	-33,508	
Logistics, Transport & Storage								
Distribution & Monitoring		25,112				25,112	-25,112	
Transport & Vehicles Costs	67,692	32,246				32,246	35,446	
Logistics Services		207				207	-207	
Total Logistics, Transport & Storage	67,692	57,565				57,565	10,127	
Personnel								
International Staff	84,000	65,615				65,615	18,385	
National Staff		481				481	-481	
National Society Staff	53,638	14,517				14,517	39,121	
Volunteers	55,476						55,476	
Total Personnel	193,114	80,613				80,613	112,501	
Workshops & Training								
Workshops & Training	40,153	27,709				27,709	12,444	
Total Workshops & Training	40,153	27,709				27,709	12,444	
General Expenditure								
Travel	5,000	8,902				8,902	-3,902	
Information & Public Relations	12,587	3,499				3,499	9,089	
Office Costs	7,121	4,058				4,058	3,063	
Communications	10,865	2,720				2,720	8,145	
Financial Charges	4,230	-30,223				-30,223	34,453	
Other General Expenses		34				34	-34	
Shared Office and Services Costs	1,500						1,500	
Total General Expenditure	41,303	-11,009				-11,009	52,313	
Operational Provisions								
Operational Provisions		24,296				24,296	-24,296	
Total Operational Provisions		24,296				24,296	-24,296	
Indirect Costs								
Programme & Services Support Recov	67,139	34,540				34,540	32,599	
Total Indirect Costs	67,139	34,540				34,540	32,599	
Pledge Specific Costs								
Pledge Earmarking Fee		2,902				2,902	-2,902	
Pledge Reporting Fees		700				700	-700	
Total Pledge Specific Costs		3,602				3,602	-3,602	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE (D)	1,100,051	614,024				614,024	486,027	
VARIANCE (C - D)		486,027				486,027		